

Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



Nottingham
City Council

Reference Number:

4930

Author:

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Department:

People

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Subject:

Department for Education FY23/24 Improvement Funding Allocation

Total Value:

£504,285 (Type: Revenue)

Decision Being Taken:

Agreement to accept £504,285 funding from the Department for Education to support Children's Services Improvement work following its inadequate Ofsted inspection.

Reasons for the Decision(s)

In July 2022 the Local Authority was judged to be inadequate following its Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services. The Children's Integrated Services department has been liaising closely with the Department for Education (DfE) around additional support and resources that it would require to support its improvement journey and deliver good services to children and young people in need of help and protection. A bid was put in and approved by the DfE to provide funding to support some key pieces of improvement work. The areas identified have been identified as areas of work that will reach the maximum number of the workforce as possible to support wider, continuous improvement. The activities will support the whole workforce to deliver quality services for children and families through training and development, reduction of bureaucracy through a more efficient and effective functioning of the case management systems - enabling the workforce to focus upon more upon direct work with children and families, and supporting the continuous improvement of practice and the capacity to learn from other local authorities and identify good practice.

The following areas of improvement work have been approved by the DfE:

Liquid Logic investment - A diagnostic of the Liquid Logic Case management system recommended to increase resilience and ensure the system is fit for purpose both now and in the future. The request is to support the implementation of the key recommendations to enable a project management approach to system development with support from an expert consultant, establishment of a team (in addition to current resource) to enable change processes to continue to be well managed along with support for the workforce, and allow social workers to work with a system that reduces duplication, meets their needs and enables better oversight and reporting of practice. £328,523.

Workforce training - This will support the service create resilience within the workforce and support staff to work in a trauma informed way. A restorative practice e-learning course for 800 practitioners to provide a basic knowledge and understanding of the restorative practice principles. A 2-day course for leadership team (20 staff) to look at restorative practice through a restorative lens and assist with developing the culture of the service. This would enable managers to consider what they need to do as leaders of restorative practice in the workplace and how they can support the wider workforce to implement restorative practice principles in their work and in their interactions with colleagues. A 1-day restorative practice course for 800 practitioners. This would build upon the E learning course and equip practitioners to use the relational window with children and families, in supervision, with their colleagues, as a planning tool for 'stuck' cases, or direct work. £106,100.

Trauma Informed Lead Manager (for 6 months) - This will support the service create resilience within the workforce and support staff to work in a trauma informed way whilst also supporting them to recognise the impact of work-related trauma can have upon them and ways to manage these impacts. £26,762.

Children's Improvement Specialist (for 6 months) - The post of improvement director has already been funded by DfE and would continue to add essential strategic capacity to support the leadership team around the improvement plan in readiness for Ofsted monitoring visits. The role will also provide dedicated senior leadership to shape and drive the embedding of consistently good, strengths-based social work practice. £42,900. Total: £504,285

Other Options Considered:

Option 1: Do nothing and do not accept the approved additional DFE funding: This option is not the preferred option and is rejected as the funding has been approved by the Department for Education. This option is not recommended as the Department for Education have already committed the funding and have an expectation that the Local Authority will spend the money on the items identified. It would create a reputational risk to refuse the monies - both in terms of potential future bids, but also the need to move at pace to make practice improvements. Without the funding Children's Services will struggle to deliver key practice improvements at pace and risk being able to make the significant improvement required to satisfy Ofsted and provide them with assurance at future inspection visits.

Background Papers:

N/A

Published Works:	N/A
Affected Wards:	Citywide
Colleague / Councillor Interests:	None
Consultations:	<p>Date: 19/04/2023</p> <p>Other: Children's Executive Improvement Board</p> <p>The item was discussed and agreed at the Board. This Board is chaired by an independent Improvement Advisor (DfE) and is attended by the Chief Executive, Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education, and the Corporate Director for People.</p> <p>Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.</p>
Crime and Disorder Implications:	N/A
Equality:	EIA not required. Reasons: This decision relates to the acceptance of DfE grant monies.
Decision Type:	Portfolio Holder
Subject to Call In:	Yes
Call In Expiry date:	17/05/2023
Advice Sought:	Legal, Finance
Legal Advice:	The DfE funding is subject to terms and conditions which, if not complied with, may be withheld, reduced or clawed back from the Council. The terms and conditions also contain time frames within which deliverables must be achieved. Any procurement of services must be in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and public procurement rules having regard to the estimated total value of the scheme. Any persons engaged to provide any element of the services described by the report author must be engaged solely in the provision of the services for which DfE funding is provided. Advice provided by Sarah O'Bradaigh (Senior Solicitor) on 25/04/2023.

Finance Advice:

The decision is valued at £504,285. This is income in the form of a grant from the Department for Education. It relates to project work to be undertaken within the Children's Directorate with the objective of achieving improvements at pace, following the services' Inadequate Ofsted judgement. There is limited risk in accepting this funding as it will be claimed after the expenditure has been undertaken. In addition, there is clear budget management in place to account for all monies that are claimed. Advice provided by Clare Rickett (Senior Commercial Business Partner) on 03/05/2023.

Signatures

Cheryl Barnard (Portfolio Holder- Children, Young People, Schools)
SIGNED and Dated: 09/05/2023
Catherine Underwood (Corporate Director for People)
SIGNED and Dated: 04/05/2023