



**JOINT REPORT OF THE:  
SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE  
SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR HR AND CUSTOMER SERVICE**

**ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOCIAL CARE CENTRE FOR KNOWLEDGE AND  
PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The report seeks approval for a temporary increase in the HR Workforce and Organisational Development staffing establishment to host a new Centre for Knowledge and Practice Development on behalf of a regional Teaching Partnership.
2. The establishment of the Centre for Knowledge and Practice Development is subject to a bid for temporary funding to the Department for Education (DfE) up until March 2016.

**Information and Advice**

3. Government intends to support a small number of early adopter teaching partnerships to test and refine new and innovative approaches to delivering high quality training for social work students and qualified social work practitioners.
4. Nottinghamshire County Council is the lead partner in a regional teaching partnership which covers both adults' and children's social work and includes:
  - a. Nottinghamshire County Council
  - b. Nottingham City Council
  - c. Derbyshire County Council
  - d. Nottinghamshire NHS Trust: Rampton Hospital
  - e. Nottingham Trent University
  - f. University of Nottingham.
5. The key ambitions of the regional Teaching Partnership are as follows:
  - a. to accept the highest calibre entrants onto courses through adherence to UCAS points and robust additional testing to demonstrate values and intellectual and academic ability.
  - b. to fully embed the Chief Social Workers' Knowledge and Skills statements and provide a strong focus on specialisms.
  - c. to provide every student with at least one but preferably two placements, relevant to their specialism, in statutory settings by March 2016.
  - d. to increase the numbers of frontline practitioners and their managers providing "classroom" teaching in partnership with Higher Education Institutes.

6. To help achieve these ambitions, The Partnership Board submitted an application for funding to the DfE in June 2015. Below are the key points that featured in the Partnership's application.
7. The Teaching Partnership aims to increase the capacity of social work placements in employer organisations so that all students experience at least one but preferably two placements in statutory settings by March 2016. Partners will commit to agreed placement numbers.
8. The Partnership's vision is to achieve the highest standards of learning and development for children and adults social workers at all stages of their career including:
  - a. whilst social work students are qualifying and are on placement
  - b. whilst newly qualified social workers undertake their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment
  - c. continuous professional development throughout a qualified social worker's career.
9. This will be achieved by making the boundaries between Higher Education Institutes and employers more permeable, through increased use of experienced social workers on university teaching programmes and more academics returning to frontline social work practice for defined periods. Both these will assist in creating effective knowledge exchange.

## **Centre for Knowledge and Practice Development**

10. The Teaching Partnership's vision to improve social work learning and development will be achieved by establishing a Centre for Knowledge and Practice Development.
11. As the lead partner, it is proposed that the Centre be hosted by Nottinghamshire County Council and reach across the partnership to coordinate knowledge exchange, disseminate learning resources and share innovative practice.
12. The Centre would be hosted by Nottinghamshire County Council but would be governed by the Partnership Board.
13. The establishment of the Centre will be presented at Children and Young People's Committee in conjunction with Children's Social Care's wider recruitment and retention strategy on 15 July 2015.
14. It is proposed that the Centre be hosted in the County Council's Workforce and Organisational Development Team on behalf of the Teaching Partnership.
15. Hosting the Centre in this service would align it to Nottinghamshire County Council's wider Workforce Planning activity and would ensure a clear focus across both adults' and children's social work.
16. The Centre would also build upon the current Workforce and Organisational Development Team by helping to enhance the support and development of placements for students from Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham.

17. The Council will continue to develop relationships with other Universities such as Sheffield Hallam, the University of Lincoln and others so that students are placed successfully across the County.

## **Staffing**

18. The Council has an integrated approach to workforce planning in order to ensure a consistent approach which supports the wider organisational transformation agenda. This is coordinated through the corporate Workforce and Organisational Development team within the corporate HR service.

19. This proposal would enhance the work on Social Work traineeships currently delivered through the corporate team which has an emphasis on placements and curriculum and the support and development of placements by bringing a wider focus on admissions, academic delivery, progression and academic experience of practice which will also improve the student experience.

20. This strengthened model of support for student placements will support the wider workforce planning agenda by encouraging students to seek employment with regional partners, including Nottinghamshire County Council, helping to address the recruitment and retention difficulties currently prevalent across social care and reduce reliance of agency staff.

21. It is therefore proposed that the Centre will be hosted within the Workforce and Organisational Development team and that the Senior HR Business Partner will manage the Centre Manager who will provide strategic leadership and be accountable to the Partnership Board.

22. The Centre Manager will lead a team of four Partnership Practice Educator Leads whose role will be to:

- increase the availability of qualified Practice Educators<sup>1</sup> to support students in social work placements which will in turn increase the number of placements available
- change the organisational culture to one that holds learning and development at its core by working with managers and Practice Educators to support students more effectively as well as improve continuing professional development opportunities for staff
- provide direct student supervision to a manageable cohort of students to help develop and test innovative learning materials and approaches.

23. There will be a mix of specialisms within the team of Partnership Practice Educator Leads (including the Centre Manager) although each post will be expected to work across the partnership. Specialisms include:

- Children and Families

---

<sup>1</sup> Practice Educators are professional social workers who support and guide students whilst on placement.

- Adults
- Mental Health

24. The Centre will also employ a fulltime administrative support officer to ensure the day to day running of the Centre and a part time data and performance analyst who will collate and analyse information to evidence the impact of the Centre and help target future activity.

25. The grades of staff are to be determined. The full list of staff shown in **Appendix A** includes:

- x1 FTE Centre Manager
- x4 FTE Partnership Practice Educator (PPEP) Leads
- x1 FTE Administrative Support Officer
- x0.5 FTE Data and Performance Analyst

26. All staff will be employed by Nottinghamshire County Council but will be based across partner organisations to ensure they benefit all partners. In practical terms, the County Council would physically host x2.5 posts with the remaining 4 PPEP posts allocated flexibly across partner organisations.

## **Costs and Timeframe**

27. If the bid is successful, funding from the DfE will cover set-up and running costs up until March 2016. This period would be considered as an initial evaluation phase to determine the effectiveness of the Centre. Importantly, DfE funding must be spent by the end of March 2016 which imposes a very tight timeline to establish the Centre, appoint to posts and allow time for the Centre to make an impact.

28. Due to these tight timescales, the process to evaluate and grade posts is subject to the completion of job descriptions and person specifications. This work is currently being completed by colleagues from the Teaching Partnership.

29. The Teaching Partnership aims to have staff in post by September, subject to notice periods, to allow for six months of operation before funding from the DfE ends in March 2016.

30. The DfE is encouraging the Teaching Partnership to view the DfE's financial contribution as 'start-up' funding and would expect that Teaching Partnerships be 'self-sufficient' beyond March 2016.

31. Beyond March 2016 the Teaching Partnership Board will consider whether it is cost effective to continue supporting the Centre in the longer term through partner contributions.

32. Posts would therefore be established on a temporary basis until March 2016 and then be subject to review. An update report to Committee would be provided in March 2016 to demonstrate progress and make recommendations for the future.

33. The DfE's decision to only consider funding the Centre until the end of March 2016 highlights the important role of the Data and Performance Analyst. This is because the Centre's impact needs to be captured and interpreted to allow the Teaching Partnership to make the best decision about the Centre's future beyond March 2016.

### **Other Options Considered**

34. As the proposal relies on DfE funding no other options were considered.

### **Reason for Recommendations**

35. The reason for the recommendations in this report is to use available DfE funding to enhance the capacity of the County Council and its key regional partners to support Social Work traineeships. This will have longer term benefits for the recruitment and retention of newly qualified workers through the establishment of a Centre for Knowledge and Practice Development under the governance of the regional Teaching Partnership.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

36. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **Financial Implications**

37. The direct cost of establishing the Centre for Knowledge and Practice Development up until the end of March 2016, including salaries for the new posts, would be no more than £405k (costs have been estimated up until this point because all DfE funding must be spent by the end of March 2016). This is made up as follows:

- £293k of the cost would be financed by funding from the DfE
- £112k of the cost would be in-kind contributions from Teaching Partnership members. These contributions are in addition to the DfE funding and represent the costs that partners would incur up to March 2016 by maintaining the Teaching Partnership and hosting the Centre. This includes senior officer time, coaching time offered by senior university academics and office costs to host the Centre.

38. The only additional cost falling to Nottinghamshire County Council's would be the in-kind contributions up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 necessary to cover the release of senior staff time and also overheads costs for accommodating the 2.5 posts directly situated with the Workforce and Organisational Development team. This is estimated at no more than £20k.

39. Beyond March 2016, the Teaching Partnership Board will decide whether to support the Centre for Knowledge and Practice Development in the longer term through partner contributions.

## **Human Resources Implications**

These are set out in the body of the report and will be subject to the Council's agreed policies and procedures. The trades unions have been consulted and are supportive of extending high quality training provided to social work students and practitioners with appropriate levels of support available.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

- 1) Subject to the approval of DfE funding; Personnel Committee approve the temporary increase in the Workforce and Organisational Development staffing establishment to host a new Centre for Knowledge and Practice Development on behalf of the regional Teaching Partnership, up until March 2016. The additional posts include:
  - a. x1 FTE Centre Manager
  - b. x4 FTE Partnership Practice Educator Leads
  - c. x1 FTE Administrative Support Officer
  - d. x0.5 FTE Data and Performance Analyst
- 2) Personnel Committee agree to receive an evaluation report on 17 March 2016 to review progress and consider the Teaching Partnership's recommendations regarding the future of the Centre for Knowledge and Practice Development beyond March 2016.

**Steve Edwards**  
**Service Director for Children's Social Care**

**Marjorie Toward**  
**Service Director for HR and Customer Services**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**  
Guy Edgar,  
Executive Officer, Children, Families and Cultural Services  
T: 01159 774035  
E: [guy.edgar@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:guy.edgar@nottsc.gov.uk)

## **Constitutional Comments (KK 09/06/15)**

10. The proposal in this report is within the remit of Personnel Committee.

## **Financial Comments (SES 09/06/14)**

11. The financial implications are set out in the report.

**Background Papers Available for Inspection**

Trades union side comments

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All

## Appendix A

### Structure for the Centre for Knowledge and Practice Development

