

Receipt of DfE Grant Funding for SAFE Taskforce Delivery Phase

Date: 4 July 2022

Report of: Head of Service Commissioning and Health Partnerships

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

Brief summary

The Department for Education (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.

Leeds will receive total grant funding of £3.7 million over three years (2022/23 – 2024/25) as part of the SAFE Taskforce programme. This will be in two phases, the set up phase and the delivery phase.

This key decision relates to the delivery phase, where Leeds will receive £3,377,550 over three years for the provision of mentoring programmes to be delivered in schools to reduce violence and improve school attendance.

Recommendations

The Director of Children & Families is recommended to

- a) Enter into an agreement with and accept grant funding from the Department for Education (DfE) for the Leeds SAFE Taskforce valued at £3,377,550.

What is this report about?

1 Summary of Safe Taskforce Programme

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 Safe Taskforce in Leeds

In Leeds, Leeds City Council has agreed to act as a central repository for the grant funds on behalf of schools, with the Taskforce to be 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. For the set up phase, the DfE has allocated Leeds a grant of £323,100 for activity to take place during February to December 2022.

6 Delivery Phase of Programme

The primary aim of the programme is to address is to improve attendance and engagement and reduce exclusions for individual children and young people (reduced persistent unauthorised absence & severe absence) and identify and respond early to behavioural indicators e.g. the correlation between low level anti-social behaviour triggering more serious youth violence, to improve positive engagement with school.

- 7 The target group for the intervention will be young people aged 11-14 years (Y7-9) with unauthorised absence above a certain threshold which will be universally agreed by participating schools, and who have also been identified as having multiple characteristics such as those with associates already known to be involved in serious youth violence, coming from community hot spots known for high levels of serious youth violence and those known to have engagement with low level anti-social behaviour.
- 8 Educational Inclusion Mentors (EIM) will be employed by 13 individual schools, all secondaries in the identified area. In addition, mentors will also be allocated to other Area Inclusion Partnership (AIP) areas across the city identified as hot spots. The EIMs will be responsible for mentoring children and young people, building positive relationships and supporting them with specific and bespoke interventions in line with their personalised needs.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 9 This report describes the delivery phase of the SAFE Taskforce programme which will seek to achieve the following impact:
- a) A reduction in attitudinal and behavioural indicators of serious violence – Challenging behaviour, Aggressive behaviours, Low levels of self-control, Low self-esteem, Low prosocial attitudes.
 - b) A reduction in an educational indicator – Improved engagement in education - reduction in persistent unauthorised absence other, improved academic progress.
 - c) Successful completion of secondary school and reduction of the risk of children who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) to be measured through our city-wide data recording.
 - d) A reduction in involvement in serious violence for the young people who took part in the intervention.
- 10 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 are 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 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities).

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 11 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

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 12 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. Consultation will further take place with all AIP Chairs.

What are the resource implications?

13 The total value of this decision is £3,377,550, which will be received over three financial years: 22/23; 23/24; and 24/25. This funding will be covered by a Section 31 grant. This funding is additional revenue funding that is ring fenced to deliver the outcomes specified in the DfE grant agreement.

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

14 The DfE funding must be spent as described in the Memorandum of Understanding. The Taskforce will need to carefully plan and monitor how this is spent to ensure the Taskforce is effectively established and supported.

What are the legal implications?

15 This is a key decision due to the value and is subject to call in. There are no grounds for keeping the contents of this report confidential under the Access to Information Rules.

16 The Letter of Determination and the Memorandum of understanding setting out the requirements from the DfE have been reviewed by the Legal Manager within Procurement and Commercial Services and no concerns with the terms of these documents were highlighted.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

17 This programme is being delivered as directed by the Department for Education who are funding the programme and have specified its delivery requirements. No other options for delivery were considered.

How will success be measured?

18 The DfE has estimated that Leeds should support 600 pupils per year.

19 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.

20 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 and who will be responsible for implementation?

21 The DfE is aiming to release the first instalment of funds in February 2022. The Leeds Taskforce will be responsible for implementation.

Appendices

- EDCI Screening

Background papers

- None