

**Report of:** Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer, Partnership Development and Business Support

**Report to:** Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

**Date:** 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2015

**Subject:** DfE funded Innovations Programme – 'Family Valued'

Are specific electoral wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity or cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

### Summary of main issues

This report provides an update to the board on the development and delivery of the DfE Innovations funded Family Valued Programme. This is a part of a 12 month national programme aimed at transforming the children's social care system. The programme in Leeds supports our wider ambition to become a Child Friendly city and our 'obsession' of safely and appropriately reducing the numbers of children who have to be looked after away from their own family. The report:

- outlines the overall aims of the programme and its underlying principles
- summarises the key strands of activity and outlines how the budget has been allocated to each area of work
- outlines progress to date and highlights links to other strategic activity

### Recommendations

The Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) is recommended to:

- a) support the work of the Family Valued Programme and endorse the contents of this report
- b) note the linkages between the Family Valued Programme and wider Domestic Violence Breakthrough Project
- c) consider the impact of the programme as it progresses and how future sustainability can be achieved, taking into account emerging findings from the evaluation activity

d), consider a further programme update in 6 months time

## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the board with overview of the DfE funded 'Family Valued' Innovations Programme, giving an outline of the aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the programme and how the funding will be used to support its successful delivery.

## **2. Background information**

- 2.1 In January 2015 Leeds was successful in bidding for £4.85m funding from the Department for Education Innovations Fund. The national innovation programme has funded 53 projects across the country, with the aim of transforming the children's social care system. Leeds won the largest award from the fund and our ambitious programme aims to embed wide-scale culture and practice change, creating a much more family support oriented model. We aim to do this by enabling practitioners to use restorative techniques that work with children, young people and families to safely and appropriately find their own solutions to the difficulties they face, before the need for more significant social care intervention. We are calling this strand of activity 'Family Valued'.
- 2.2 The funding period for the programme is 12 months, initially until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2016 although DfE have indicated that some monies can be carried forward into the new financial year to allow the programme a full year of delivery.

## **3. Main issues**

- 3.1 The programme aims to refocus the work of organisations supporting children, young people and families in Leeds, to realise the following entitlement described in the 3 policy statements within the Children and Young People's Plan:
- The default behaviour of children's services in all its dealings with local citizens/partners and organisations will be restorative - high support with high challenge
  - Children's Services in Leeds will ensure that families, whose children might otherwise be removed from their homes, are supported to meet and develop an alternative plan before such action is taken
  - In all other cases where there are concerns about the safeguarding or welfare of a child or children, we will work safely and appropriately with the family to support them in helping to decide what needs to happen
- 3.2 In order to achieve this, we are significantly expanding our Family Group Conference (FGC) service to support a greater number of families, rolling out appropriate levels of restorative practice training to 6000 key practitioners and organisations across the city, and commissioning a small but diverse range of services to support children, young people and families. A key focus of the programme is developing restorative approaches with families experiencing domestic violence, and is closely linked to the wider work of the Domestic Violence Breakthrough Project. As such we have made both operational and strategic links between the two programmes to develop the work

in partnership where appropriate. Please see Appendix A for a simple overview of the three key areas of work.

3.3 The programme is funded by a non-ringfenced grant of £4.85m in total. The spending priorities are as follows:

3.4 *Expansion of Family Group Conference Service - £1.62m* This will enable us to recruit and train sufficient staff to deliver up to 1000 FGCs per year, almost doubling the capacity of the service. We have already recruited an additional 16 Family Group Conference co-ordinators and a team manager, with a view to recruiting additional sessional co-ordinators as the year progresses. The additional capacity will enable the service to offer FGCs to a wider range of families, earlier in the lifetime of the problem, and will include a focus on developing the use of Family Group Conference with families who are experiencing domestic violence.

3.5 *Workforce development - £1.32m* We have formed a team of 12 restorative practice trainers from internal recruitment to deliver restorative practice awareness training across the city to up to 4500 people until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2016. This will be delivered across a range of settings, across the council and to the voluntary and private sector, with the aim of increasing engagement in restorative practices and promoting restorative behaviour as the default setting. We have designed a restorative practice training framework (See Appendix B) to offer a range of training as appropriate to the needs of individuals and organisations. In addition we have commissioned a group of restorative practice experts, many of whom have international standing, to design and deliver intensive packages to 1500 organisations and individuals to support the embedding of restorative practice as an approach e.g. schools, police, clusters, senior council leaders.

3.6 A key element of this strand of work is developing an offer to clusters around becoming recognised as a 'restorative cluster'. This will include additional workforce development activity and support to key individuals within the cluster and engagement is underway with key clusters to develop this area of work in partnership with them.

3.7 *Programme development including commissioning - £1.91m* The programme has commissioned a small but diverse range of services to support families who are engaged in family group decision making and need additional support. Key priorities for commissioning are: work with perpetrators/instigators of domestic violence, work with children and young people who have experienced domestic violence, work with victims/women, family work post removal, support work for women post removal of a child, psychological work with families pre and post removal. Due to timescales of the funding period, there has not been scope to conduct a full tendering process, therefore commissioning activity has focused on variations to existing contracts with a range of providers.

3.8 The programme development element of the budget includes £400k committed to an external evaluation of the programme. This is a requirement of the innovations grant and will be conducted by an evaluation team of experts including academics from Nottingham and Sheffield Universities and led by an international policy and research company, ICF International. The evaluation will produce 3 reports in September 2015, March 2016 and September 2016 and will follow an Outcomes Based Accountability approach for measuring the success of the programme.

3.9 A key focus across all areas of the programme is improving responses and support to families experiencing domestic abuse. This includes tying the work of the programme into developments at the 'front door' and working to ensure that the programme meets the wider aims of the Domestic Violence Breakthrough Project.

## **4 Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

4.1.2 Extensive consultation and engagement was undertaken during the bidding process with key stakeholders. Our ambition to make Leeds a Child Friendly City has attracted wide support from across the full spectrum of services and partners in Leeds. The programme supports this ambition and as a result, is supported by the following partners

- Key implementation partners: Leeds City Council (cross directorate and cross political support), West Yorkshire Police, NHS Leeds and Leeds Community Healthcare, schools, the third sector, the courts and the three Leeds universities.
- Key partnership bodies: The Leeds Health and Well-being Board and Safer Leeds: the Leeds Community Safety Partnership.
- International and academic partners: Paul Nixon (Chief Social Worker, New Zealand) and Kate Morris (Professor of Social Work University of Nottingham)
- Key supporters: The Yorkshire Evening Post newspaper and the Leeds Rugby Foundation.

4.1.2 The Family Group Conference Service has active service user groups, for children and young people and for parents, all of whom were consulted as part of the bidding process. Feedback from these groups will form a key strand of activity within the evaluation of the programme.

### **4.2 Equality and diversity, cohesion and integration**

4.2.1 There are no specific equality issues identified at present. However we are working closely with our evaluation team to ensure that the analysis of the programme includes interviews with a representative sample of families and that the evaluation highlights any equality issues that may arise out of the programme.

### **4.3. Council policies and the best council plan**

4.3.1 The programme is underpinned by a 'Theory of Change' which has been developed by strategic managers and key stakeholders, in partnership with the evaluation team. This has established three headline outcomes that we are looking to achieve through the programme:

- a) More children are safely and appropriately living with their families
- b) The children and families workforce is better equipped to work with families restoratively
- c) The importance of family is recognized across the support system for children and families.

4.3.2 The principles underlying the programme and the programme activity form a central part of the strategy within the Children and Young People's Plan and in particular support the 'obsession' of safely and appropriately reducing the numbers of Children Looked After. This in turn supports the Best Council Plan, and the plan for Leeds to be the best city in the UK.

#### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 A key strand of the programme is ensuring sustainability beyond the lifetime of the initial funding period. Over the last 2 years, in contrast to most other core cities and our statistical neighbours, Leeds has achieved consecutive reductions in the number of children who are looked after (CLA). Detailed evaluation of the current activity/performance of the FGC service indicates that this service has played a key part in the reduction in CLA numbers, enabling over 75% of children and unborn babies on the edge of care to remain safely at home. By extending the capacity and "reach" of our FGC, the service will enable more families to develop their own safe shared solutions to issues with the potential to enable a further 150+ children per annum to safely remain with (or return to) their families.

4.4.2 After adjusting the above assumptions to make allowance for other potential pressures (e.g. population growth and heightened awareness of the risks around child sexual exploitation), it is still reasonable to assume that the programme will deliver a 10% reduction in CLA numbers (circa 125 children) in 2015/16, while the estimated 5 year impact on CLA numbers and placements would indicate an overall net reduction in CLA placements of 25% by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. This would create a saving to Leeds of almost £7.0m per annum in direct placements costs.

4.4.3 Based on the above calculations, it is envisaged that sustainability of the expanded FGC service will be achieved through reductions in the numbers of looked after children and a reduction in the numbers of domestic violence referrals received.

4.4.4 The programme is being delivered in a national context of reduced resources and a procedurally driven system which places an emphasis on the state over the family as being best placed to look after children who are vulnerable. Our key proposition is that there is significant public value in pursuing system transformation oriented towards 'family support' rather than the prevailing English orientation towards 'child protection'.

4.4.5 A key challenge for the programme will be the ability to demonstrate evidence of achieving the desired outcomes in a relatively short time frame and in support of future funding/commissioning arrangements. A sustainability plan is in development to ensure the programme is in a strong position to continue beyond the 12 month period and becomes part of mainstream delivery.

#### **4.5 Legal implications, access to information and call-in**

4.5.1 There are no legal implications relating to this report.

#### **4.6 Risk management**

4.6.1. The programme is being managed using a robust project management approach, including the identification, active review and management of any risks.

### **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1.1 The scrutiny board has requested an overview of the DfE Innovations Fund Family Valued Programme and this report gives an account of the aims and objectives of the programme, key priorities, a summary of progress and issues for future consideration.
- 5.1.2 The board is invited to recognise the programme as a positive development for Leeds which gives us the opportunity to reshape our work, using internationally evidence based approaches to develop a more family support oriented model. This will support our wider strategic ambitions to become a Child Friendly City, and the best city in the UK.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1.1 The Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) is recommended to:

- a) support the work of the Family Valued Programme and endorse the contents of this report
- b) note the linkages between the Family Valued Programme and wider Domestic Violence Breakthrough Project
- c) consider the impact of the programme as it progresses and how future sustainability can be achieved, taking into account emerging findings from the evaluation activity
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## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- Appendix A – Family Valued – The Leeds Innovation Programme one side summary
- Appendix B – Restorative Practice Training Framework

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.