

Decision Maker: Executive

For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by Care Services PDS Committee on:

Date: 23rd June 2015

Decision Type: Non urgent Executive Non Key

Title: **SOCIAL CARE INNOVATION GRANT - DRAWDOWN OF FUNDING**

Contact Officer: Hilary Rogers, Joint Commissioner for Disabled Children Services
Contact: hilary.rogers@bromley.gov.uk 020 8464 3333 x 3059

Mark Smith, Group Manager, Disabled Children's Team
Contact: mark.smith@bromley.gov.uk 020 8461 7915

Chief Officer: Kay Weiss, Director Children's Social Care

Ward: Borough wide

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 This report requests the release of funds which are confirmed by the Department of Education to be transferred into Bromley Council's central contingency in the sum of £100,000 in June 2015.
- 1.2 This funding has been awarded to Bromley Council as a result of a successful bid to the Department of Education's SEND Innovation Fund which is intended to test new models of service efficiencies within Children's Social Care.
- 1.3 The funding is ring fenced for the specific purpose of Social Care innovation as detailed in the bid documentation.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 **The Care Services Policy and Development Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and comment upon the recommended decision to approve the release of the ring fenced £100,000 from the central contingency into the Social Care budget for 2015/16.**
- 2.2 **The Executive is asked to consider the content of this report and approve the release of £100,000 from the central contingency into the Social Care budget for 2015/16.**

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status Existing Policy : Draft Care Services Plan for 2015/16
 2. BBB Priority Children and Young People: Enjoy learning and achieve their full potential; ensuring the health and wellbeing of children and young people, and their families., promoting independence
-

Financial

1. Cost of proposal:: £100,000
 2. Ongoing costs: Not applicable. One off payment until 31 March 2016
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Childrens Disability Service, Children's Social Care (814001, 834105 & 834110)
 4. Total current budget for this head: £580,000, £508,740, £1,289,900 **Total: £2,378,640**
 5. Source of funding: External funding: Department of Education, Social Care Innovation Fund
-

Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): Two part time temporary positions for up to 32 weeks
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Approximately 500 hours over project period
-

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Non statutory
 2. Call-in: Applicable
-

Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Approximately 200 disabled children and young people and their parents/carers
-

Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? no
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: n/a

3. COMMENTARY

Background

- 3.1 The 2014 JSNA identified that the borough is experiencing significant increases in both the number of children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities and experiencing an increase in the complexity of need of this group, who then in turn require an increasing level of support from specialist services.
- 3.2 There are clear indications that the level of needs of the children and young people will continue to increase over the next 10 years.
- 3.3 Historically, Bromley has funded a proportionally high number of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) placed in out of borough residential schools and colleges. However, in recent years the local authority has developed a strategy to increase 'in borough' specialist SEN provision which has resulted in continuing high levels of demand for short breaks from this group.
- 3.4 There are currently 360 children open to the Bromley's Disabled Children's Team in Social Care. The majority of these children are receiving a short break and all of these children have had at least an initial assessment of needs, with some having a more detailed core assessment of need.
- 3.5 Typically an Initial Assessment requires 15 hours of social care staff time. A more detailed assessment requires an average of 30 hours of social care time.
- 3.6 There are presently only three children open to Bromley's Disabled Children's Team in Social Care who are subject to a Child Protection plan. Although rigorous child protection and effective casework is in place, research suggests that, proportionately, there should be more children who have a severe/profound disability subject to a Child Protection plan, given that disabled children are more than 3 times more likely to be abused than their non-disabled peers.
- 3.7 Increasing the frequency of Children in Need visits and meetings for children for whom there are concerns will aid in identifying abuse.
- 3.8 With the introduction of the Children and Families Act 2014, and the new SEND Reform Programme including Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans and the Local Offer, there may be an increased demand for short breaks.

PROPOSAL

- 3.9 There is therefore now a need to re-consider what constitutes an appropriate level of assessment and monitoring and whether this should be undertaken in proportion to need, whilst ensuring timely decision making and ensuring that social care resources can be targeted towards the most complex cases.
- 3.10 Resources need to be focused to ensure the use of qualified Social Workers to support those children and families in most need; to prevent family breakdown and children coming into care, to support looked after children and to ensure that disabled children are safeguarded from harm
- 3.11 The above description of demand and pressures upon children's social care resources is recognised nationally. Local budgets are under tight constraint with services needing to find efficiencies whilst responding to these demands and pressures.

- 3.12 In order to address this, in February 2015 the Department of Education (DfE) sought bids from local authorities to develop and test new ways of working which will target the right level of resource in a way which is proportionate with need and which will be sustainable into the future without the need for additional funding resource.
- 3.13 The Group Manager, Disabled Children's Team and other colleagues have worked closely with the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) to formulate a funding bid which was confirmed as successful in March 2015. The total bid was for £100,000.
- 3.14 The desired outcomes for this funding are:-
- An exploration and trial of new methods and timescales for assessment of social care provision, typically short break provision
 - A methodology to link into the new Education, Health and Care reforms which seek to determine appropriate access to education, health and care services through one assessment process
 - Social workers and social work assistants will work in more focussed way, with less time spent on assessments and more on interventions
 - More children will utilise the local offer/ targeted and universal services instead of reliance on specialist, local authority funded services. i.e. needs will be being identified which can be met without referral for local authority provision.
 - Earlier identification of need will lead to earlier 'signposting' to universal provision where appropriate
 - Well-functioning families will receive a low level of assessment
 - Parents/carers will receive a timely response to requests for service intervention and will feel less pressurised by experiencing a level of social care intervention which is commensurate with their needs and will 'tell their story' less often.
- 3.15 The funding bid was co-produced with representatives from Bromley Parent Voice
- 3.16 One of the pre-requisites of the project is for the local authority to work with parents/carers and disabled children and young people, which will ensure that their views and needs are reflected in any proposed service changes. This will require the spot commissioning of Bromley Parent Voice and Advocacy for All to for these purposes as these organisations are already well established in Bromley to respond in a timely way to facilitate this co-production.
- 3.17 The project will require that a co-ordinator be engaged on a consultancy basis for the duration of the project, together with a temporary business support and data management function.
- 3.18 Bromley's voluntary sector has also been invited to work on the project which will extend the reach for representation from a diverse group.
- 3.19 Opportunities will be investigated to work with professionals across Education and Health which will further enhance the integration of these services for disabled children and young people.

3.19 Outcomes from this work will be shared at national level which will showcase the London Borough of Bromley as a champion of efficiency transformation, and which are expected to influence future legislative frameworks.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This request is in line with the draft Care Services Portfolio Plan 2015/16 : to support children with complex disabilities to remain within their family home and their local community

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Confirmation of the funding has been received by DfE. The funding is ring fenced and expenditure /progress of the scheme has to be reported to DfE on a quarterly basis, up to 31 March 2016.

5.2 The grant allocation is one off funding that does not lead to ongoing future expenditure being incurred by the service

5.3 The detailed proposed project expenditure is detailed in attached Appendix One.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The local authority has a duty to provide social care assessments within designated timescales and to ensure the safeguarding of vulnerable children.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Personnel Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronically Sick & Disabled Person’s Act 1970 • Children Act 1989 • Childrens & Family’s Act 2014 • SEN & Disability Code of Practice 0-25, 2014 • Munro Review of Child Protection 2011 • Pan London Child Protection Procedures 2015