

Receipt of grant funding and award of cooperation agreements to Area Inclusion Partnerships for provision of Mentoring services to support young people at risk of involvement in violence to re-engage with education

Date: 16.05.2022

Report of: Deputy Director Learning

Report to: Director of Children and Families

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- The report concerns the receipt of grant funding from the Department of Education and the award of cooperation agreements to the Area Inclusion Partnerships (AIPs) for provision of Mentoring services to support young people at risk of involvement in violence to re-engage with education. These awards are made on behalf of the Leeds SAFE (Support, Attend, Fulfil, Exceed) Taskforce using grant funding from the Department for Education (DfE) as part of the cross-government Beating Crime Plan published in July 2021.
- This decision supports the 2020-25 Best Council Plan priority to make Leeds a Child Friendly City where families are supported to give children the best start in life.

Recommendations

The Director of Children and Families is also recommended to approve the decisions to

- A) Award cooperation agreements as below for provision of Educational Inclusion Mentoring services to support young people at risk of involvement in violence to re-engage with education. The cooperation agreements will be awarded as soon as possible. The commencement date of the cooperation agreements is subject to the timescales in which the DfE can arrange for release of funds for this element of the programme: it is hoped this will be July/August but could be September. The cooperation agreements will expire on 31/03/2025:
- a) The East AIP for the value of £1,180,583
 - b) The North-East AIP for the value of £191,167
 - c) The North-West AIP for the value of £191,167
 - d) The South AIP for the value of £191,167

e) The West AIP for the value of £191,167

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 The DfE has made available grant funding to establish SAFE Taskforces in 10 local authority areas across the country, as part of the cross-government Beating Crime Plan published in July 2021, which announced investment in specialist support in schools in serious violence hotspots to support young people at risk of involvement in violence to re-engage with education.
- 2 SAFE Taskforces will bring together mainstream schools to commission evidence-based interventions to **Support** young people with challenging behaviour, enabling them to **Attend** school regularly so they can **Fulfil** their potential and prevent costly poor life outcomes by inspiring them to **Exceed** their expectations.
- 3 The programme is designed to be schools led because school leaders, teachers and staff have a distinct expertise and access to make a difference in young people's lives. As part of the Taskforce, the DfE are asking schools also to work alongside other local partners who can provide expertise and support. This programme will enable schools to support young people within their school and community, by bringing them together to collectively manage a pot of funding. Each SAFE Taskforce will need to commission and fund evidence-based interventions to support young people at risk of serious violence and re-engage them in education.
- 4 In Leeds, Leeds City Council has agreed to act as a central repository for the grant funds on behalf of schools, with the Taskforce established through the existing Area Inclusion Partnership (AIP) arrangements. AIPs bring schools together in a recognised & equitable partnership to deliver & coordinate services to keep children and young people in vulnerable circumstances and at risk of exclusion from education, included in high quality learning.
- 5 Leeds will receive total grant funding of £3.7 million over three years (2022/23 – 2024/25). This will be in two phases, the set up phase and the delivery phase, with £2,810,875 available for the commissioning of interventions.
- 6 The primary intervention chosen by the Leeds SAFE Taskforce is an Educational Inclusion Mentors service. Mentoring has a strong existing evidence base and is recommended by the DfE. Mentors will also work alongside the whole family using restorative practice principles. This intervention will build on our AIP arrangements, which have proved highly successful in promoting the inclusion and preventing the exclusion of children and young people in Leeds schools.
- 7 Provision will be focused in the East AIP in line with our Strategic Needs Analysis, which indicates a higher prevalence across the target indicators in wards in the East of the city; Gipton & Harehills, Burmantofts & Richmond Hill and Killingbeck & Seacroft were the wards most consistently represented across the indicators based on home or offence postcode. Numerically and proportionately pupils attending school in the East AIP area have the highest persistent absence, persistent unauthorised absence and severe absence. Two schools outside the East AIP will also employ Mentors (in North-East and North-West AIP areas), which are in designated areas for hot spots.
- 8 A total of 19 Educational Inclusion Mentors will be employed: 13 by individual secondary schools (11 in the East AIP area, one in North-East and one in North-West). The other Mentors will be employed by the North-East, North-West, South and West AIPs to work across their AIP areas, targeted where there is greatest identified need.
- 9 The East AIP will employ an Educational Inclusion Strategic Lead, who will be responsible for overseeing the virtual team of Mentors, quality assurance and reporting on performance and impact to the SAFE Taskforce.

- 10 Mentors and young people will decide how they spend their time together, focusing on engagement, attendance and attainment within school and working with the Attendance Team on the advocacy of the young person's needs. The Mentors will also work alongside the families and coordinate access to after school and holiday activities such as sports. This will help us understand the drivers for the parent/carer and other factors impacting on the family so that they can be signposted to other existing provision to reduce the risk of offending, change mindsets and promote the safety, security and wellbeing of the young person to disengage from negative influences, which have identified them as being part of this cohort.
- 11 The release date of the delivery phase grant by the DfE is still to be confirmed. DfE are working on arrangements to release the element of the grant to commence the Educational Inclusion Mentor services as soon as possible to enable recruitment of Mentors. The cooperation agreements will be awarded as soon as possible thereafter. The commencement date of the cooperation agreements is therefore subject to the timescales in which the DfE can arrange for release of funds for this element of the programme: it is hoped this will be July/August but could be September.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 12 Leeds has established the SAFE Taskforce through the East AIP, where there is currently the highest incidence of violent crime. The focus for the funding will therefore be in the areas and schools covered by the East AIP: primarily, this encompasses Gipton & Harehills, Burmantofts & Richmond Hill and Killingbeck & Seacroft wards. However, the benefits of the programme may reach wider.
- 13 An Equality Impact Assessment Screening has been undertaken. This identifies the decision will have a positive impact for equality, diversity, cohesion and integration because it will support young people at risk of involvement in violence to attend school and re-engage with education. The cohorts Taskforces will focus on pupils already known to be involved in serious violence or who are in close proximity to serious violence due to contextual factors such as peer groups, family, or neighbourhood; and pupils who are disengaged from education e.g. truancy, suspension or exclusion from school who are more likely to end up on the pathway into serious violence. This means the cohort is likely to include high proportions of pupils from recognised vulnerable groups (e.g. Children in Need, Looked After Children and those with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)).

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 14 A project team has been established within Children and Families comprising of representatives from Learning Inclusion, Performance Management and Improvement, Learning Systems and Commissioning. Regular consultation is taking place with Heads from schools within the East AIP and advice sought from Finance and Procurement. The SAFE Taskforce is meeting monthly currently to complete key tasks to finalise key documents such as the Delivery Plan, manage the budget and determine which interventions to commission.

What are the resource implications?

- 15 The total value of these cooperation agreement is £1,945,251.

- 16 These cooperation agreements are funded through additional revenue funding that is ring fenced to deliver the outcomes specified in the DfE grant agreement. The DfE was due to release the grant in July 2022 but has agreed to release funding for these agreements early to enable schools to recruit the Mentors in time for delivery to start in the Autumn term 2022/23.
- 17 A separate key decision is being taken to accept this funding from the DfE.
- 18 Leeds City Council has agreed to act as central repository on behalf of schools.

What are the legal implications?

- 19 This decision is classified as a key decision. It was published on the list of forthcoming key decisions on 13th May 2022 and will be subject to call-in.
- 20 There are no grounds for keeping the contents of this report confidential under the Access to Information Rules.
- 21 Advice will be sought from Procurement legal when drafting the cooperation agreements.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 22 The performance including quality, outcomes and impact will need to be closely monitored by the project team and reported back to the SAFE Taskforce and the DfE.

Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

- 23 This proposal supports the council's health & wellbeing pillar and the commitments city & council ambitions of:
- Improving educational attainment and closing achievement gaps for children and young people vulnerable to poor learning outcomes
 - Improving social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing
 - Helping young people into adulthood, to develop life skills and be ready for work

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 24 This intervention emerged as the primary preferred option early on in the set up phase of the programme and has continued to gain support among stakeholders. This type of intervention has been identified by schools as a gap and one that should have significant positive impact. It is one of the interventions identified by the DfE as having a strong evidence base for being effective in reducing serious youth violence. For the reasons set out in this report, the mentors are to be employed by individual schools in the East AIP and so a cooperation agreement is required between the Council and the East AIP.

How will success be measured?

- 25 The DfE has estimated that Leeds should support 600 pupils per year.
- 26 The DfE has commissioned external evaluators through the Youth Endowment Fund. The measure for success for this programme combines both serious violence and education measures. SAFE taskforces will be asked to support the DfE to gather some data to help

understand impact. The evaluators will do the remaining work to collate and analyse the outcomes data, ensuring no unnecessary burden is placed on Taskforces and schools.

- 27 Data will be requested on a termly basis starting the first term in Year 1 (September 2022) until the final term of delivery in Year 3 (currently scheduled for Easter term 2025). External evaluators will also undertake annual surveys, one-to-one interviews and/or focus groups, and some visits to meetings from the evaluators.

What is the timetable for implementation?

- 28 DfE are working on arrangements to release the element of the grant to commence the Educational Inclusion Mentor services as soon as possible to enable recruitment of Mentors. The cooperation agreements will be awarded as soon as possible thereafter.
- 29 The commencement date of the cooperation agreements is therefore subject to the timescales in which the DfE can arrange for release of funds for this element of the programme: it is hoped this will be July/August but could be September.
- 30 Recruitment of mentors will commence as soon as cooperation agreements have been awarded.

Appendices

- 31 EDCI screening.

Background papers

- 32 None.