

# Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



**Nottingham**  
**City Council**

**Reference Number:**

5023

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**Department:**

People

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**Subject:**

Attendance Improvement Enhanced Programme (PEIA Grant Funded)

**Total Value:**

£578,600 (Type: Revenue)

**Decision Being Taken:**

1. Accept the Priority Education Investment Area (PEIA) Grant from the Department for Education.
2. Delegate authority to spend the funding to the Director for Education, in accordance with the terms of the grant and as set out in the table of proposed staffing and activity attached.

**Reasons for the Decision**

Nottingham was confirmed as one of the 24 Priority Education Investments Areas (PEIAs) in March 2022, in the Schools White Paper: <https://www.gov.uk/governments/publications/opportunity-for-all-strong-schools-with-great-teachers-for-your-child>. PEIAs are a subset of the 55 Education Investment Areas (EIAs) announced by the DfE in the Levelling Up White Paper (Feb 2022), and comprise of the 12 existing DfE Opportunity Areas and 12 other EIAs that have particularly low attainment and high rates of disadvantage.

In Nottingham, the Local Partnership Board is chaired by Jane McNeil, the Pro Vice-Chancellor at Nottingham Trent University and includes representatives from the local authority, strong multi-academy trusts, and local dioceses, as well as education experts who bring specific skills, expertise and challenge. The Board has met regularly since July 2022 to oversee a Local Needs Analysis and develop and agree a Local Delivery Plan, which includes bespoke interventions to address priority local needs in the city. They will continue to meet on a regular basis in order to provide ongoing challenge and oversight of programme delivery. One of three local priorities to be addressed through the PEIA Local Needs Fund in Nottingham is 'Attendance and Persistent Absence': improving attendance, particularly for those learners who are persistently absent and reducing Nottingham's persistent absence rate, building on the recommendations from the DfE attendance adviser. On the 6th May 2022 the DfE released new non-statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

The aim of the document is to help schools, trusts, governing bodies, and local authorities maintain high levels of school attendance and improve consistency of support. The DfE are committed to this guidance becoming statutory 'no sooner than September 2023'. The Education Welfare & Education Other Than at School (EW & EOTAS) Service has spearheaded the development of Nottingham City's Attendance Improvement Strategy, setting up pilot projects with schools and gathering information from pupils and families. As part of the overall strategy, the Educational Psychology Service has introduced the ATTEND Framework to City schools, an evidence-based tool developed by Dr Adele Tobias (Educational Psychologist at Brighton & Hove City Council) which aims to identify all the contributing factors involved when school attendance drops below 90% or is at risk of doing so.

The PEIA Local Partnership Board is keen to align with the Local Authority's developing attendance strategy and wider inclusion work in the City to maximise impact and best use of the existing offer and resources available. To facilitate this, the DfE are proposing to award a grant of £578,600 (£228,100 in FY 2023/24, and £350,500 in FY 2024/25 subject to good progress) to Nottingham City Council to deliver an enhanced package of support to education providers and families (in addition to the Council's anticipated new statutory duties) during the period covered by the PEIA activity, which ends in March 2025.

This funded activity will contribute to meeting the following objectives: 1 Support Nottingham's schools by providing additional capacity and capability to tackle persistent absence effectively, and proactively support pupils at risk. 2 Support Nottingham's school leaders to develop their knowledge of effective approaches in tackling persistent absence, and support to develop and implement effective strategies, which include proactive support for pupils at risk of persistent absence. 3 Support Nottingham's schools to engage with communities and families in order to improve school attendance.

**Briefing notes documents:**

**DDM PEIA funded Staffing and Activity.docx**

**Other Options Considered:**

**We have the option to not accept the grant funding, but that would not be in the best interests of families**

**Background Papers:**

<b>Published Works:</b>	None
<b>Affected Wards:</b>	Citywide
<b>Colleague / Councillor Interests:</b>	None
<b>Consultations:</b>	Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.
<b>Crime and Disorder Implications:</b>	None
<b>Equality:</b>	EIA not required - this is not a new service or a change to a service, it represents additional capacity for existing services.
<b>Social Value Considerations:</b>	None
<b>Relates to staffing:</b>	Yes
<b>Decision Type:</b>	Portfolio Holder
<b>Subject to Call In:</b>	Yes
<b>Call In Expiry date:</b>	03/10/2023
<b>Advice Sought:</b>	Legal, Finance, Procurement, Human Resources
<b>Legal Advice:</b>	<p>DfE grant funding for the PEIA project is subject to grant conditions which, if not met, may result in the withdrawal of the funding. It should be noted that the DfE has only confirmed grant funding of up to £228,100 for the period 1st August 23-31 March 2024 and only provided an indicative amount of funding for 1 April 2024-31 March 2025 which will in any event be dependant on specified outcomes being achieved. If the additional workers are engaged on fixed term contracts, there will need to be a contingency budget to meet the the full costs of their posts in the event of any shortfall in DfE funding.</p> <p>Advice provided by Sarah O'Bradaigh (senior solicitor) on 02/08/2023.</p>

**Finance Advice:**

**This decision relates to the receipt of Priority Education Investment Area (PEIA) Grant which has been awarded to the Council by the DfE for the delivery of a number of activities aimed to improve school attendance. The total expected value of the grant over two years is £578,600, which comprises £228,100 in 23/24 and an indicative amount of £350,500 in 24/25, subject to good progress. Grant conditions associated with the funding will need to be followed to avoid any risk of clawback.**

**Advice provided by Paul Stevenson, Interim Strategic Finance Business Partner, Childrens and Education, 11/09/2023.**

**HR Advice:**

**Management are proposing to accept grant funding for the Priority Education Investment Area (PEIA) on a 2-year period. Management have outlined that this grant will be used to recruit to 8 roles: 6x Family Support Workers (1 at Grade I and 5 at Grade F) on 18 month fixed term contracts, 1 x Education Welfare Specialist (Grade H) on a 18-month fixed term contract and 1 x Principal Analyst (Grade H) on a 1-year fixed term contract. Management need to ensure that these posts have been through the job evaluation process.**

**Management will need to ensure that recruitment is conducted through the appropriate processes for the newly created roles, with a CLT panel approval process in place during spending controls for all newly created posts.**

**Management need to ensure an appropriate exit strategy is in place in order to terminate the contract in line with NCC guidance in the event that the posts are not made permanent at the end of the fixed term period. Risks should be managed with regard to the impacts of fixed-term workers and allowances will need to be made within the department's budget for redundancy costs if the fixed-term contracts are extended beyond 2 years, or the successful candidate has continuous service. Timelines associated with notice periods and redeployment obligations will also need to be considered.**

**Management should apply pay policy principles in the starting salary for all new post holders and seek HR advice if necessary. There will need to be a support and development plan and robust performance objectives for the new post-holder once appointed. Future Ways of Working should be discussed with the employee in relation to category of worker and any expectations should be clearly outlined with regard to attendance at a NCC base, dependant on the role and responsibilities.**

**Advice provided by Louise Hobbs (HR Consultant) on 08/08/2023.**

**Procurement Advice:**

**This decision relates to the receipt and expenditure of Priority Education Investment Area (PEIA) Grant which has been awarded to the Council by the DfE for the delivery of a number of activities aimed to improve school attendance. It is understood that any external expenditure of this funding will be at small values below the thresholds of the Contracts Procedure Rules requiring a formal procurement procedure, therefore there are no procurement implications. However best value should be sought in the sourcing of these activities and procurement advice should be sought if there is any change to the proposals. The terms of the grant conditions should be complied with in the use of this funding.**

**Advice provided by Jo Pettifor (Procurement Team Manager) on 07/08/2023.**

**Signatures**

**Cheryl Barnard (PH - Children, Young People & Education)**

**SIGNED and Dated: 26/09/2023**

<b>Catherine Underwood (Corporate Director for People)</b>
<b>SIGNED and Dated: 25/09/2023</b>