

18th November 2019

Agenda Item: 8

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTORS FOR EDUCATION, LEARNING &
SKILLS AND YOUTH, FAMILIES & SOCIAL WORK**

**ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST
POST TO SUPPORT THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF STRENGTHS
BASED PRACTICE**

Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks approval to establish a 1 fte Educational Psychologist post within the Educational Psychology Service to further develop and embed the new strengths-based framework for practice across the Children and Families department.

Information

2. On 18th June 2018, Committee approved funding to support improvements in the quality of social work through the development of a strengths-based practice framework to create a sustainable delivery model for services for vulnerable children and families. Committee was provided with a further update in December 2018 and in March 2019 the Committee approved the formal launch of the new practice framework.
3. Whilst the development of the strengths-based practice framework has been strategically led by the Service Director for Youth, Families and Social Work, supported by the Group Manager for Service Improvement, the Principal Social Worker, the Programmes and Projects team, and a team of social work practice consultants, the Educational Psychology Service, placed within the Education, Learning and Skills service area, has provided considerable professional advice and support which has been funded from the dedicated funds approved by Children and Young People's Committee in June 2018.
4. The input of the Educational Psychology Service to the development of the framework has been positive. However, the capacity of the current Educational Psychology Service did not factor in this significant piece of work when the structure and capacity within the Education, Learning and Skills service area was reviewed and approved by Committee in June 2019. As a result, the Psychology Service has experienced challenges to fulfil its core duties in relation to Educational Psychology advice to schools, children and families. In addition, the ongoing increased requests for Education, Health and Care assessments has also resulted

in unacceptable demands on this service which must provide an individual review as part of every assessment.

5. Members are also advised that currently there is a national shortage of Educational Psychologists. Whilst Damian Hinds, the then Secretary of State for Education in December 2018, announced additional funding for the training places for Educational Psychologist Services across the country, it remains the case that many local authorities are experiencing significant challenges in the recruitment and retention of Educational Psychologists.
6. Nottinghamshire has retained a full team of Educational Psychologists as a result of ensuring that they have access to quality continued professional development including the opportunity to work with professionals such as social workers to develop person centred and strengths-based ways of working. The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) has been successful to date in being able to recruit to fill vacant posts, and to retain Psychologists, something which neighbouring authority services have struggled to do. The use of a strengths-based practice framework which is already embedded within the EPS is one reason for the service being an attractive place to work.
7. This report therefore requests the permanent increase of 1 fte Educational Psychologist within the establishment of the Psychology Service team to ensure that the work that has commenced in rolling out strengths-based practice can be embedded further. The scale of the post is Soulbury A2-7 (plus up to 3 SPAs).

Other Options Considered

8. The department could consider buying back external Psychology advice. However, this is more costly and external psychologists would require greater induction to understand fully the context within Nottinghamshire.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

9. At this time, the recruitment of Educational Psychologists remains challenging.

Statutory and Policy Implications

10. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment 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

11. The funding for this post is available within the Service Improvement budget. Whilst this funding is time limited, the proposal to appoint permanently is also to strengthen succession planning within this vital service area.

12. The cost of 1.0 fte Educational Psychologist post at Soulbury A2-7 (plus up to 3 SPAs) is £65,527. The equipment required for this post will be approximately £1,212 to cover laptop, headset, phone and associated monthly charges. The cost of establishing the post is £12,013 in 2019-20 and £65,671 in 2020-21. This will be met from the Service Improvement budget within Youth, Families and Social Work for 2019-20 and 2020-21. Following that the costs will transfer to the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Human Resources Implications

13. The increased capacity will provide the necessary professional advice and support to further embed strengths-based practice. Any subsequent appointment will be made in line with the Council's current recruitment procedures.

Implications for Service Users

14. The implementation of strength based practice will improve the quality of service to vulnerable children and young people in need of safeguarding.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That Committee approve the establishment of 1 fte Educational Psychologist post within the Educational Psychology Service to further develop and embed the new strengths-based framework for practice across the Children and Families department.

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Constitutional Comments (KK 06/10/19)

15. The proposal in this report is within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee.

Financial Comments (SAS 07/11/19)

16. The cost of 1.0 fte Educational Psychologist post at Soulbury A2-7 (plus up to 3 SPAs) is £65,527. The equipment required for this post will be approximately £1,212 to cover laptop, headset, phone and associated monthly charges. The cost of establishing the post is £12,013 in 2019-20 and £65,671 in 2020-21. This will be met from the Service Improvement

budget of £2.8m within Youth, Families and Social Work for 2019-20 and 2020-21. Following that the costs will transfer to the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

HR Comments (BC 18/10/19)

17. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. The post will be recruited to in line with the Council's vacancy control and recruitment procedures.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[Supporting Improvement in Children's Social Care – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 18th June 2018](#)

[Update on supporting improvements in Children's Social Care – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 17th December 2018](#)

[Youth, Families and Social Work Framework for Practice – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 18th March 2019](#)

[Support to Schools Service structure – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 17th June 2019](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1314