

Report of Head of Service Workforce Development and Change

Report to Director of Children & Families

Date: 30/10/2018

Subject: Step up to Social Work – Permission to Procure



Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, 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 has been part of the DfE funded Step Up to Social Work programme for training Social Workers for a number of years. Sheffield was historically the lead authority for our region, leading the procurement of the university provider and the grant funding for the programme. For last cohort in 2017, the partnership led by Sheffield decided to split into two, with Leeds leading a separate partnership including Wakefield, Bradford, Kirklees and North Yorkshire, called the West and North Yorkshire Partnership. At that time a DDN not to procure was submitted as we were still working closely with Sheffield.
2. We now need to procure an HEI for the new cohort of Step Up to Social Work for the West and North Yorkshire Partnership. It is anticipated a new contract will be required from early 2019, where Leeds will be the lead partner on behalf of Wakefield, Bradford, Kirklees and North Yorkshire. This report requests permission to undertake a competitive tender exercise to procure this contract.
3. The maximum value of the contract will be £163,338 p.a. for a period of 24 months. The DfE provide £11,667 per student directly managed by the lead partner (Leeds). The Leeds partnership have applied for funding for 28 student places. Confirmation has not yet been received from the DfE regarding the funding, however, a new contract must be awarded by early 2019 to enable to validation and recruitment activities. Therefore, due to the short timescales permission to procure is being sought before we have confirmation. If funding is not received the procurement will not take place.

Recommendations

- 1.1 The Director of Children and Families is recommended to provide permission to receive funding from the DfE to enable the commissioning of a Step Up to Social work programme.
- 1.2 The Director of Children and Families is recommended to provide permission to procure a new Step up to Social Work service via competitive tender. The duration of the contract will be 24 months; commencing early 2019 and will offer 28 funded student places. The maximum contract value will be £163,338 p.a. over 24 months.

Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request approval from the Director of Children and Families to provide permission to receive funding from the DfE to enable the commissioning of a Step Up to Social work programme.
- 1.2 The report is also seeking approval to conduct a competitive procurement exercise to procure a new contract to deliver the Step Up to Social work programme.

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. It targets high calibre individuals who already have experience of working with children and young people and who want to train as Social Workers. 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 (RPs) and contracting with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Students successfully completing the course will qualify with a postgraduate diploma in social work. This will enable students to apply for registration as a qualified social worker with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).
- 2.2 Leeds has been part of the DfE funded Step Up to Social Work programme for training Social Workers for a number of years. Evaluation of previous cohorts shows an average 84% conversion rate to Social Worker posts on completion of the programme and very positive views about the quality of the training.
- 2.3 Step Up to Social Work complements our reform programme and our commitment to raising the quality of social work practice, with a particular focus on the practice of child and family social workers undertaking statutory social work. We expect the delivery of cohort 6 of Step up to Social Work to embed the Knowledge and Skills Statement for approved child and family practitioners in the design and content of the training programmes, and associated Regional Partnership arrangements.
- 2.4 Sheffield was historically the lead authority for our region, leading the procurement of the university provider and the grant funding for the programme and carried out the procurement of the current provider, University of Salford. For the last cohort in 2017, the partnership led by Sheffield decided to split into two, with Leeds leading a separate partnership including Wakefield, Bradford, Kirklees and North Yorkshire, called the West and North Yorkshire Partnership. Leeds currently manages its own contract with the University of Salford, awarded following the procurement by Sheffield. This contract expires at the end of March 2019. Leeds will lead a new procurement on behalf of Wakefield, Bradford, Kirklees and North Yorkshire in order to secure a new contract from 1st April 2019. Sheffield will lead their own procurement on behalf of other local authorities in the region.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to request approval from the Director of Children & Families Services to receive funding from the DfE to enable the commissioning of a Step Up to Social work programme.

- 3.2 The report is also seeking permission to conduct a competitive procurement exercise to procure a new Step Up to Social Work service.
- 3.3 The maximum value of the contract will be £163,338 p.a for a period of 24 months. The DfE provide £11,667 per student directly managed by the lead partner (Leeds). The Leeds partnership have applied for funding for 28 student places. Confirmation has not yet been received from the DfE regarding the funding, however, a new contract must be awarded by early 2019. Therefore, due to the short timescales permission to procure is being sought before we have confirmation. If funding is not received the procurement will not take place.
- 3.4 The contract will be for 24 months; commencing early 2019 and terminating in 2021 with no options to extend.
- 3.5 The tender evaluation will comprise of 11 written tender questions and will be assessed by Workforce Development representatives.
- 3.6 TUPE will not apply to this contract.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 A partnership has been set up with Workforce Development colleagues from all partner authorities of which Leeds will be procuring on the behalf of.
- 4.1.2 Within Leeds, a project team has been established to support the procurement consisting of representations from Workforce Development, Commissioning and Procurement.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 An equality impact screening form has been completed and is attached as appendix 1.

4.3 Council policies and best council plan

- 4.3.1 This contract will support the best council plan priorities of keeping people safe from harm and reducing the number of children looked after.
- 4.3.2 This contract will support Children and Families Services commitment to:
- Help children and parents to live in safe, supportive and loving families
 - Ensure that the most vulnerable are protected
 - Support families to give children the best start in life
 - Increase the number of children and young people participating and engaging in learning
 - Improve social, emotional, and mental health and wellbeing

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 The maximum contract value for the contract is £163,338 p.a. This funding comes directly from the DfE through monthly grant funding, claimed and managed by the

lead partner (Leeds) on behalf of the five local authorities. The DfE have not yet sent confirmation to fund the 28 student places across the partnership at £11,667 per student, however, a new contract must be awarded by early 2019. Therefore due to the short timescales permission to procure has been sought before we have confirmation. If funding is not received the procurement will not take place and so the local authority will not incur any financial risk other than officer time.

4.4.2 The price element of the evaluation will be scored based on the overall contract value. The bidder with the lowest total cost will score the highest in the price evaluation. This approach will help to drive down the cost.

4.4.3 Bidders will be asked to submit a service cost analysis form (SCAF) which will inform the breakdown of the bidder's price.

4.4.4 As part of the grant funding from the DfE some funds will be allocated to employ a part time Quality Assurance manager who will meet with the contractor quarterly to ensure best value for money is being achieved.

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

4.5.1 The annual value of the contract is up to £163,338 p.a. and is therefore a Significant Operational decision and is not subject to call-in.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 A risk register is in place and managed by the project team.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Following a detailed appraisal of the options available to fulfil this contract need; the Step Up to Social Work project team made up of partners from Leeds Wakefield, Bradford, Kirklees and North Yorkshire concludes that the best value option is to undertake a competitive tender to commission an external organisation to provide the Step Up to Social Work Project.

6. Recommendations

6.1 The Director of Children and Families is recommended to provide permission to receive funding from the DfE to enable the commissioning of a Step Up to Social work programme.

6.2 The Director of Children and Families is recommended to provide permission to procure a new Step up to Social Work service via competitive tender. The duration of the contract will be 24 months; commencing early 2019 and will offer 28 funded student places. The maximum contract value will be £163,338 p.a over 24 months.

7. Background documents¹

7.1 N/A

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.