

Decision Maker: Executive

Date: 14 December 2011

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: **RELEASE OF GOVERNMENT FUNDING TO SUPPORT THE STEP UP TO SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMME**

Contact Officer: Antoinette Thorne, Learning and Development Manager (ACS and CYP)
Tel: 020 8313 4208 Email: antoinette.thorne@bromley.gov.uk
Kay Weiss, Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Social Care
Tel: 020 8313 4062 E-mail: kay.weiss@bromley.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Charles Obazuaye, Assistant Director, Human Resources
Gillian Pearson, Director of Children and Young People Services

Ward: N/A

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 In May 2011 the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) announced that they were making funding available to run a second cohort of the Step Up To Social Work programme.
- 1.2 The CWDC initiated the Step Up to Social Work Programme in response to a recognised need to encourage candidates from a wider range of professional backgrounds to consider front-line children's social work as a future career. The aim was to develop a condensed, bespoke, work based entry route into children's social work for high calibre experienced candidates.
- 1.3 Bromley CYP and HR have led a regional partnership including the London Boroughs of Bexley and Lewisham to secure a successful application and award of new funding to deliver the programme. The boroughs are collectively known as the South East London Regional Partnership.
- 1.4 As lead authority for the partnership Bromley Council will receive total funding of £698,000 over a period of 2 years (based on taking 12 candidates onto the programme). This will be released in phases as project milestones are met and evidenced. This represents a trainee and recruitment programme for Bromley at no cost.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That the Council's Executive agrees the release of the Step Up to Social Work funding into the CYP Budget to run the Step Up to Social Work Programme, in partnership with the London Boroughs of Bexley and Lewisham.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy.
 2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People.
-

Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated cost £698,000 across the three boroughs involved in this initiative: Bromley, Bexley and Lewisham.
 2. Ongoing costs: Non-recurring cost.
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Safeguarding and Social Care
 4. Total current budget for this head: £24.373m
 5. Source of funding: Children's Workforce Development Council - Step Up to Social Work Programme
-

Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): n/a
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: 1 FTE
-

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: No statutory requirement or Government guidance.
 2. Call-in: Call-in is applicable
-

Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected):
-

Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? N/A.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 In 2010, the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) developed a new programme, Step Up To Social Work. The programme is a national initiative designed to attract high calibre, professionals into children's social work. The programme offers candidates an 18 month bursary of £15,000 p.a. leading to an MA in social work. The course also pays the higher education provider fees of £20,000 per candidate. It is a condensed, work based entry route to social work and enables the employers to work closely with the higher education provider to ensure that the programme reflects the world of work.
- 3.2 Due to the programme being judged as a success, in May 2011 the CWDC announced that they would be funding a second cohort of candidates through the programme.
- 3.3 One of the key benefits of the programme is that Regional Partnerships are able to work with the higher education provider to create a "bespoke" Masters programme that better reflects the world of work within the partner organisations. The programme must also meet the General Social Care Council (GSCC) requirements and the National Occupational Standards.
- 3.4 The CWDC set out specific criteria requiring local authorities to form regional partnerships with a designated lead authority to make a successful Step Up application. In August 2011 Bromley, in collaboration with the London Boroughs of Bexley and Lewisham, formed the South East London Regional Partnership. It was agreed that Bromley would take on the Lead Authority role.
- 3.5 Bromley as the lead authority is responsible for accessing and administering the funding on behalf of the South East London Regional Partnership. As lead authority, the Council will receive total funding of £698,000 over a period of 2 years (based on taking 12 candidates onto the programme). This will be released in phases as the CWDC project milestones are met and evidenced. The regional partnership operates under a Memorandum of Understanding which states that all decisions regarding the detailed use of the funding to meet the objectives must be agreed by all three boroughs.
- 3.6 The timetable for initiating the Step Up to Social Work Programme was set by the CWDC in order that students would commence their studies in February 2012. Table 1 sets out the key elements of the programme and the timescales for the release of funding.
- 3.7 The regional partnership was established in August 2011. A steering board was formed currently chaired by Antoinette Thorne, Learning and Development Manager (ACS and CYP) from London Borough of Bromley. This Board oversees and monitors the operational implementation and actively participates in the strategic development of the project to make sure that it is delivered to the highest standards and to timescales. They also take key decisions regarding the use of funding.
- 3.8 The partnership tendered for and successfully commissioned a higher education institution to work with on the delivery of the MA course. Goldsmiths were appointed to the work and have a reputation of producing high calibre social work graduates.
- 3.9 The CWDC managed the advertising and initial screening of candidates at a national level. Over 2,000 applications nationally were received over the summer by the CWDC, with 211 expressing interest in a bursary with Bromley, Bexley and Lewisham. Of this number 52 candidates have been successful in progressing to an assessment centre. The assessment centre follows a prescribed mandatory formula and is estimated to cost £15,000 excluding officer time.

- 3.10 A condition of the funding is that a Step Up To Social Work Programme Co-ordinator is recruited. Bromley as the lead Authority has addressed this by reorganising work within HR to release an officer to take up the role on a full time temporary basis to manage the project. This arrangement will be reviewed in March to assess the level of work required to manage the programme after the students have started the course. Any costs incurred as a result of this arrangement will be funded from the programme.
- 3.11 The students will be granted a bursary by one of the authorities within the partnership. Each authority will have responsibility for issuing their own bursary agreements and the payment of the bursary money to the students. The bursary payment is worth £22,500 in total, equating to £15,000 per annum pro rata for the 18 months of the programme.
- 3.12 The amount of £20,000 is allocated per candidate to the higher education institute.
- 3.13 Placement supervision costs of £1500 per candidate are used to reimburse the supervising officers' time while managing the student throughout the course.
- 3.14 The programme is estimated to be cost neutral for the South East London partners as the funds can be used to compensate for officer time spent on setting up the Regional Partnership, commissioning the higher education institute, delivering the assessment centre, induction and customisation of the course.

Table 1 – Breakdown of Funding Timetable

Objective	Funding for cohort two (August 2011 – August 2013)	Total funding for the South East London Regional Partnership (Based on 12 candidates)	Month the funding will be received
Set-up of Regional Partnership	£45,000	£45,000	July 2011
Commissioning of higher education institution	£30,000	£30,000	July 2011
Regional Partnership administration/programme management	£95,000	£95,000	July 2011 (£30,000) December 2011 (£25,000) Release date to be announced (£40,000)
Bursary	£22,500 per candidate	£270,000	March 2012 (£3,750 per candidate) Release date to be announced (£18,750 per candidate)
Training Costs (University Fees)	£20,000 per candidate	£240,000	March 2012 (£3,333.33 per candidate) Release date to be announced (£16,666.67 per candidate)
Placement Supervision	£1,500 per candidate	£18,000	March 2012 (£250 per candidate) Release date to be announced (£1,250 per candidate)
Total		£698,000	

3.15 The CWDC releases the funding in phases as project milestones are met and evidenced. To date £105,000 has been released:

- £45,000 - Set-up of the Regional Partnership
- £30,000 - Commissioning the higher education institute
- £30,000 – The first portion of the £95,000 allocated for Regional Partnership administration/programme management

3.16 The South East London Regional Partnership have planned to use this funding as follows

Item	Breakdown of Costs
Delivery of the assessment centre including officer time	£27,000
Reimbursement of officer time spent on the project	£24,550
Practice Educator course for all those supervising students across the partnership	£19,200
Partnership development to plan and deliver advanced practitioner training in systemic practice	£15,000
Salary of the Step Up To Social Work Programme Co-ordinator	£13,000
Reimbursement for officer time spent on course planning and customisation	£2,095
On-boarding event with practice assessors, learning mentors and teams managers from across the partnership (officer's time and venue)	£2,000
Payment to service users involvement in the Board, assessment centre and course design	£1,100
CRB checks for successful candidates	£528
Total	£104,473

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Step Up to Social Work Programme will assist the Council in delivering its commitment to prioritise the safeguarding and protection of our most vulnerable children and young people, as stated in Building a Better Bromley.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Step Up to Social Work programme is fully funded from the CWDC grant. At the end of the programme it will be possible to recruit to social work vacancies within Bromley without the need to resort to expensive recruitment procedures.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The bursary agreement does not constitute a contract of employment. At the end of the programme the authorities within the partnership are committed to offer successful students employment, subject to suitable vacancies being available.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

Whilst the Council's recruitment and retention strategy for children's social workers has successfully helped to reduce the vacancy levels within this area of work, it is important that we take advantage of any opportunities to increase the supply of high calibre social workers available to work within Bromley.

Non-Applicable Sections:	N/A
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	CWDC Step-Up to Social Work – Information about funding and timeline DCYP10023 – Recruitment and Retention of Children's Social Work Staff