

Report of Head of Service Workforce Development and Change

Report to the Director of Children & Families

Date: 21/01/19

Subject: Step up to Social Work – Award Report



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. This report seeks approval to award a contract to The University of Salford for the provision of the Step Up to Social Work programme.
2. This award follows a competitive tendering exercise. Permission to procure was approved on 23rd November 2018.
3. Leeds City Council has led the tender process on behalf of Wakefield, Bradford Kirklees and North Yorkshire called the West and North Yorkshire Partnership.
4. The value of the contract is £103,385 p.a. and will be for a period of 26 months, therefore the contract value over the life of the contract will be £224,000. The West and North Yorkshire Partnership have received confirmation from the DfE for funding of 28 student places to cover the complete cost of the service.
5. The award criteria for this contract were based on price and quality: price 40% and quality 60%. The tender evaluation comprised of 10 written tender questions and assessed by Workforce Development representatives from across the partnership.
6. The University of Salford were the only bidder for the contract but met all minimum quality thresholds within the tender.

7. Awarding this contract will:

7.1 Support the best council plan priorities of keeping people safe from harm and reducing the number of children looked after.

7.2 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

Recommendations

1. The Director of Children and Families Services is recommended to approve the award of a contract to The University of Salford to deliver the Step Up to Social Work Service for the West and North Yorkshire Partnership. The value of the contract is £103,385 p.a. and will be for a period of 26 months, therefore the contract value over the life of the contract will be £224,000. The West and North Yorkshire Partnership have received confirmation from the DfE for funding of 28 student places to cover the complete cost of the service.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to request the award of a contract to The University of Salford deliver the Step Up to Social Work Service. The value of the contract is £103,385 p.a. and will be for a period of 26 months therefore, the contract value over the life of the contract will be £224,000. The West and North Yorkshire Partnership have received confirmation from the DfE for funding of 28 student places to cover the complete cost of the service.

2. Background information

- 2.2 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).
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 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 has led a new procurement on behalf of Wakefield, Bradford, Kirklees and North Yorkshire in order to secure a new contract from 1st April 2019. Sheffield has led their own procurement on behalf of other local authorities in the region.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 There are no specific implications or impact on a specific ward or wards as the provision is for the West and North Yorkshire Partnership.
- 3.2 The Lead Member for Children's Services has been briefed on the commissioning of this service and will be updated on the outcome.
- 3.3 The recommendation contained in this report will have positive implications for young people across West and North Yorkshire.
- 3.4 The provider will be informed of the decision as soon as possible. Workforce Development representatives will work with the provider to manage the transition to the new contract.
- 3.5 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 has commissioned on the behalf of.
- 4.1.2 Within Leeds, a project team has been established to support the procurement and award of contract, 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 tender was evaluated on price and quality: 60% quality and 40% price.

- 4.4.2 The value of the contract is £103,385 p.a. and will be for a period of 26 months, therefore the contract value over the life of the contract will be £224,000. The West and North Yorkshire Partnership have received confirmation from the DfE for funding of 28 student places to cover the complete cost of the service.
- 4.4.3 The Partnership have received confirmation from the DfE for funding of 28 student places to cover the complete cost of the service.
- 4.4.4 The price element of the evaluation was scored against a maximum contract value. This approach has contributed to driving down the cost of provision.
- 4.4.5 Having a contract for a number of Local Authorities has enabled us to achieve economies of scale in management overheads and achieve best value.
- 4.4.6 As part of the grant funding received 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 value of this contract is £103,385 p.a. and is therefore a significant operational decision. The decision is not subject to call in.

4.6 Risk Management

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

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The recommendations within this report will help to ensure the Step Up to Social Work Project will be delivered consistently and at the best value. The contract award follows a fair and transparent competitive tendering exercise which involved an evaluation exercise carried out by stakeholders made up of partners from Leeds Wakefield, Bradford, Kirklees and North Yorkshire.

6. Recommendations

- 7. The Director of Children and Families Services is recommended to approve the award of a contract to The University of Salford to deliver the Step Up to Social Work Service for the West and North Yorkshire Partnership. The value of the contract is £103,385 p.a. and will be for a period of 26 months, therefore the contract value over the life of the contract will be £224,000. The West and North Yorkshire Partnership have received confirmation from the DfE for funding of 28 student places to cover the complete cost of the service.

8. Background documents¹

- 8.1 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.