

26<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Agenda Item: 17

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL WORK**

### **SUPERVISION OF DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. This report seeks approval to establish a fixed-term 1 fte (full-time equivalent) Advanced Practitioner (Band C) post, for the academic year commencing in September 2021, to provide group supervision to Designated Safeguarding Leads in Secondary Schools, as part of a pilot, funded by What Works for Children's Social Care.

#### **Information**

2. Nottinghamshire County Council's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) receives an average of 2,675 referrals regarding children per month. Schools are the third largest referrer and 43% of their referrals require no further action. Referrals which require no further action impact on the time and focus which social workers can give to responding to safeguarding concerns, and the speed these concerns can be responded to.
3. Joint audit work has been undertaken with partner agencies with a view to understand the causes of referrals which require no further action. The audit found that most relate to complex issues such as self-harm and challenging behaviour, where it can be difficult for non-social care professionals to determine if the threshold for safeguarding is met.
4. Within schools, Designated Safeguarding Leads are the members of staff who have the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including responsibility for referring cases that meet threshold levels of concern to Children's Social Care. Designated Safeguarding Leads tell us it can be difficult to make threshold decisions when faced with complex issues such as self-harm and challenging behaviour. They can also feel anxious about holding risk in these scenarios, which can result in them referring when this is not always required.
5. An opportunity has arisen through What Works for Children's Social Care to participate in a programme providing monthly group supervision to Designated Safeguarding Leads in secondary schools within the Local Authority.

6. The programme aims to introduce a group supervision model of intervention, already widely used in social care, with Designated Safeguarding Leads, who often receive no formal supervision in relation to their role as Designated Safeguarding Leads. The aim of the intervention is to improve knowledge and understanding of Children's Social Care processes and issues, resulting in reductions in inappropriate contacts to Children's Social Care, and a reduction of Designated Safeguarding Lead stress and anxiety.
7. Successful applicants to the programme receive funding to establish a fixed-term Advanced Practitioner post for one academic year, starting in September 2021. The Advanced Practitioner would work with half of the Local Authority's secondary schools, with the remaining half acting as a comparison group for evaluation purposes.
8. An application was made by Nottinghamshire County Council to be one of 10 local authorities who will be part of the programme for secondary schools. In May, notification was received that this application was successful.
9. The programme is due to begin in September 2021. Prior to the start of the programme, preparatory activities will be undertaken. This includes the identification of secondary schools involved in the programme and communication to Designated Safeguarding Leads about the programme. Recruitment of the Advanced Practitioner is also required, in readiness for attending training sessions in August, ahead of the September implementation date.

### **Other Options Considered**

10. There is an option to 'do nothing', however, as this is a funded opportunity which seeks to provide support to Designated Safeguarding Leads in an area where support is required, this would be detrimental.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

11. It is recommended that a fixed-term 1 fte Advanced Practitioner (Band C) is established to provide group supervision to Designated Safeguarding Leads in Secondary Schools, in order to implement the programme to introduce group supervision to Designated Safeguarding Leads, funded by What Works for Children's Social Care.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

12. 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**

13. The cost of a Band C Advanced Practitioner for the period 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022 is £50,000. This will be contained within the £50,000 funding from What Works for Children Social Care.

### **Human Resources Implications**

14. A formal recruitment process will be undertaken to recruit to the role.

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) To approve the establishment of a fixed-term 1 fte Advanced Practitioner (Band C) post, for the academic year commencing in September 2021, to provide group supervision to Designated Safeguarding Leads in Secondary Schools, as part of a pilot, funded by What Works for Children's Social Care.

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### **Constitutional Comments (LW 01/07/21)**

15. Children & Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of the report.

### **Financial Comments (LCD 02/07/21)**

16. The cost of a Band C Advanced Practitioner for the period 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022 is £50,000. This will be contained within the £50,000 funding from What Works for Children Social Care.

### **HR Comments (BC 14/07/21)**

17. The staffing implications are contained in 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.

None.

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

All.

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