

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 10 July 2017

ITEM 6(f)

Title: Step up to Social Work Regional Programme

Portfolio(s): **Children, Young People and Learning**

Cabinet Member(s): **Councillor Ian Grayson**

Report from Service

Area: **Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding**

Responsible Officer: **Jacqui Old, Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding** (Tel: (0191) 643 7006)

Wards affected: **All**

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

In January 2016 the Department for Education (DfE) confirmed its intention to run a fifth cohort of the Step Up To Social Work programme ('the Programme'), starting in January 2018. The 12 North East local authorities submitted a bid to the DfE to take part in cohort 5 by accommodating 41 funded students across the region, with North Tyneside Council ('the Authority') acting as the lead authority for the project on behalf of all of the 12 North East Local Authorities. The Authority has written letters of intent from the other 11 North East local authorities, confirming their commitment to take part in the Programme and accept their agreed number of students as identified in the bid. The Authority, acting as the lead authority has now received written confirmation from the DfE that the bid has been successful.

The Programme provides an accelerated entry route into social work for high-achieving graduates and career changers. The Programme is delivered through the development of a bespoke work based 14 month postgraduate diploma programme, delivered by the 12 local authorities working in a regional partnership and contracting with a higher education institution.

Step Up to Social Work is funded via a "Social Work Programme Grant Agreement" - circa £1.4m which is allocated to the Authority, as the lead authority for the North East partnership.

This report seeks Cabinet approval to act as the lead authority for, and to accept and administer the funding for the Programme on behalf of, the North East partnership and to then implement the Programme in line with the DfE's funding requirements, once received. In addition, the report seeks approval from Cabinet for the Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding in consultation with the Head of Law and Governance and the Head of Finance to have delegated authority to deal with all financial and delivery aspects of this programme on behalf of the Authority.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) agree, as lead authority, to accept funding from the DfE in respect of the Programme submission made on behalf of the 12 local authorities detailed in this report; and
- (2) authorise the Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding in consultation with the Head of Law and Governance and the Head of Finance to deal with all financial and delivery aspects of the Programme on behalf of the 12 North East local authorities.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty eight days notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 12th June 2017.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the following priority in the 2015/19 Our North Tyneside Plan:

Our People - will be cared for and safeguarded if they become vulnerable.

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

In January 2016 the Department for Education (DfE) confirmed its intention to run a fifth cohort of the Step Up To Social Work programme, starting in January 2018. All twelve of the North East authorities submitted a bid to the DfE to take part in cohort 5 by accommodating 41 funded students across the region, with North Tyneside Council ('the Authority') acting as the lead authority for the project on behalf of all of the 12 North East Local Authorities. The 12 North East Authorities are North Tyneside Council, South Tyneside Council, Sunderland City Council, Newcastle City Council, Northumberland County Council, Gateshead Council, Durham County Council, Darlington Borough Council, Middlesbrough Borough Council, Hartlepool Borough Council, Redcar and Cleveland Council and Stockton on Tees Council (the LA's). The Authority, acting as the lead authority has now received written confirmation from the DfE that the bid has been successful.

1.5.2 The Programme provides an accelerated entry route into social work for high-achieving graduates and career changers. The Programme is delivered through the development of a bespoke work based 14 month postgraduate diploma programme, delivered by the 12 local authorities working in a regional partnership and contracting with a higher education institution. Award of the diploma enables candidates to apply for registration as a qualified social worker. The scheme targets high calibre individuals who already have experience of working with children and young people and who want to train as social workers. Evaluation of previous cohorts shows an average 80% conversion rate to social worker posts on completion of the programme and very positive views about the quality of the training.

1.5.3 The Step up to Social Work Programme compliments the DfE's reform programme and its commitment to raising the quality of social work practice, with a particular focus on the practice of child and family social workers undertaking statutory social work. Regionally,

the programme helps address and support the recruitment and retention issues facing all authorities within the region as it provides a pipeline of new social workers to the profession. The majority of students from the previous cohort did secure permanent posts within authorities in the region.

1.5.4 As lead authority for the North East region, the Authority will appoint a Project Coordinator to manage the delivery of the Project. The Project Co-ordinator will be supported by a Project Administrator. It has been agreed that Sunderland City Council will provide the Project Administrator. This role will be fulfilled at Sunderland City Council by an internal secondment for the length of the appointment.

1.5.5 Step Up to Social Work is funded via a “Social Work Programme Grant Agreement” which is allocated through the Authority, as the lead authority for the North East partnership. To enable the North East partnership to implement the Step Up To Social Work programme the DfE will provide the following funding:

- £19,833 per trainee to deliver a bursary to each trainee.
- £11,750 per trainee to cover the supervision and support that hosting authorities provide during the programme.
- £11,667 per trainee to allow the local authorities to procure the course from their chosen Higher Education Institute and provide funds towards a project coordinator post that will be the main interface between the 12 LA’s and the higher Education Provider.
- £38,000 to the North East partnership for establishing and administering the regional partnership of local authorities and their selected Higher Education Institute provider. These funds will cover the cost of Sunderland Council administering the day to day activities of the programme on behalf of the 12 local authorities. The remaining funds will contribute towards a project coordinator post that the 12 LA’s will contract with.
- £10,000 to the North East partnership for making delivery arrangements with the Higher Education institute provider. These funds will remain with North Tyneside as the lead authority and for procuring the Higher Education provider on behalf of the 12 LA’s.
- £4,000 one off payment to the North East Partnership for hosting 41 candidates. This will be split across each LA for their contribution to the partnership.

1.5.6 The timescales for the implementation are as follows:

Application window opens for interested candidates	28 th March 2017
Application window closes	5 th May 2017
Regional Partners to undertake the assessment centre	June 2017
Successful applicants invited to confirm place on course	Early- mid August 2017
Partnership approves HCPC approval for programme	BY November 2017
Step Up to Social Work Programme starts	January 2018
Step Up to Social Work Programme ends	March 2019

1.5.7 North East partnership consists of the following local authorities and associated number of placements that they are each able to support:

Local authority	Number of placements offered
Darlington	3
Durham	6
Gateshead	3
Hartlepool	2
Middlesbrough	4
Newcastle	3
Northumberland	2
North Tyneside	2
Redcar and Cleveland	4
South Tyneside	4
Sunderland	4
Stockton	4
TOTAL	41

This report seeks Cabinet approval for North Tyneside Council to act as the lead authority for the Programme on behalf of the North East partnership and to implement the programme in line with the DfE.

In addition, the report seeks approval from Cabinet for the Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding in consultation with the Head of Law and Governance and the Head of Finance to have delegated authority to deal with all financial and delivery aspects of this programme on behalf of the Authority.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

Cabinet approve the implementation of the Programme in accordance with the recommendations at paragraph 1.2.

Option 2

Cabinet does not approve the implementation of the Programme in accordance with the recommendations at paragraph 1.2 and request Officers to consider other options.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

If Cabinet approves the recommended option, the Authority will commence implementation of the Programme in line with the Department for Education's Grant Funding Agreement.

If the preferred option is not approved, the Authority will be unable to undertake the proposed implementation of the Programme on behalf of the 12 local authorities.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix: North East Step Up to Social Work Cohort 5 – application form

1.9 Contact officers::

Jacqui Old, Director of Children’s Services, tel. (0191) 643 7006.

Martin Birch, Assistant Director of Children’s Services, tel. (0191) 643 7356.

Louise Robson, Senior Manager (Organisation and Workforce Development), tel. (0191) 643 5043.

Alison Campbell, Senior Business Partner (Finance), tel. (0191) 643 7038

1.10 Background information:

There are no background papers/information for this report.

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The Programme is funded via a “Social Work Programme Grant Agreement”. Funding payments will be made on a monthly basis, in arrears, and will be made to the Authority as the lead authority. The Authority will then transfer funds to each local authority to ensure the funds are applied correctly and in line with the grant agreement. The total funds to deliver the North East partnership are circa £1,415,220.

As the lead authority the Authority will receive £33,500. Of this, £10,000 is received for the work involved in acting as lead authority and in particular for arranging the procurement of the higher education institution and the balance is to finance the support and supervision costs of the two students accepted by the authority onto the programme.

The authority has received written confirmation from the DfE on the grant allocation as outlined in section 1.5.5.

2.2 Legal

The Authority has in place a Neutral Vendor Agreement with Bloom (formerly NEPRO). This has been procured in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The Agreement enables the Authority to contract with Bloom, and for Bloom to engage with a higher education institution to deliver the required project. The Authority’s contractual relationship is with Bloom, and it is Bloom that will have the contractual relationship with the higher education institution. Thought will be given to ensure that the requirements of the DfE in respect of the funding, filter through this contractual chain, to ensure compliance by the higher education institution.

Of the 12 North East Local Authorities, Sunderland City Council volunteered to provide from their staff, a Project Administrator role to support the Project Co-ordinator. The arrangement with Sunderland City Council is an inter-authority arrangement and is therefore not caught by the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The funding agreed with Sunderland City Council does however fit within the financial envelope of the DfE funding.

In order to engage with a Project Co-ordinator, the North East partnership worked with North East Regional Employer’s Organisation to advertise for and recruit into the Project Co-ordinator

role. The fees for the Project Co-ordinator were advertised at an hourly rate and an assumed number of hours. The applicants for the role were interviewed and the most suitable candidate chosen. Again, it has been ensured that the Project Co-ordinator role will be delivered within the financial envelope of the DfE funding. The fees therefore were based on a fixed fee, the quality and standard of the applicants and their ability to deliver on the role evaluated at the interview stage.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

The Senior Management Team for social care have been consulted on the proposed implementation plan for the Programme.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development has been engaged on the implementation plan for the Programme.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

The Associate Directors of Children's Services and The Regional Workforce Development Group have been consulted and engaged on the Programme for the North East region.

2.4 Human rights

The proposal within this report does not have any direct implications in respect of the Human Rights Act 1998.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no adverse equalities or diversity issues arising from this report. This report is covered under the EIA for the Workforce Strategy 2015 – 2018.

2.6 Risk management

A key risk to the Authority will be in relation to capacity and resources across the partnership to coordinate and manage the programme. This risk will be managed as part of the authority's operational risk management process.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications directly arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Deputy Chief Executive x
- Head(s) of Service x
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) x
- Chief Finance Officer x
- Monitoring Officer x
- Head of Corporate Strategy x