

Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



Reference Number:

5029

Author:

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Department:

People

Contact:

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Subject:

Department for Education FY23/24 Wave 2 improvement funding

Total Value:

£421,611 (Type: Revenue)

Decision Being Taken:

1. To accept Department for Education Wave 2 funding to support children's services improvement work following the inadequate Ofsted inspection.
2. To delegate authority to spend the DFE grant monies in line with the grant terms and conditions to the Director for Children's Integrated Services or lead Head of Service for the activity funded (Improvement Specialist and Head of Service post - Director for Children's Integrated Services, Trauma Informed Lead Manager, Audit Resource and Learning, Practice Educator Post - Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Workforce Training - Head of Strategy and Improvement)

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 originally put in to the DfE to provide funding to support some key pieces of improvement work. The DfE were unable to support all areas of the bid in the initial funding application but have since been able to identify further 'wave 2' funding to support further areas of improvement in that original bid. 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, supporting the continuous improvement of practice and the capacity to learn from other local authorities and identifying good practice. The following areas of improvement work have been approved by the DfE:

Workforce training - funding to commission additional specialist training which our internal workforce development team is not equipped to provide for the more experience social work cohort - £50,000

Trauma Informed Lead Manager - continuation of funding for a 6 month period to 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 work related trauma can have on them and ways to manage this impact- £26,762

Children's Improvement Specialist - continuation of funding for 6 months to 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

Audit resource and learning - Agency resource for a period of 6 months to support with audit work to free up management capacity. Managers have undergone a period of training to support them undertake auditing work, but this would allow managers space to undertake identified learning and development at the same time as improving and transforming the service - £243,880

Head of Service capacity - creating additional leadership capacity to support the service on its improvement journey for a period of 6 months- £45,061

Practice Educator post - a six month part time post to enable the service to focus upon coordinating placement brokering, student placement development offers and build its pool of practice educators to enable a dedicated provision to student placements to encourage them to choose and remain with Nottingham City as a career - £13,008.

Total £421,611

Other Options Considered:

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:	10/10/2023
Advice Sought:	Legal, Finance
Legal Advice:	The DfE grant funding will be subject to grant funding conditions which if not complied with could result in suspension, reduction or clawback of the funding from the council. Any services procured with the grant funding must be procured in compliance with the council's Contract Procedure Rules and public procurement rules. Any individuals engaged and paid with grant funding must spend 100% of their time on the grant funded role. Advice provided by Sarah O'Bradaigh (senior solicitor) on 13/09/2023.
Finance Advice:	The decision relates to the proposed acceptance of £421,611 of DfE Wave 2 improvement funding, which has been offered by the DfE following the submission of a funding bid. The funding will enable the extension of a range of additional staffing and agency resources for a period of 6 months to continue essential improvement work. The service will need to comply with grant conditions associated with funding and will need to have exit strategies for the temporary resources taken on, given the time limited nature of the funding. Advice provided by Paul Stevenson (Interim Strategic Finance Business Partner) on 28/09/2023.

Signatures

Cheryl Barnard (PH - Children, Young People & Education)
SIGNED and Dated: 02/10/2023
Catherine Underwood (Corporate Director for People)
SIGNED and Dated: 29/09/2023