



Cabinet Report

Report of: Jayne Ludlam

Report to: Cabinet

Date: September 2015

Subject: Step Up to Social Work Programme

Author of Report: Dorothy Smith 0114 2736976

Key Decision: YES

Reason Key Decision: The external funding to be received from the DfE exceeds the £1.5million limit and is therefore required to be approved by Cabinet.

Summary: The Step Up to Social Work programme is a Department for Education wholly funded initiative to promote people to change or start their careers in children and families social work by funding a 14 month degree in social work. Sheffield City Council is the lead authority for the Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Partnership (the Partnership) which consists of 10 local authorities. This programme started in 2010 and this report updates Cabinet on the progress of the programme whereby Sheffield City Council acts as a lead authority for the Partnership and administrates the external funding on its behalf. The report seeks approval for a number of agreements to facilitate the continuation of the programme.

Reasons for Recommendations:

The Step Up to Social Work programme is a national initiative which is wholly funded by the Department for Education by way of a grant. This funding includes a bursary payment for each successful student on the degree programme, funding of the University course, funding for training and supervision of each student whilst they are placed in their host authority across the region and administration of funding by the lead authority.

The programme has been running since 2010 and has flagship status both regionally and nationally. The Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Partnership is the largest of the 18 national partnerships participating in the Step up to Social Work programme. This initiative has produced 108 high calibre graduates since its initiation and 98% of these graduates have been successful in gaining employment as social workers in authorities across this region. This initiative has proven to be highly successful in resolving recruitment difficulties in social work in children and families.

This year the DfE have approved funding for the Yorkshire and Humberside region to host 50 students which means that external funding awarded will be £1.7m for the 14 month programme which will start in January 2016. Admissions recruitment took place in June/July 2015. Sheffield is the lead authority and acts as the broker for the grant funding with the responsibility of distribution of funding to each authority as directed by the Department of Education and oversees the success of the programme.

The other nine local authorities in the Partnership include: City of Bradford MBC, Doncaster Children's Services Trust, Kirklees Council, Leeds City Council, Calderdale County Council, North Lincolnshire Council, North East Lincolnshire Council, North Yorkshire County Council and Wakefield Council. Letters of Commitment from all these authorities were received at the point of submitting the bid and Inter Authority Contracts have been prepared in accordance with the DfE template. The Grant Offer Letter from the Department for Education was received on 26 June 2015. Salford University has been procured to deliver the 14 month post graduate degree programme and the relevant contract terms have now been agreed (Appendix 1). The grant will be paid on a monthly basis and any underspend on funding as at March 2017 will be repaid to the DfE.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of this report**
- b) Note that the Council has entered into the Grant Funding Agreement for the Step Up To Social Work Programme as the lead authority for the Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Partnership.**
- c) Approve that Inter Authority Contracts between the authorities of the Partnership, which have been agreed in principle, are now executed.**
- d) Approve that the Council enters into a contract with Salford University for Cohort 4 and approve an extension to that contract for**

- a further cohort if the Council should be successful in receiving another grant for any future cohort.
- e) Delegate authority to administer the DfE funding awarded to the Partnership to Sheffield City Council Assistant Director of Children and Families Fieldwork Services
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Background Papers: attached
Grant Agreement
Salford University contract (Appendix 1)
Inter Authority contract (example)

Category of Report: OPEN (Appendix 1 is CLOSED i.e. not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)).

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
YES Cleared by: M Wassell
Legal Implications
YES Cleared by: Ewelina Nidecka/Sarah Bennett/Nadine Wynter
Equality of Opportunity Implications
NO Cleared by: Bashir Khan
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
NO
Human Rights Implications
NO
Environmental and Sustainability implications
NO
Economic Impact
NO
Community Safety Implications
NO
Human Resources Implications
NO Cleared by: Kath Selman
Property Implications
NO
Area(s) Affected
Children and Families statutory fieldwork services
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Lead
Jayne Ludlam
Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
NO
Press Release
NO

REPORT TO CABINET

STEP UP TO SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMME

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Step Up to Social Work programme is a DfE initiative which is grant funded to encourage the general public to either start or change their career into social work
- 1.2 The national initiative is aimed at resolving recruitment and retention of social workers and as a means of training existing graduates to become high calibre social workers.
- 1.3 Sheffield City Council has been the lead authority for the Yorkshire and Humberside Step up to Social Work Regional Partnership since 2010. The number of places hosted by the authorities within the Partnership has increased to 50 and therefore the amount of funding to be received exceeds £1.5m.
- 1.4 The region has been successful in its bid for funding to support the current cohort of 50 students within 10 local authorities to graduate as Children and Families social workers

2.0 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SHEFFIELD PEOPLE

- 2.1 Graduates are not guaranteed employment however statistical evidence proves that 98% of graduates have been successful in obtaining a job as a social worker. Sheffield CYPF will host 10 students as part of this fourth cohort.
- 2.2 Upon graduation, the region will have 50 high calibre newly qualified social workers to fill vacant social worker posts who have been supported through an employer led degree programme.
- 2.3 The assessment centre admissions process includes interviews held by foster carers and young people from Sheffield whose comments and scores are fed into the regional panels.
- 2.4 Foster carers use this process for their development portfolios and young people use their experiences for their CV's and to develop confidence. Many young people have been assisted in gaining employment and/or travel opportunities as a result of this experience.

3.0 OUTCOME AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 3.1 Upon graduation in March 2017, there will be 50 additional high calibre social workers who will have been part of an employer led university post graduate degree course who are ready and trained for employment in social work with children and families across the region.

- 3.2 The programme is fully funded by the Department for Education and therefore is at no cost to Sheffield City Council or any of the other 9 authorities in the Partnership.
- 3.3 The Government has agreed to fund 500 places and 18 partnerships across the country due to the success of this programme.
- 3.4 The 10 local authorities within the Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Partnership work creatively and collaboratively. This programme has been highly successful and as our partnership is the largest in the country the DfE ask Sheffield to give advice, support and expertise to other new partnerships.
- 3.5 Local authorities within South Yorkshire are currently forming a teaching partnership which will be funded by the Department for Education and the Department of Health based on the Step up to Social Work model. Sheffield will be the lead authority for the new South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership as well based on their experience and success of the Step Up programme.

4.0 MAIN BODY OF THE REPORT

- 4.1 As the lead authority of the Partnership, Sheffield City Council administrates the external DfE grant and makes payments to the authorities within the Partnership on behalf of the DfE for bursary payments and training and support payments for the number of students hosted by each local authority. Sheffield City Council is responsible for payment to Salford University for course fees for all 50 students. A trainee contract is drawn up by the host local authority for each student to sign prior to commencement of the Post graduate degree in Social Work programme.

As the lead authority, Sheffield City Council receives funding to administrate the Step Up to Social Work process and to procure an HEI to deliver the programme. Procurement for an HEI to deliver the Cohort 4 programme took place between July 2014 and January 2015.

Regional Partnership meetings take place on a bi-monthly basis with the HEI and are chaired by Sheffield City Council as the lead authority. Reports on students' progress will be submitted to the DfE.

Sheffield submitted a bid to the DfE in February 2015 which was successful and the Council has now signed a Grant Funding Agreement with the DfE for the next 14 month Post Graduate in Social Work degree programme which commences in January 2016.. The Grant Funding Agreement is effective from 26 June 2015. Both Salford University and local authorities in the Partnership were required to attend the admissions assessment centre where the recruitment of 50 students into this programme was undertaken.

- 4.2 The terms of Inter Authority Contracts have now been agreed between Sheffield and each authority within the Partnership in accordance with the template provided by the DfE. These follow Letters of Commitment received from each partner authority during the bidding process. These contracts are ready to be executed in order to formalise the inter authority agreements.

Financial Implications

- 4.3 There are no financial implications to Sheffield City Council to engage in this programme. However, all funding must be spent and accounted for by the end of the financial year in 2017; any underspend must be repaid to the DfE.

The value of the DfE grant is £1.7 million. It will be paid in equal instalments and must be spent by the end of March 2017. Any unspent grant will be repaid back to the DfE. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the grant will mean that all or part of the grant will have to be repaid. The latest grant agreement terms and conditions for the grant have not yet been finalised, but there are not expected to be any material changes from previous years funding allocations.

Legal implications

Sheffield, on behalf of the Partnership has procured Salford University to deliver the post graduate programme. DfE funding includes payment for the procurement of an HEI.

Procurement has been carried out in accordance with Sheffield City Council Contract Standing Orders and the Contract Award approval was signed off at the end of 2014 to allow for the bidding process with the DfE. The contract itself has been awarded to Salford University.

The purpose of the Inter Authority Contracts is to safeguard the relationships between the local authorities within the Partnership and to support the role of Sheffield City Council as the lead authority, with the responsibility for entering into a number of contracts on behalf of the Partnership. These contracts are not legally binding between the parties until they are signed and sealed.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Sheffield City Council has been the lead authority for the Step up to Social Work programme since its inception at a pilot stage in 2010. The Regional Partnership is the largest in the country and is highly praised by the DfE for its success. The DfE has advised prospective new partnerships to contact Sheffield for expert guidance and the lead Step Up co-ordinator from Sheffield visited Somerset and Dorset in March. This led to the South West forming a new partnership and they continue to seek guidance from Sheffield.

Sheffield City Council is currently participating in a DfE longitudinal national study of graduates from past Step Up Cohorts and was recently invited to be interviewed by Consultant Economists who have been commissioned by the DfE to audit the value of different social work degree programmes.

Sheffield City Council wishes to continue to act as the lead authority for Step up to Social Work within the Yorkshire and Humberside region as it raises the profile of the authority not only for the workforce across the region but nationally.

Sheffield City Council has recently been successful in the bid for the Early Adopter phase of Teaching Partnerships for the South Yorkshire region. 22 Partnerships bid nationally; these were shortlisted to 8 with a requirement for a further application which resulted in Sheffield City Council being one of the final 4 successful bidders. This new partnership will allow Sheffield City Council to contribute to the future of social work education and it is believed that the bid was successful due to the expertise gained from the Step Up to Social Work programme.

6.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The Step Up to Social Work programme is a national initiative which is wholly funded by the Department for Education by way of a grant. This funding includes a bursary payment for each successful student on the degree programme, funding of the University course, funding for training and supervision of each student whilst they are placed in their host authority across the region and administration of funding by the lead authority.

6.2 The programme has been running since 2010 and has flagship status both regionally and nationally. The Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Partnership is the largest of the 18 national partnerships participating in the Step up to Social Work programme. This initiative has produced 108 high calibre graduates since its initiation and 98% of these graduates have been successful in gaining employment as social workers in authorities across this region. This initiative has proven to be highly successful in resolving recruitment difficulties in social work in children and families.

6.3 This year the DfE have approved funding for the Yorkshire and Humberside region to host 50 students which means that external funding awarded will be £1.7m for the 14 month programme which will start in January 2016. Admissions recruitment took place in June/July 2015. Sheffield is the lead authority and acts as the broker for the grant funding with the responsibility of distribution of funding to each authority as directed by the Department of Education and oversees the success of the programme.

6.4 The other nine local authorities in the Partnership include: City of Bradford MBC, Doncaster Children's Services Trust, Kirklees Council, Leeds City Council, Calderdale County Council, North Lincolnshire Council, North East Lincolnshire Council, North Yorkshire County Council and Wakefield Council. Letters of Commitment from all these authorities were received at the point of submitting the bid and Inter Authority Contracts have been prepared in accordance with the DfE template. The Grant Offer Letter from the Department for Education was received on 26 June 2015. . Salford University has been procured to deliver the 14 month post graduate degree programme and the relevant contract terms have now been agreed (Appendix 1). The grant will be paid on a monthly basis and any underspend on funding as at March 2017 will be repaid to the DfE.

7.0 REASONS FOR EXEMPTION

7.1 Appendix 1 attached to this report is presented as an exempt item because it contains exempt information under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) i.e. it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council. In considering this exemption the author of the report has decided that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, because it might weaken the City Council's position in a competitive environment in relation to any future bidding process for DfE grants in the future.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of this report
- b) Note that the Council has entered into the Grant Funding Agreement for the Step Up To Social Work Programme as the lead authority for the Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Partnership.
- c) Approve that Inter Authority Contracts between the authorities of the Partnership, which have been agreed in principle, are now executed.
- d) Approve that the Council enters into a contract with Salford University for Cohort 4 and approve an extension to that contract for a further cohort if the Council should be successful in receiving another grant for any future cohort.

- e) Delegate authority to administer the DfE funding awarded to the Partnership to Sheffield City Council Assistant Director of Children's Fieldwork Services

Author Dorothy Smith
Job Title Senior HR consultant
Date 14/8/15