

Report of Training and Development Manager

Report to Director of Childrens Services

Date: November 2016



Subject: Waiver of Contract Procedure Rule 9 to award a contract to Salford University for delivery of the Step up to Social Work Programme (which is a 14 month fast track Post Graduate Social Work Degree).

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and 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? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. Leeds would like to bid to the DFE to lead a consortium of 4 local authorities (26 students) to run a Step Up Programme in partnership with a Sheffield consortium of 11 local authorities.
2. The Director of Childrens Services is requested to waive the requirements of Contract Procedure Rule 9 to award a contract to Salford University for delivery of the Step up to Social Work Programme (which is a 14 month fast track Post Graduate Social Work Degree).
3. Leeds has previously been part of the Sheffield Consortia which is in its 5th cohort and has now grown so large (15 LAs and 80 students) that we would like to split in two (Leeds leading one and Sheffield leading the other) but work in one partnership with one HEI delivering the Programme.
4. Sheffield consortia (on which Leeds is currently named) already has a contract in place with Salford University to deliver this programme.
5. There is a proven track record with Salford University of delivering a high quality value for money programme. This has been through the Sheffield procurement process.
6. This forms part of the Department for Education Step up to Social Work Initiative and is fully funded. Leeds would like to bid for this funding on behalf of Bradford Wakefield Leeds and North Yorkshire in December 2016.
7. The programme is due to start in January 2018 – March 2019

Recommendations

1. The Director of Childrens Services is requested to Waive the requirements of Contract Procedure Rule 9 to award a contract to Salford University for delivery of the Step up to Social Work Programme (which is a 14 month fast track Post Graduate Social Work Degree), to enable us to deliver the programme in partnership with the Sheffield Consortia.
2. The contract will be for a period of two years – annual contract value is £195,000 per cohort.
3. It is not possible to novate the existing contract with Salford University held by Sheffield Council, therefore it is necessary to establish a new contract

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 Director of Childrens Services is recommended to Waive the requirements of Contract Procedure Rule 9 to award a contract to Salford University for delivery of the Step up to Social Work Programme (which is a 14 month fast track Post Graduate Social Work Degree), to enable us to deliver the programme in partnership with the Sheffield Consortia. for 4 local Authorities – Leeds, Bradford, North Yorkshire and Wakefield. The value of the contract over 2 years is £390,000 which is fiscally covered by a grant from the DFE

2 Background information

- 2.1 The *Step Up to Social Work* programme provides an accelerated entry route into social work for high-achieving graduates and career changers. *Step Up to Social Work* is delivered through the development of a bespoke work-based 14 month postgraduate diploma programme, led by groups of local authorities working in regional partnerships and contracting with HEIs. Award of the diploma enables candidates to apply for registration as a qualified social worker. The scheme targets high calibre individuals who already have experience of working with children and young people and who want to train as social workers.
- 2.2 For the last 4 years Leeds LA has been part of a consortium with 9 other Local Authorities in Yorkshire and Humber - led by Sheffield Local Authority. Sheffield contracted the HEI (Salford) for all 9 Local Authorities and managed the contract. They went through their procurement process and can evidence value for money
- 2.3 The Step up programme within Yorkshire and Humber has now grown so large - 2018's commitment is now 80 student with all 15 Local Authorities committed.
- 2.4 By splitting into 2 consortia that work together as one partnership we can achieve a regional and geographical approach to the programme.
- 2.5 By creating 2 consortia we can also receive 2 DFE bids which will bring additional money for training and development and practice improvement to the region

2.6 We know that Salford University provides excellent education and value for money.

The contract established by Sheffield for previous cohorts was the subject of competitive tendering.

2.7 The DFE has committed to 2 more step up programmes has 2 more cohorts as part of their programme of social work reform - 2018/2019 and 2019/2020

2.8 The Programme

The Step Up to Social Work Programme will develop and deliver a tailored employer-led training programme for social workers, incorporating both assessed practice and academic learning requirements. Upon successful completion, trainees will be expected to be awarded a Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work. The programme aims to be one component of the strategy to increase the supply of social workers, raise standards and strengthen the workforce.

The programme objectives are:

- To design and deliver a selection process that provides up to 200 trainees capable of completing a Social Work Post Graduate Diploma.
- To design and deliver an approved Social Work Post Graduate Diploma programme that allows trainees to complete within 14 months.
- to identify Regional Partnerships across England that can provide practice placements and learning support for Post Graduate Diploma trainees throughout the
- Length of the course to identify and provide robust support arrangements for each of the trainees throughout their degree programme.
- To deliver trainees qualified with a Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work that is capable of filling social work vacancies within local authorities.
- To deliver evaluation and learning from the programme that helps to inform and develop future Social Work training, recruitment and selection practices.

3 Main issues

Reason for Contracts Procedure Rules Waiver

- 3.1 The Step up Partnership – led by Sheffield – contracted Salford University in since the Step Up pilot began 5 years ago. They went through their procurement process to ensure best value for money and quality.
- 3.2 We have a developed and good relationship with Salford University, the programme consistently evaluates well; in terms of value of money, student satisfaction, HCPC regulations, HEI standards and programme quality.
- 3.3 Sheffield and Leeds will lead the 2 consortia and work together in partnership to provide the same provision of recruitment and education for all 80 students – they

essentially will be one cohort. We will do joint recruitment, joint audit and evaluation and joint Practice improvement events

Consequences if the proposed action is not approved

Sheffield and Leeds would not be able submit 2 separate bids to the DFE and Leeds would lose the opportunity to be a Host consortia and the funding attached to this. Therefore without the contract being in place, it would not be possible to apply for the grant from the DFE with Leeds leading the consortia. This could jeopardize our ability to participate in the Step up programme with the knock on consequences for the service with a reduced number of social workers being available to make the critical interventions necessary

All costs are fully funded within the DFE bid. While the DFE has yet not made the final figures clear, we can be confident that Leeds authority will have an income of approximately 70-100k to share across our 4 Local authorities

Advertising

- 3.3 This contract opportunity has not been advertised. The contract value is below the current EU threshold, so there is no requirement for the contract to be tendered in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations but there is a requirement to comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 Internal consultation has taken place. Leeds Authority was fully involved in the procurement of Salford University in 2011 and the ongoing procurement. This was done in conjunction with Heads of Service in Childrens social work. The Heads of service social work, Chief Officer social work and Head of Service Workforce Development all have been engaged in discussions and support next steps.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1. The equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening form is attached as Appendix 1. This form identifies that an impact assessment is not required in this case.

4.3 Council Policies and Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 This work is key to supporting the Best Council Plan's ambition to make Leeds a Child Friendly City that is the Best City for children and families in the UK. This procurement will support the priorities of the Children and Young People's Plan and Council Budget plan to safely reduce the need for children to become looked after through improving the quality and consistency of front line social work practice.

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

- 4.4.1 The procurement of Salford through a contract waiver would also 2 consortia to bid for DFE funding – which would bring in additional funding for the 4 Local authorities in Leeds consortium to be invested in practice education and practice improvement,
- 4.4.2 Sheffield consortia has already been through their internal procurement process and the contract represents best value for money

All costs are fully funded within the DFE bid. While the DFE has yet not made the final figures clear, we can be confident that Leeds authority will have an income of approximately 70-100k to share across our 4 Local authorities

The intention is to recruit the Step up graduates into social work posts which saves on both recruitment and training in the longer terms

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1. This decision is not subject to call-in. The decision to waive contract procedure rule 9 is a significant operational decision in line with contract procedure rule 27.
- 4.5.2 Giving the work to this provider without competition could leave the Council open to a potential claim from other providers, to whom this contract could be of interest, that it has not been wholly transparent. In terms of transparency it should be noted that Contracts Procedure Rules suggests that contracts of this value should be subject to a degree of advertising. It is up to the Council to decide what degree of advertising is appropriate. In giving the work to this provider without competition there is a potential risk of challenge from other providers who have not been given the chance to tender for this opportunity.
- 4.5.3 Whilst there is no legal obstacle preventing the waiver of CPR 9.1 and 9.2, the above comments should be noted when making the final decision, the Director of Children's Services should be satisfied that the course of action chosen represents Best Value for the Council.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1. There is a risk that other providers are not in favour of the decision to award a contract without competition. As the contract value is under EU regulation value there is no legal requirement to subject the matter to competition.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The most appropriate course of action is to waive the requirements of contracts procedure rule 9 and award a contract without competition to Salford University for the reasons stated within this report

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Director of Childrens Services is recommended to Waive the requirements of Contract Procedure Rule 9 to award a contract to Salford University for delivery of the Step up to Social Work Programme (which is a 14 month fast track Post Graduate Social Work Degree), to enable us to deliver the programme in partnership with the Sheffield Consortia, for 4 local Authorities – Leeds, Bradford, North Yorkshire and Wakefield. The value of the contract over 2 years is £390,000 which is fiscally covered by a grant from the DFE.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 None

¹ 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.