

Report of the Director of Children and Families

Report to Executive Board

Date: 17th October 2018

Subject: Families First ‘Earned Autonomy’ – the plan to use new freedoms to transform early help services for children and families



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input 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. The purpose of this report is to update Executive Board on Leeds’ success in gaining ‘Earned Autonomy’ from central government for its work to support public sector transformation as part of the ‘Families First’ programme. This report is to seek the Board’s approval for implementation plans developed with local partners.
2. Leeds is one of only 13 Local Authorities to have won ‘Earned Autonomy’ status. This was through a competitive process judged by central government and is a result of the high performance and strong leadership of Leeds’ Family First programme. Leeds has been a national example of good practice for a long period, with frequent visits to learn from Leeds’ approach from senior civil servants, politician and local government leaders.
3. Earned Autonomy will give more freedom to transform the way we deliver early help for children and families, supported by funding from central government via upfront payment of ‘Payment By Results’ (PBR) monies. Earned Autonomy status for Leeds is recognition for the improved outcomes, sustained high performance and strong leadership of children’s services in the city.
4. Leeds’ Families First has made a huge difference to the lives of local children and families. Since 2014 the expanded Families First programme has helped 935 children improve their attendance, helped 579 adults into continuous employment (in most cases this has been for 6 months or more) and also supported 1242 adults to make

progress to work; 1566 families have demonstrated a sustained reduction in domestic violence incidents and 713 families have demonstrated a sustained reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour incidents. This shows the value and impact of a whole family approach to improving lives and communities, contributing across Council-wide agendas on learning, skills, crime and wellbeing.

5. Earned Autonomy is a great opportunity to accelerate and support integrated working for children and families at both a citywide and locality level with partners. It is an important part of our ongoing conversation with local schools and services about how we can strengthen the Council's offer of support and investment to these vital local partnerships. Earned Autonomy can also be used to support and inform wider innovation and reform in local services, from Community Hubs and Priority Neighbourhoods to NHS Child and Family Health Hubs. It is clear that in the context of demographic and funding pressures that significant change is needed and our Earned Autonomy plans can help support that change and help reshape a sustainable future for local services.
6. Plans for using the money and freedoms of Earned Autonomy to support further reform and investment have been developed in consultation with local partners across the Council and in the NHS, Police and local schools and organisations. It is proposed to use the Earned Autonomy funding in concert with wider plans for new locality and citywide approaches such as Child and Family Health Hubs and the West Yorkshire Police Early Intervention Strategy. The main areas of change are designed to help strengthen existing working in clusters and wider locality working. The areas are as follows:
 - Three Early Help Hubs, one for each area of the city. These multi-disciplinary hubs will include experienced practitioners in crucial areas such as mental health, substance misuse, worklessness and domestic violence. They will provide direct early help to children and families but will also work with cluster partners to enhance confidence, knowledge and skills in key areas. This model builds on emerging national best practice in areas such as Hertfordshire. The Hubs will also include additional capacity for the support, performance management and quality assurance of Early Help working across the city.
 - New approach to adolescent services. This will be a commissioning fund linked to wider work to support reform and reshaping of local services, again building on national best practice such as the North Yorkshire 'No Wrong Door' initiative.
 - For capacity building in key areas such as workforce development; predictive analysis and performance management; developing practice to better support the Three As – attendance, attainment and achievement.

Recommendations

7. The Board is recommended to:

- Note and approve the plans for Earned Autonomy
- Delegate responsibility for implementation to the Director of Children and Families

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Executive Board on Leeds' success in gaining 'Earned Autonomy' from central government for its work in support of the national 'Troubled Families' programme and to seek the Board's approval of delegated responsibility for the Director of Children and Families to manage the implementation plans developed with local partners.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The 'Troubled Families' initiative was launched by central government in 2011 and has been a high profile national programme of intensive support for families that focused on families with multiple needs including worklessness, poor school attendance, substance abuse, anti-social behaviour and crime.
- 2.2 Leeds chose to rebrand Troubled Families as 'Families First' to emphasise the more positive implementation of the programme in the city and avoid some of the criticism and negativity in some elements of national rhetoric and debate.
- 2.3 The city has a long history of successful work in family support projects and the programme built on this existing good practice across the city including the work of Targeted Services and the existing cluster partnership arrangements. The programme is supported by a multi-agency team with secondments from Police and the DWP which forms the bedrock of the programme.
- 2.4 Leeds is one of only 13 Local Authorities to have won 'Earned Autonomy' status. This was through a competitive process judged by central government and is a result of the high performance and strong leadership of Leeds' Family First programme. Leeds has been a national example of good practice for a long period, with frequent visits to learn from Leeds' approach from senior civil servants, politician and local government leaders.
- 2.5 Leeds' Families First programme has a very good track record, with consistently high levels of performance and improved outcomes for local families. Leeds' Families First programme has received national praise and awards for its work over recent years and is frequently cited as an example of best practice, receiving visits from central government and other Local Authorities.
- 2.6 Leeds' Families First has made a huge difference to the lives of local children and families. Since 2014 the expanded Families First programme has helped 935 children improve their attendance, helped 579 adults into continuous employment (in most cases this has been for 6 months or more) and also supported 1242 adults to make progress to work; 1566 families have demonstrated a sustained reduction in domestic violence incidents and 713 families have demonstrated a sustained reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour incidents. This shows the value and impact of a whole family approach to improving lives and communities, contributing across Council-wide agendas on learning, skills, crime and wellbeing.
- 2.7 Leeds work is held in high regard nationally, having attracted visits and praise from senior politicians, civil servants and colleagues from local authorities across

the UK and other countries. For example, after a central government spot check the feedback from a Director at DCLG was that staff were 'very impressive' who all demonstrated the 'high quality of work that Leeds is carrying out with your families', supported by 'extremely impressive' data systems' and a central team that were 'doing a fantastic job'.

- 2.8 In November 2017 the national Troubled Families national team announced there would be a new way of delivering the programme called "earned autonomy". This would allow local Authorities the freedom and flexibility to receive up front funding of all 'Payments By Results' (PBR) funding and develop a local framework for measuring outcomes. The aim of this new approach to funding was to give Local Authorities the opportunity to innovate and accelerate the pace of change. Local Authorities were asked to bid for earned autonomy, with success dependent on prior good performance, strong local leadership and performance management and a commitment to using the programme to promote further public service transformation
- 2.9 Leeds' bid was developed in partnership and the final proposal was approved by key strategic leads including LCC CEO, Director of Children and Families Services, DWP, Health and Police. Leeds bid was successful and Leeds is one of only thirteen local authorities to have been granted Earned Autonomy.
- 2.10 Funding and audit arrangements have now been agreed with central government. It is important to note that the use of the term 'autonomy' is somewhat over-generous as the scheme will continue to require considerable close performance management and audit of the implementation of the scheme.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Leeds' bid was based on the following plan for funding and change:
- a) Firstly enhancing our Early Help offer at a cluster level by strengthening our local partnerships with multi-disciplinary Hubs (Families First Hubs) in each of the three areas of the city, with investment in additional practitioners and expertise in key areas of need e.g. mental health and housing. Practitioners based in the hubs will have a range of knowledge and experience in key areas of need e.g. mental health, substance misuse, Domestic Violence. They will provide direct early help to children and families and will work with cluster partners to enhance confidence, knowledge and skills in key areas. This model builds on emerging national best practice in areas such as Hertfordshire.
 - b) Secondly, innovation in key areas including work with adolescents, building on existing work with W Yorkshire Police and the Early Intervention Foundation. Existing provision will be re shaped and realigned to develop this service building on existing work with West Yorkshire Police, the Early Intervention foundation, health, education, social care and voluntary sector partners in Leeds. The model will apply learning from other successful approaches such as the North Yorkshire 'No Wrong Door' project
 - c) Thirdly, capacity building, including:

- i. Roll out of the national qualification framework for Early Intervention, Troubled Families Core Cities management training, and the Leeds Practice Model which includes motivational interviewing, formulation and outcome based supervision.
- ii. Investment in intelligence, analysis, performance management and quality assurance. We will develop the use of predictive analysis and intelligent use of analytical data to develop a targeted and proactive approach to addressing needs and vulnerabilities. We will enhance and progress our top 100 methodology ensuring a targeted outcome focussed approach to delivering support services. This work will build on the lessons that have been learnt through Families First in Leeds and the success that we have had in this area. It will also build on a recent project undertaken by Social Finance to explore how existing data and management information systems in Leeds can be used to best effect to target support for children at risk of poor outcomes – such as exclusion from school.
- iii. Developing a stronger focus on the three As (attendance, attainment and achievement) and engagement with schools to achieve improved outcomes for children and young people.

3.2 Since being awarded Earned Autonomy status Children and Families Directorate has been consulting with local partners at both a citywide and local neighbourhood level about how best to implement these new proposals, and how best to link the Earned Autonomy proposals with wider new ways of working in the city and local communities.

3.3 It is important that Earned Autonomy plans are developed and implemented in such a way as to complement and coordinate with the extensive wider changes in services and practice across the city, including: the next steps for Clusters of schools and services; the development of Child and Family Health Hubs in the NHS; the development of Community Hubs in Citizens and Communities; Locality 'Core Groups' and the West Yorkshire Police's Early Intervention Strategy.

3.4 New approaches are being tested in '2Gether Cluster' in the Inner North-East Leeds, bringing together all local agencies to trial novel approaches to further integration and joined up working. The findings from this ongoing work will inform the next steps of implementation for Earned Autonomy.

3.5 These plans will be progressed through a multi-agency working group that will report into the Early Help Board (currently being established) and in turn the Children and Families Trust Board. The Early Help Board will be responsible for strategic leadership of the programme it will report to the Children and Family Trust Board and DHCLG. The Early Help Board will have representation from a wide range of partners including:

- LCC: Children and Families Services; Communities and Environment; Resources and Housing; Adults and Health
 - Clinical Commissioning Group

- West Yorkshire Police
- Schools
- Third Sector

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 The plans for Earned Autonomy have been developed in partnership with a wide range of local partners, and formally supported by all leading public service organisations in the city. Further consultation will be undertaken in the next three months to inform implementation and ensure these proposals fit with the local needs and aims of neighbourhood level partnerships like clusters and NHS Health Hubs.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 As an important citywide initiative to support children and families this programme has important equalities and cohesion implications. Existing work has been underpinned by equalities monitoring but local partners agree that it is now timely to undertake a review to ensure that the revised programme under Earned Autonomy meets the Council's full expectations.

4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan

4.3.1 This report is primarily aligned to the 'Child Friendly Leeds' priority but, as previously mentioned, has an important role in supporting wider aims on worklessness, skills, health and wellbeing.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.2 The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have announced funding of £2.7m p.a. for 2 financial-years (2018-19 & 2019-20); Total £5.4m. This new agreement under Earned Autonomy will bring additional funding to Leeds, as previous budgets were based on achieving a realistic 65% success rate for Payments By Results but Earned Autonomy will provide 100% PBR funding upfront. No decision has been made regarding funding for 2020-21 and beyond. As mentioned in 2.10 above, performance targets and audit requirements have been agreed with the MHCLG.

4.4.3 Under the new Earned Autonomy agreement there are new spending commitments, outlined in 3.1 above that will need to be delivered. These can be managed within existing financial plans for the directorate.

4.5 The Earned Autonomy proposals are a key element of ensuring sustainability for the child welfare system in Leeds. The proposals are designed to support continued partnership working and joint investment and to help reduce demand for costly specialist services and care over time.

4.6 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.6.1 No known issues.

4.7 Risk Management

4.7.1 The new programme will undertake a full risk analysis and a risk management plan will be a responsibility of the new Early Help Board. Risks will be assured by central government oversight and LCC corporate monitoring.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Leeds' approach to joined up working *with* families has made a significant difference to local children and families – helping children engage with school and learn well, helping parents into work and helping to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in some of the more deprived neighbourhoods of the city. The success of Family First has led to continued recognition and praise from national government, and the award of Earned Autonomy status, which will enable the city to further accelerate the pace of change.

5.2 Plans for Earned Autonomy are part of a wider strategy for Early Help for children and families, which in turn is part of a wider citywide transformation programme driving integration and localisation of services. It is important that these proposals are now progressed, ensuring at every stage that we are working with local children, families and partner organisations to build new ways of joint working and new restorative relationships across the city.

5.3 These plans are vital to ensuring the child welfare system in Leeds is sustainable in the medium term and continues to provide good support to children and families. Demographic pressures and continued reductions in public service budgets mean that the status quo cannot continue and new ways of working together need to be found. These Earned Autonomy proposals, properly linked to wider change in other citywide and locality working, can help ensure that success can continue into the next decade.

6 Recommendations

6.1 The Board is recommended to:

- Note and approve the plans for Earned Autonomy
- Delegate responsibility for implementation to the Director of Children and Families

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.