

# Report of the Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) to the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017



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## Subject:

**DfE Re-thinking Social Care Innovation Fund**

## Summary statement:

This report outlines Bradford's £3.2 million innovation fund and its linkages with our existing Journey to Excellence Programme.

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## Portfolio:

**Children's Services**

## Overview & Scrutiny Area:

**Children's Services**



## **1. SUMMARY**

This report outlines the plans following the award of the Department for Education (DfE) Re-thinking Social Care Innovation Fund.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

2.1. There are currently more than 900 looked-after children in Bradford. Many are in settled and stable environments, but too many are not. Currently, 85 are cared for outside our district and too many experience placement breakdowns as part of their journey through care. Long term stability has yet to be achieved for approximately 29.8% of the cohort and three or more placement moves have been experienced by 9.5% of the cohort. At least 100 young people are not attending school full-time. The persistent absence rate from schools for Bradford's LAC children is 19.9%. Many of these issues are particularly prevalent for those becoming Looked After as adolescents.

2.2 There is evidence that this is a particular issue for Bradford children who have a set of complex and interdependent emotional, social and cognitive needs which are sometimes neglected in favour of crisis care. These issues are strongly linked with poorer than average outcomes in education, employment and health, costing the public purse millions of pounds each year in crisis care.

2.3 The Bradford Council Plan 2016-2020 outlines the six key priorities being worked on in order to "create as good a quality of life as possible for the people and communities of the Bradford District". The Children's Social Care Innovation Programme clearly aligns with these priorities in its determination to ensure:

- Better skills, more good jobs and a growing economy
- A great start and good schools for all our children
- Safe, clean and active communities
- Decent homes that people can afford to live in
- Better health, better lives
- A well-run council, using all our resources to deliver our priorities.

## **3. REPORT ISSUES**

3.1 As a consequence of the needs of our Looked After children, particularly those becoming Looked After as adolescents, a proposal was submitted to the Department for Education Re-thinking Social Care Innovation Fund which has subsequently been granted.

3.2 £3.2 million has been awarded over two years for Bradford to reinvent its Care Provision for adolescent Looked After children. The model will be established based on the North Yorkshire No Wrong Door programme which has received national recognition for the proven impact it has had on the looked after children in their district. It is hoped that the scaling up of this programme and the reshaping to fit the demographics of the Bradford context will lead to similar outcomes.

- 3.3 CBMDC's award also incorporates the Mockingbird project, developed in the USA by The Mockingbird Society, an alternative method of delivering foster care with the potential to improve placement stability, safety and permanency for children and young people in care and to improve support for, and retention of, foster carers.
- 3.4 The third element of the successful bid is to undertake Multi-agency, cross-discipline training in Signs of Safety and P.A.C.E. (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy) which will significantly support the work of the Hub Teams in each of the new settings.
- 3.5 The Innovation Programme closely links to the identified priorities and commitments of the Crisis Care Concordat action plan for Bradford, Airedale and Craven. This concordat provides a framework for the improvement and development of mental health services for people in crisis in the district. The Innovation Programme's planned outcomes will further strengthen the impact of the concordat joint commitments.
- 3.6 There is also funding in the Innovation Fund to create an apprentice post to join the leaving care service to promote pathways to further training or employment. We hope that this post will be filled by a care leaver.
- 3.7 The Innovation Programme compliments the Journey to Excellence programme with elements including Signs of Safety, the modelling of children's homes to create smaller and more therapeutic opportunities, the creation of a transition team for disabled children and better out of hours / rapid response services.
- 3.8 A key aim of Journey to Excellence is the ambition to reduce the number of Looked after Children in Bradford. Measured in rates per ten thousand, Bradford currently sits above the National average for looked after children (Bradford 64, National 61) but below the Core City average of 77. The cost of LAC to Bradford in 2015/16 was £40.7k per year per child, totalling £35.6m.
- 3.9 If between the Journey to Excellence Programme and using the Innovation Fund to develop a version of No Wrong Door we were able to reduce the rate of looked after children to that of the National rate per ten thousand, this would reduce the cost to CBMDC by approximately £5m.
- 3.10 The existing Journey to Excellence Programme Board will be revised and expanded to become the Programme Board that oversees the Innovation Fund. North Yorkshire Children's Services who pioneered this approach will be board members alongside the DfE. A research partner will be appointed to consultation with DfE to evaluate the progress and cost effectiveness of the programme.
- 3.11 Suggestions for a programme names are welcomed
- 3.12 The start date for the programme is planned to be 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

#### **4. OPTIONS**

No further information.

#### **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

**6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 That the Corporate Parenting Panel note the award of the Innovation Fund and consider requesting an update once the programme has been fully established.

**7. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None.

**8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

None.

**9. APPENDICES**

None.