

10 November 2014**Agenda Item: 12****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTORS, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND
EDUCATION, STANDARDS AND INCLUSION****ESTABLISHMENT OF POSTS IN CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND CULTURAL
SERVICES****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek Committee approval to establish the following posts:
 - a) Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)/ Early Help Unit (EHU) Operational Manager (1 full-time equivalent (fte) Band E) and MASH Education Adviser (1 fte, Soulbury points 21 to 24), both of which are currently temporary to the end of March 2015
 - b) Looked After Children (LAC) Achievement Officer (1 fte, Band A) and LAC Education Technical Specialist Senior Practitioner (1 fte, indicative Band A) within the Virtual School for Looked After Children
 - c) Occupational Therapy (OT) Service Organiser (1 fte, Grade 4), to address current service pressures and anticipated risks to service delivery.

Information and Advice**Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) posts**

2. The MASH is the County's first point of contact for new safeguarding concerns and provides an environment for the sharing of information between a number of agencies, helping to protect the most vulnerable children and adults from harm, neglect and abuse.
3. The post of MASH Operational Manager was created and appointed to in September 2012, on a temporary basis. The MASH Operational Manager has overall responsibility for: the safe delivery of MASH services; business continuity; the facilitation of positive partner working relationships; performance reporting and management; the MASH working environment including health and safety; working with ICT colleagues on the development and delivery of MASH ICT solutions; and management of the Education Adviser and the MASH Officers. The post-holder also has responsibility for the relevant parts of the MASH budget.
4. In March 2014, agreement was given to the internal recruitment of a temporary (12 months) MASH Operational Manager. In preparation for the co-location of the Early Help

Unit (EHU) with the MASH, some operational responsibilities for the EHU were added to the job description.

5. When the MASH became operational in December 2012 there was an acknowledgement that input from schools to the information-sharing process was essential, and that head teachers and designated teachers would respond more positively to these requests if they were made by a peer. Between April 2013 and April 2014 there was head teacher presence in the MASH, initially for 2 days per week, then for all 5 days. In December 2013 a 12 month Education Adviser post secondment or temporary (12 month) opportunity was advertised. The current post holder started in April 2014.
6. The MASH Education Adviser post has developed since this appointment. As well as contributing to the information-sharing process in the MASH, the Education Adviser has contributed to: Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) multi-agency safeguarding training; designated teacher training; the Encompass programme development, including delivering briefings to all head teachers and senior leaders; delivering presentations to MASH Head Teacher open days, and generally acting as an ambassador for the MASH. Her head teacher experience has been invaluable.
7. The permanent establishment of both posts will provide the necessary resilience to enable the MASH to continue to improve on service provision in the future.

Virtual School for Looked After Children posts

8. Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote the education of children and young people who are 'Looked After'. In Nottinghamshire, the Virtual School for Looked After Children (LAC) aims to improve the educational outcomes of all children and young people in its care as well as those looked after by a different authority but attending Nottinghamshire schools and educational settings. In partnership with headteachers, governing bodies and other educational providers, the Virtual School ensures that the educational outcomes of LAC is a key priority for all schools and settings providing statutory education to Looked After Children.
9. A short analysis of the Virtual Schools in neighbouring authorities suggests that Nottinghamshire's Virtual School is small. This in itself is not necessarily an issue as the Virtual School is underpinned by partnership with Nottinghamshire schools. It is headteachers and governing bodies who are directly responsible to ensure high quality provision for every LAC in their school and are responsible for their outcomes. Ofsted hold all schools to account during inspection in relation to vulnerable pupils, including LAC.
10. The Virtual School provided by advisers is valued by schools and other key stakeholders such as education psychologists and social workers. No LAC has been permanently excluded in recent years and fixed term exclusions continue to be rare. LAC Achievement Officers play a key role in mediating additional and different provision at times of crisis in a school or other appropriate setting. If, however, the Virtual School is able to add value to the outcomes at key stage 4, increased capacity is required to develop long term and sustainable strategies across Nottinghamshire schools in particular. Therefore, a fourth LAC Achievement Officer is required to increase the team's capacity to support Nottinghamshire LAC.

11. The effectiveness of the Virtual School is underpinned by rigorous and accurate tracking and data analysis. The Virtual School's data processes continue to require improvement and the Virtual School does not have the capacity to analyse this pupil level data. The creation of a LAC Education Technical Specialist Senior Practitioner will ensure a daily and continued focus on tracking pupil attainment and progress. The systems to collect and analyse this data continue to be a challenge and the creation of this post would ensure that reliable and robust data could inform the targeted deployment of LAC officers to intervene earlier when LAC's attainment and/or progress stall.

Occupational Therapy Service Organiser post

12. Since its establishment in April 2008 the Children's Countywide Occupational Therapy (OT) Service has experienced ongoing high levels of demand. Between 2009 and 2012 the service received substantial investment which has seen the staffing structure grow from 3 fte Qualified Occupational Therapists and a 0.5 fte OT Team Manager to 11.75 OTs and 2 Team Managers.
13. The OT Service has implemented revised ways of working and has delivered specialist equipment through a clinic environment which has produced a 25% reduction of expenditure on the OT Integrated Community Equipment Loan Service (ICELS) budget and has been recognised nationally as good practice.
14. Despite this, the OT service continues to receive an increase in referral requests for OT assessment and intervention. The service attempts to deliver these assessments and interventions in a timely way and has set its own performance targets. 3 OT Assistant (OTA) posts have been created to support the streamlined processes that have been implemented in the service
15. The OT Service has seen a 46% increase in Initial Assessments and 168% increase in Fast Track Assessments, both of which are managed by the OTAs. Many of these requests come to a central OT duty desk, which is primarily staffed by OTAs on a rotational basis. Because of this increase in demand and the need for the OTAs to staff the duty desk, the OT service is no longer able to achieve its assessment timeframe targets. This means that disabled children could be left waiting for longer periods for assessment by OT/OTAs and provision of equipment.
16. The establishment of a full-time OT Service Organiser post would enable one person to manage the incoming referrals and requests for advice, guidance and information. This proposal would result in a worker dedicated to delivering an OT service at duty point and would release a significant proportion of both OTAs' and Qualified OTs' clinical time back into frontline fieldwork to address the service's statutory core duty of assessment and intervention.

Other Options Considered

17. With regard to the MASH/EHU Operational Manager and MASH Education Adviser posts, consideration has been given to extending the current temporary contracts, which are due to end in March/April 2015. However, it is anticipated that both posts will be essential to

the successful operation of the MASH in the future so need to be permanently established.

18. Consideration has also been given to not recruiting to either of these roles once the current temporary contracts come to an end. It is assessed that this would pose a significant risk to the function of the MASH and would impact negatively on the reputation of the County Council.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

19. The MASH has been operational for almost 2 years. During this time processes have been refined and become more efficient and effective. There are plans to locate the EHU in the same worksite as the MASH. These posts are integral to the continued development of the MASH and the EHU. Both posts entail significant leadership responsibilities and contribute to positive outcomes for Nottinghamshire children and families.
20. The attainment of LAC, particularly at key stage 4, continues to require improvement and therefore there is a significant need to increase the capacity of the Virtual School to support and challenge schools and other providers.
21. It is recommended that the OT Service Organiser post be established for a minimum period of 2 years to help maintain a safe service and enable the service to address its statutory duties.

Statutory and Policy Implications

22. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working 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

23. The cost of establishing the two MASH posts is £129,032 per annum which can be met from within the existing permanent budget for the MASH.
24. The establishment of a LAC Achievement Officer will be funded fully by the Virtual School's budget. The Senior Professional Practitioner post will be funded by Children's Social Care. Both posts are permanent and have been incorporated into the medium and long term financial planning of the respective budgets.
25. The funding of the proposed OT Service organiser post is to be met from within the existing OT and Personalisation budget and would require an annual financial commitment of £24,480.

Human Resources Implications

26. The MASH/EHU Operational Manager post went through job evaluation prior to the current post-holder being employed. It is a Band E post. The current Education Adviser post-holder is appointed on a Soulbury Grade; it is recommended that the appropriate band for this post is Soulbury 21-24. As both posts were advertised and appointed to on a temporary basis, recruitment to permanent posts will take place, subject to the Vacancy Control Process.

Implications for Service Users

27. The MASH has made a positive contribution to safeguarding services for children and adults. It is the first point of contact for Children's Social Care and through its information-sharing process ensures that the most vulnerable children are identified quickly and that they receive appropriate services.

Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults Implications

28. Information sharing between agencies in the MASH results in early identification of child protection cases; ensures that all relevant available information is shared as soon as possible, and that the receiving social work team begins the investigation with a complete multi-agency package of information.
29. The proposed OT Service Organiser post aims to ensure that the current established Qualified OT and OT Assistant resource is used to progress OT assessment and intervention for vulnerable children and families in a timelier manner than is currently being managed.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) the establishment of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)/ Early Help Unit (EHU) Operational Manager (1 fte, Band E) post be approved
- 2) the establishment of a MASH Education Adviser (1 fte, Soulbury points 21 to 24) post be approved
- 3) the establishment of a Looked After Children (LAC) Achievement Officer (1 fte, Band A) post within the Virtual School for Looked After Children be approved
- 4) the establishment of a LAC Education Technical Specialist Senior Practitioner (1 fte, indicative Band A) post within the Virtual School for Looked After Children be approved
- 5) the establishment of an Occupational Therapy Service Organiser (1 fte, Grade 4) post in Children's Social Care be approved.

Steve Edwards
Service Director
Children's Social Care

John Slater
Service Director
Education Standards and Inclusion

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

MASH posts:

Carol Pattinson
Group Manager, Children's Social Care
T: 01623 433433
E: carol.pattinson@nottsc.gov.uk

Virtual School posts:

Marion Clay
Group Manager, Support to Schools Service
T: 0115 9773736
E: marion.clay@nottsc.gov.uk

Rachel Coombs
Group Manager, Children's Social Care
T: 0115 97 74153
E: rachel.coombs@nottsc.gov.uk

Occupational Therapy post:

Katie Marsden
OT Lead – Children's Disability Services
T: 01623 433237
E: katie.marsden@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (SLB 23/10/14)

30. The Committee has the responsibility for approval of departmental staffing structures. The proposals in this report fall within the remit of this Committee.
31. The Employment Procedure Rules provide that the report to Committee include the required advice and HR comments and that the recognised trade unions be consulted on all proposed changes to staffing structures (and any views given should be fully considered prior to a decision being made).

Financial Comments (KLA 23/10/14)

32. The financial implications of the report are set out in paragraphs 23 to 25 above.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C0507