

Cabinet

28 August 2018

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Councillor P Seaman

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (People)

Ward(s) affected:

None

Title: West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet of the formation of the West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership (WMSWTP) and to seek approval for receipt of grant funding of £1.8million over 2 years to support this venture.

The partnership is a collaboration between fifteen local authorities, nine universities, and two NHS trusts. It is proposed that Coventry City Council will be the lead authority for the West Midlands.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

- 1) Approve receipt of West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership DfE grant funding of £1,790,610 for the period from April 2018 to March 2020.

List of Appendices included:

None

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 The Government's Social Work Teaching Partnerships programme brings universities and local authorities together to deliver high quality training for social workers.
- 1.2 These partnerships aim to improve the recruitment, retention and development of social workers and the overall quality of practice.
- 1.3 This is a two year grant funded project that is supported by the West Midlands Association of Directors of Children's Services and the Association of Directors of Adults Services.
- 1.4 This regional partnership will provide the opportunity for Local Authorities and Universities to work more closely together to develop and take forward the learning and professional development for Social Workers in Children's and Adults Services across the region.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 The Regional West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership comprises:

- Birmingham City Council and Birmingham Children's Trust
- Birmingham City University
- Cheshire East Council
- City of Stoke on Trent Council
- City of Wolverhampton Council
- Coventry City Council (Lead Authority)
- Coventry University
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Heart of Worcester College
- Herefordshire Council
- Keele University
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and Sandwell Children's Trust
- Shropshire County Council
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
- South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership NHS Trust
- Staffordshire County Council
- Staffordshire University
- Telford and Wrekin Council
- University of Birmingham
- University of Warwick
- University of Wolverhampton
- University of Worcester
- Walsall Council
- Warwickshire County Council
- Worcestershire County Council

2.2 The recommendation and proposal for Cabinet approval is that Coventry City Council becomes the lead the Local Authority and accountable body for the West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership. Regional Social Work Employers and Universities have requested Coventry City Council to act as the lead due to the continued commitment to develop and create the organisational conditions for Social Work to flourish, and the strength and commitment to regional partnership working with Employers and Universities demonstrated by the Adult's and Children's Services.

- 2.3 Following the publication of the Government's reviews of social work Education in 2015, Government developed a programme to improve the quality of education received by social work students, and post qualifying social work practitioners including through provision of statutory placements for more students and increased employer involvement in student selection. It also developed a programme of Social Work Teaching Partnerships (SWTPs).
- 2.4 In May 2018 Coventry City Council submitted an expression of interest on behalf of the West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership to the Department for Education and Department for Health and Social Care. This bid was confirmed as successful in June 2018.
- 2.5 The Department for Education introduced Teaching Partnerships to help improve the overall quality of practice, learning and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) amongst trainee and practicing social workers.
- 2.6. Funded by the government, Teaching Partnerships have been created to develop and support high standards of work and education by building stronger links between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and employers (Local Authorities). The Partnerships involve a highly collaborative relationship, with the curriculum being jointly developed, delivered and owned.
- 2.7. Students within the partnerships benefit from a curriculum that is relevant to and informed by social work practice – equipping them to be good social workers going forward. They also benefit from practical statutory placements. Qualified social workers get access to many more CPD opportunities and have the opportunity to share best practice via the Partnership structure.

SWTP's aim to:

- to enhance partnership arrangements between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and employers;
 - attract more able students; embed the knowledge and skills into academic teaching and learning and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for existing workers;
 - and overall raise the quality of social work practice.
- 2.8 The government document Children's Social Care – A Vision for Change (2016) noted that: too often in the past reform of social work education and training has been solely focused on the initial and generic qualification of social workers. This is not sufficient to bring the social work profession to its full potential. There is need for an end-to-end practice-focused national career pathway which develops talent from practitioner to Practice Leader.
 - 2.9. West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership will take the strategic responsibility for promoting closer working between all stakeholders and driving forward the improvement in the education, training and development for Children's and Adults Social Workers.
 - 2.7 Adult social work has an essential role to play in helping people keep themselves safe from harm and getting them the right care and support to achieve the best possible outcomes. To make that happen, Government recognises that everyone working in Adult Social Work should have the knowledge and skills to do their jobs well. The West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership includes Adults Services.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 There is no requirement for a formal Consultation. This paper focusses on the proposals for Coventry City Council to act as the Lead Local Authority for the West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 If approved Recommendation 1 will be progressed immediately with a timetable for implementation commencing in August 2018.

5. Comments from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources

5.1 Financial implications

The total grant award is £1,790,610 of DfE funding over two years, with the Council proposing to be the lead authority and accountable body for the project. There is no requirement for match funding.

As Accountable Body, Council officers will ensure effective governance arrangements are in place to facilitate appropriate control over the allocation of resources and spend against the approved programme outlined above.

The payment profile for the project is quarterly in arrears, and payment is triggered by the submission of a claim form. Funding cannot be carried across financial years and must be fully spent by March 2020.

On completion of the project in March 2020 it is envisaged that there will be closer working between all of the partners, and the project will be sustained as business as usual with more local and regional working that is strengthened and shared between Social Work Employers and HEI's.

The risk to the council is minimal due to the grant funding being used to support the development of Social Work Education and Training across the partnership. Posts that will be created to deliver the project milestones will be on a fixed term basis and will not progress beyond the end date for the project in March 2020.

The grant is paid under Section 14 subsection 2 of the Education Act 2002 and Section 67, sub-section 4b of the Care Standards Act 2000.

5.2 Legal Implications

The appointment of the Council as Accountable Body as outlined in this report will be achieved through a contractual relationship and signature of a funding contract. The recommendations sought are consistent with this approach and extensive by necessity given the wide ranging nature of the subject matter of the report.

Legal colleagues are available to advise on and support the completion and signature of the funding contract and ensure that risk to the Council is fully understood and mitigated through appropriate governance. Further, they will offer support in the delivery of the project as and when required by the anticipated project team.

The appointment to Accountable Body status will enable the Council to be directly and indirectly involved in the delivery of the objectives stated within this report. Due to the multi-party collaboration elements of the projects, the Council will need to enter into a partnership agreement with the project partners thus ensuring that appropriate governance is in place between the project partners and that the partners are spending the elements of the grant funding for approved eligible expenditures.

Any procurement exercise if required will be conducted so as to comply with the Council's policy and legal obligations, specifically in compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, and supported by relevant officers.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan

- **Globally Connected-** Leading the West Midlands Social Working Teaching Partnership will enhance the reputation of Coventry City Council at both a regional and national level. It will continue to promote Coventry as a destination of choice for Social Workers to be employed and practice in Children's and Adults Services.
- **Locally Committed-** Through stronger local working with our HEI's local people will have the opportunity to undertake Social Work programmes to enable them to qualify as Children's and Adults Social Workers. Through the recruitment of a well-trained and developed Social Work Workforce Children, Young People and their Families and Carers will benefit from improved services, help and support.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

6.2.1 Delivery of the West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership will be overseen and reviewed regularly by the Executive Board chaired by the Director of Children's Services.

6.2.2 With regards to the delivery of the West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership a Risk Register has been produced and will be maintained, this will be regularly reviewed and managed by the Project Manager throughout the process and life of the project. Further scrutiny and oversight will be provided by the Strategic Board.

6.2.3 The most significant risks for the project along with the control measures have been identified as:

- (i) To effectively manage Information Risks. The control measures include Locked units. ICT controlled access. Back up servers. Induction training on information sharing and data protection for all Teaching Partnership associated staff in line with the GDPRs new legislation.
- (ii) Communicate the aims and objectives of the Partnership in a coherent and transparent manner. Control measure include having a clear and coherent communications strategy that supports and promotes the efficient delivery of information.
- (iii) Board and Programme Manager are not appointed. Control measures in place that the post is advertised and recruited to by September 2018.
- (iv) Improving the SW education and SW recruitment doesn't happen fast enough. The control measures for this include stronger regional working and ownership from the Universities and Social Work Employers.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

6.3.1 The West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership is a partnership that has been developed with all of the HEI and Social Work Employers stakeholders in the West Midlands.

6.3.2 Financial Grant Funding has been approved by the DFE following an Expression of Interest that had clear project milestones and defined outputs that met the required stretch criteria to become a Social Work Teaching Partnership.

6.3.3 The report recommendations will support and deliver an improvement in the training, development and education of Social Workers at pre and post qualifying level. This will also contribute to the recruitment and retention of Children, Families and Adult Social Workers in Coventry and across the West Midlands.

6.3.4 There are no HR implications for the organisation as these proposals will not directly affect City Council employees.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

6.4.1 The West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership is expected to contribute to raising standards and improving the quality of social work. It is expected to have a positive impact on all protected groups who are undertaking pre and post qualifying Social Work Education.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

There are no implications on the environment for this project.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

6.6.1 The West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership 2018 to 2020 is a partnership that has been developed with a range of stakeholders and partnerships. Approval and Implementation of the partnership has given confidence and demonstrated that Coventry City Council is committed to developing and improving the Quality and Consistency of Social Work Practice. The project has also provided confidence to HEI's that there is a shared ownership and commitment to work together to improve Social Work Education in Coventry and across the West Midlands.

Report author(s):

Lee Pardy-McLaughlin
Principal Child and Family Social Worker

Directorate:

People

Tel and email contact:

Email: Lee Pardy-McLaughlin
Tel: 024 76832929

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Michelle Salmon	Governance Services Officer	Place	07/08/18	07/08/18
Names of approvers for submission: (Officers and Members)				
Nicola David	Lead Accountant	People	02/08/18	04/08/18
John Gregg	Director Children's Services	People	29/07/18	02/08/18
Andrew Errington	Head of Safeguarding and Principal Social Worker Adult Services	People	07/08/18	08/08/18
Julie Newman	Head of Legal Services	Place	08/08/18	08/08/18
Councillor P Seaman	Cabinet Member for Childrens Services	People	07/08/18	08/08/18

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