



Executive Director/Director Non-Key Executive Decision Report

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Report to:

Date of Decision:

08/02/21

Subject:

South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership Covid 19 funding

Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? Children and Families
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? Children, Young People and Family Support

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken? Yes No

If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? *(Insert reference number)*

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-

"The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."

Purpose of Report:

The DfE invited all Social Work Teaching Partnerships to submit an application for additional funding to support services that have been disadvantaged as a result of the pandemic.

Sheffield City Council, as lead authority of the South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership, submitted an application in August 2020 for £139,329. The DfE have confirmed that they have agreed this application and will provide this funding as a grant award under section 46 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 during the 2020/21 financial year. The grant terms and conditions were sent on 25th January.

Recommendations:**It is recommended that the Director of Children and Families:**

a) Approves Sheffield City Council accepting Grant Funding in the sum of £139,329 from the DfE for the South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership and for Sheffield City Council to be the Accountable Body in respect of the grant on behalf of the South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership and for the funding to be utilised as detailed in this report.

b) Approves the Council entering into a funding agreement with the DfE.

Background Papers:

(Insert details of any background papers used in the compilation of the report.)

Lead Officer to complete:-	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: <i>Sonya Oates</i>
	Legal: <i>Gemma Day</i>
	Equalities: <i>Bashir Khan</i>
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>
2	Lead Officer Name: Dorothy Smith
	Job Title: Programme Manager, SYTP
	Date: 04/02/2021

1. PROPOSAL

1.1

South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership

Sheffield City Council is the lead authority for the South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership. The Partnership was founded in 2015 as an early adopter and funding was provided by the DfE/DoH from 2015 until March 2018. Since that time the Partnership has continued to operate and is funded by an annual subscription paid by each partner local authority which only covers the salary of the part time Project Manager. Any supplementary income is gained through income generation via a continuing professional development programme offered by partner Universities and external providers.

Our partners

Sheffield City Council (lead authority), Barnsley Metropolitan Council, Rotherham Metropolitan Council, Doncaster Children's Services Trust, Doncaster Metropolitan Council, Lincolnshire County Council (childrens) The University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University.

1.2 **Student placements and impact on future pipeline of students**

The attached reports outline the impact on the Partnership in relation to curtailment of student placements and contingency plans that had to be put in place.

Social Work Apprenticeship degree programme

Social Work apprenticeship Cohort 1 placements (38 students) were suspended in March and will not restart until 1st September. This has resulted in students being 6 months behind in their learning and has impacted on their 3-year degree programme being extended into 2023 thus affecting future apprenticeship programmes. Services backfilled some apprentice placements with temporary staff resulting in the cover arrangements having to be extended for a further 6 months, increasing agency costs.

Cohort 2 social work apprentices had just started their 3-week training programme in March when this teaching stopped. They will return to learning and the apprenticeship programme in September however the university teaching has to be repeated as refresher training. Placements for Cohort 2 will now not take place in March 2021 but in September 2021 thereby creating a bottleneck of placement requirements for all

degree programmes for both universities and impacting on the future calendar of placements for the next two years.

1.3 **The University of Sheffield MA programme**

The University of Sheffield MA students' final placements started in February 2020 and students had completed 30 days on placement before being curtailed in March which led to the Partnership having to make contingency plans as outlined in the attached documents. Students finished their degree in March as opposed to July 2020 and have been disadvantaged due to not having completed the 100 day placement.

The Partnership has written contingency documents including a new blended placement programme and have provided this to all placement 1 students who started in September/October. This affected students from Sheffield Hallam University and Salford University and will affect future students for both Universities in Spring 2021. The blended placement is a combination of virtual learning and worksite based and supplementary activities working with vulnerable children and families and adults services. The majority of worksites in this Partnership have been risk assessed for social distancing with limited space for social workers to work in offices. The majority of staff are working from home and work in offices on a rota. This has severely impacted work on direct service user experience for students. Ability to support all students in worksite offices is not likely to change until Spring 2021.

As a result, local authorities have had to purchase new IT equipment to allow students to work from home on virtual/blended placements.

1.4 **ASYE bolster period**

Our partnership has developed and agreed to offer any students who have been disadvantaged by the impact of Covid-19 where placements have been curtailed or ceased a 3 month extension to their mandatory ASYE programme for fitness to practice. The partnership has agreed that each student who has been offered employment as a social worker will have this additional 3 month learning and development period offered by the local authority which will include an individualised learning plan outlining what gaps need to be filled with additional support being provided by the University and local authority practitioners.

1.5 **Employees**

SYTP has a robust Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

programme offered by both local Universities and all modules and teaching ceased in March. This has resulted in the whole of CPD teaching modules and programmes having to be rewritten in order to be delivered virtually from September and any modules that were halted in March to be completed in Autumn 2020.

1.6 **Income generation**

The Partnership's sustainability plan was based on provision of masterclass places sold both within and external to the Partnership. 2019 proved that the Partnership could meet its costs by income generating in this way. The impact of Covid-19 has meant that 6 masterclasses and 6 learning sessions have been cancelled resulting in the Partnership not having generated any income at all over the last 6 months and potentially for the rest of the financial year.

1.7 **Recruitment**

The Partnership has continued to recruit newly qualified social workers during this period of time and has used virtual platforms to do this. Whilst remote recruitment has allowed us to continue business as usual, there are risks associated with not having been able to use service users at interview. Interviewers have had to learn new skills and IT equipment and licences have had to be purchased to enable us to do this.

1.8 **Summary**

- As an early adopter Partnership we have not been funded since 2018.
- Our sustainability plan has gone awry due to impact of Covid- 19.
- Laptops and mobile phones for all our students on placement have had to be purchased as staff numbers in offices remain restricted.
- Placement 1 students will commence a blended placement in October
- Development of a virtual placement and CPD programmes has had an impact on budgets
- Social Work apprenticeship programmes have severely been affected due to being halted for 6 months thus impacting on staffing costs and future programmes

- All learning and development trainers and lecturers have had to develop new skills in IT and remote teaching.
- 12 student workshops were cancelled over the summer and will be offered to newly qualified social workers in their ASYE bolster period at the same time as dates offered to new students on their placements.
- Our key area of focus will be contingency planning for the next two years in order that we can deliver programmes in many different ways i.e. face to face, virtual or blended so that in any eventuality we can continue business as usual.

The Partnership has incurred additional expenditure, as detailed within the report, due to the impact of Covid-19 on services. A request for funding was made to the DfE to help support our budget in the following areas:

42 Laptops and mobile phones for students to do virtual placements (adults and childrens) from September 2020 (laptops £860 and phones £58)	38556
Additional costs for development of virtual placement (5 people estimated time taken 1 week @ £26 per hour)	4838
Additional costs to deliver workshops in ASYE bolster period (approx. 20 students in SYTP)	2322
Additional HEI teaching in ASYE bolster period (12 days x £50 per hour lecture time)	4440
Loss of income re cessation of SYTP masterclasses and learning sessions (6 masterclasses – 100 people @ £50) (6 learning sessions – 30 people @£50)	30,000 9,000
Additional agency costs had to be extended for 6 month period due to curtailment of 3 apprenticeship placements in Leaving Care services (Sheffield)	50173

Total £139,329

The DfE have confirmed the funding by way of using a Grant award under Section 46 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 during the 2020/21 financial year. Grant claims will be in arrears.

The grant will be awarded in two stages with the first payment on 31/01/2021 and the final payment on 30/04/2021.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

- 2.1 Our students are our social workers of the future and they generally apply for jobs in the local authority where they have undertaken their placement. Therefore, a good quality placement is imperative to maintain our excellent reputation and high standards as employers within the South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership.

DfE funding for the South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership ceased in 2018 as Partnerships were expected to be sustainable and self-sufficient after 4 years of funding. Our income generation plan has been impacted significantly as a result of Covid-19 all face to face learning and development ceased. Significant work has taken place over the last few months to convert learning and development onto an on line platform so that our employees and students can continue with their studies and continuing professional development can be delivered to social workers to maintain their social work registration.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 All national Teaching Partnerships were invited by the DfE to submit applications for funding in order to recover from the impact of Covid-19 and advise them of the additional challenges it has caused. There is no requirement to consult on this proposal.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

- 4.1.1 none

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 The grant offered by the Department of Education (DfE) is for up to £139,239 and covers the period from October 2020 to March 2021. The grant offer letter is dated 25th January 2021.

The grant is paid only in respect of the funded activities as set out in the agreement, which is to provide support to the South Yorkshire Social Work Teaching Partnership's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Any material changes/variations to the agreed activities and milestones must only be made with written permission from the funder.

The grant is subject to DfE general grant funding terms and conditions

and project specific conditions. Key terms and conditions are highlighted below:

General terms:

Continuation of funding is not committed to by the funder, and any additional costs must be borne by the recipient.

Co-funding by third parties is not permitted unless the funder has been notified and has given written permission. Similarly, duplicate funding is not permitted.

Claims will be paid in arrears; incorrect or incomplete claims will be returned unpaid.

Payment may be withheld if grant conditions have not been met or have been breached.

Eligible expenditure must be claimed net of VAT and must not be deliberately incurred in advance of need. A range of costs that are not to be included as eligible expenditure is detailed on page 12 of the general terms and conditions.

Monitoring and progress reporting must be provided in accordance with the grant offer letter. A final activity report must be provided within three months of completing the agreed activities. A yearly report must also be completed within 60 days of the end of the funding period.

The Department may evaluate the project at any time.

An Annual Statement of Grant Usage must be completed and certified by Chief Financial Officer or Auditor.

An Exit Plan should be put in place within the first three months of funding in order to ensure a smooth continuation or closure of the project once funding ends.

Funding may be clawed back, reduced or terminated for a variety of reasons as set out on pages 24-26 of the general grant terms and conditions.

Project Specific terms:

The SY Teaching Partnership commits to:

Working openly with DfE and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) officials throughout the duration of the grant agreement and cooperating fully with any site visits made;

Working openly with independent evaluators and/or Government-appointed contractors and sharing information and data (where available and appropriate) with them and with DfE;

Working collaboratively with other teaching partnerships, where areas of

joint development are identified;

Providing written progress reports as outlined in Annex H, until the conclusion of this funding agreement or until instructed otherwise.

Procurement/Code of Conduct:

All public sector procurement is governed by both European Legislation and UK National Law. In addition, all procurement in Sheffield City Council must comply with its own Procurement Policy, and internal regulations known as 'Contracts Standing Orders' (CSOs).

Contracts Standing Orders requirements will apply in full to the procurement of services, goods or works utilising grants. All grant monies must be treated in the same way as any other Council monies and any requirement to purchase/acquire services, goods or works must go via a competitive process.

The Project Manager will need to read, understand and comply with all of the grant terms and conditions and the [Code of Conduct for Grant Recipients](#).

4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 The grant is paid to the Council under Section 46 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and will be paid only in respect of approved expenditure incurred by Sheffield City Council for the purpose of the funded activities. Any requests to change the funded activities need to be submitted to the DfE.

The Council has a general power under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that an individual may generally do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation and the power is exercised in accordance with the limitations specified in the Act. This gives the Council the ability to accept this grant from the DfE.

The grant offer is subject to the provisions, limitations and conditions set out in the grant offer letter and in the DfE general grant terms and conditions.

Officers involved in the delivery of this project must ensure that they comply with the monitoring and reporting requirements detailed in the grant agreement.

The DfE are able to terminate the grant agreement for specified reasons.

By accepting the funding, the Council agrees to take account of the Supplier Code of Conduct and ensure that any representatives undertake their duties in a manner which is consistent with this code of conduct.

If the grant terms and conditions are not complied with, the DfE have the ability to require all or part of the funding to be repaid.

Any funding that remains unspent must be returned to the DfE.

The Council and the South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership must use all reasonable endeavours to achieve the objectives detailed in the grant offer letter.

The Council and any subcontractors and personnel must comply with all applicable law, guidance and policies. This includes but is not limited to Data Protection Legislation, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Procurement regulations and the Council's Contract Standing Orders must be complied with.

The rules around Subsidy Control must be complied with.

4.4 Other Implications

4.4.1 *none*

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 SYTP is one of the leading Social Work Teaching Partnerships in the country. We have two prestigious Universities in our partnership and meet Partner local authorities monthly to discuss strategies and contingency planning.

All University teaching and placements were paused in March 2020 and as a Partnership we spent two months converting worksite placements into virtual placements and purchased IT equipment and mobiles so that students were not disadvantaged.

We converted all face to face training onto an online platform so that business could continue as usual.

No other option could be considered as students would have failed their degree programmes which would have led to legal implications for Universities and damage to our partnership's reputation. Our local universities are our supply chain for newly qualified social workers as most students who study in Sheffield wish to remain and be employed in Sheffield. The support given to students who have had their placement curtailed by the impact of the pandemic has allowed us to fulfil our recruitment and retention strategy of employing and training newly

qualified social workers.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The purchase of IT equipment and phones for our students has allowed them to complete their mandatory university placements to pass their social work degree programmes and has allowed the placements to be blended by way of part working with service users and part working from home due to restricted access to worksites.

The learning that students have missed due to curtailment of placement will be replaced by additional virtual workshops provided by the Teaching partnership local authorities. This includes additional virtual tuition from the University.

The Teaching Partnership income generation plan has failed this financial year due to not being able to deliver face to face masterclass sessions for which places were previously charged. It has not been possible to replicate these virtually due to key speakers no longer being available. The DfE funding for loss of income generation supports the Teaching Partnership budget to balance.

The provision of funding to support the backfill of social work apprentices for an extended period has allowed services to retain trained agency workers which has been not only more cost effective and efficient but has provided consistent support to young people and those leaving care.