



Report of SFPC Lead

Report to Programme Director, Strengthening Families Protecting Children

Date: 31/03/2020

Subject: Improvement Partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council



Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<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
Will the decision be open 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Summary

1. Main issues

- The Leeds Relational Practice Centre (LRPC) has been in discussions with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Department for Education to negotiate a package of support for Stoke to help them to improve their children’s services which were judged to be ‘Inadequate’ in 2019.
- The purpose of this report is to formally accept the funding agreed with DfE for this work.

2. Best Council Plan Implications (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- The LRPC leads and coordinates sector led improvement work on behalf of the Council. The aim of this is to generate funding for Leeds and to promote adoption of the Leeds approach to children’s services reform. This in turn should support the Best Council Plan priority to make Leeds a ‘Child Friendly City.’

3. Resource Implications

- The Department will provide funding of up to a total of £478,600; £281,400 in the 2019/20 financial year and £197,200 in the 2020/21 financial year.

- This funding will be used to fund the work of the LRPC, to recruit additional consultancy capacity and invest in management capacity in Children and Families Services

Recommendations

- a) To formally accept the funding agreed with the DfE

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to formally accept the funding agreed with DfE for an improvement partnership between Leeds and Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

2. Background information

- 2.1 Stoke were judged to be 'inadequate' by OfSTED in an inspection of children's services in 2019. The Council are therefore subject to DfE intervention. The DfE Commissioner who is leading the intervention worked with Leeds previously in Kirklees. As such there have been negotiations to agree a partnership between the two Council to help share Leeds' learning and good practice.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 The DfE have agreed to fund Leeds' work in Stoke. The focus of the agreed partnership will include the following areas of work:
 - Implementing restorative working across children's services
 - Mentoring and support for the new Director of Children's Services
 - Advice and consultancy on key areas for improvement including: Early Help; the 'Front Door' to social work; placement sufficiency; and Social Work Practice.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 This agreement has been developed with close involvement with the DfE, Stoke Council and senior leaders in Leeds including the Leader of the Council, Lead Member for Children and Families; the Interim Director of Children and Families and the Programme Director, Strengthening Families Protecting Children.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 There are no direct implications for equality and diversity but all work will include consideration of equalities issues as required by Statutory Duties and good practice.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 The LRPC leads and coordinates sector led improvement work on behalf of the Council. The aim of this is to generate funding for Leeds and to promote adoption of the Leeds approach to children's services reform. This in turn should support the Best Council Plan priority to make Leeds a 'Child Friendly City.'

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.2 There are no direct climate implications from this report although it is important to note that as with wider national sector led improvement work all staff will use low carbon public transport options wherever possible.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 The Department will provide funding of up to a total of £478,600; £281,400 in the 2019/20 financial year and £197,200 in the 2020/21 financial year.
- 4.4.2 This funding will be used to fund the work of the LRPC, to recruit additional consultancy capacity and invest in management capacity in Children and Families Services

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

- 4.5.1 This is a significant operational decision so is not subject to call-in.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 A risk management plan will be completed for this project. Funding from sector led improvement is an important income source to support the ongoing work of children's services in Leeds.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 This is a valuable opportunity for the Council to generate income to promote its approach to children's services reform and to help promote the wellbeing of vulnerable children in Stoke.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 To formally accept the funding agreed with 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.