

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Decision Maker: **Children and Young People Portfolio Holder**
Date: **For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by the Children and Young People PDS Committee on 30 November 2010**

Decision Maker: **Executive**
Date: **8 December 2010**

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

TITLE: SAFEGUARDING AND SOCIAL CARE: RELEASE OF SOCIAL WORK IMPROVEMENT FUND GRANT

Contact Officer: Kay Weiss, Assistant Director, Children and Young People Services
Tel 020 83134464 E-mail: kay.weiss@bromley.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Gillian Pearson, Director of Children and Young People Services

Ward: Boroughwide

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 This report requests the Executive agree the release of £72,000 of grant money from the Children's Work Force Development Council (made up of £62,000 from the Social Work Improvement fund and £10,000 from the Newly Qualified Social Worker programme) from contingency for 2010/11 only.
-

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 **The Children and Young People Portfolio Holder is recommended to request the Executive approve the release of £72,000 of money from the Children's Workforce Development Council from contingency to support the improvement in the recruitment and retention of frontline children's social workers.**
- 2.2 **Further, the Children and Young People Portfolio Holder is recommended to request that the remaining sum of £98,000 which will be paid into the council over the next 5 months from the Children's Workforce Development Council, be released on receipt to support the improvement in the recruitment and retention of frontline children's social workers.**

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy:
 2. BBB Priority:
-

Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No cost
 2. Ongoing costs: N/A
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Children's Social Care
 4. Total current budget for this head: £72,000 if approved
 5. Source of funding: Children's Workforce Development Council
-

Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional) - Nil
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours – N/A
-

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory requirement:
 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 As part of the 2009/10 budget setting process, Members agreed that any new grant funding or increases above inflation for existing grant funding be held in the central contingency budget and not included in departmental service budgets. This process continues into 2010/11.
- 3.2 This report requests the release of a grant from the Children's Workforce Development Council that will be used to offset existing expenditure.
- 3.3 The recent national concern about the quality of front line social work practice in child protection has led to the Government establishing the Social Work Reform Board and commissioning Professor Eileen Munro to undertake a comprehensive review of child protection social work. In line with the recommendations of the Social Work Task Force, the precursor of the Social Work Reform Board, the Department for Education (DfE) announced a £23m Social Work Improvement Fund (SWIF) for 2010-11. Allocations to individual authorities have been determined by DfE according to the Relative Needs Formula which is used when allocating other funding to local authorities. The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) has been tasked with distributing these funds and supporting employers to use the funding to reduce pressure on front line social workers and build capacity for reform and improvement in social work with children and families.
- 3.4 The CWDC is distributing this money together with other grants for which the authority is eligible in raising the standards of front line child protection practice. In Bromley this includes money for supporting newly qualified social workers.

Social Work Improvement Fund

- 3.5 The SWIF allocation for Bromley is £130,000.
- 3.6 The Social Work Task Reform Board has emphasised the importance of skilled and confident front line managers as essential to safe child protection work and to ensure effective management of workload, effective supervision and reflective practice. They also highlight the need for better access to training and development in professional supervision. In line with these requirements Bromley has developed a training package with the Tavistock clinic which is being rolled out to all front line child protection managers over the next 3 months. It is propose that this programme is extended to key senior practitioners in order to develop the next generation of front line managers. These have proved the most difficult posts to recruit to in front line teams.
- 3.7 As well as training for front line managers, front line child protection practitioners need enhanced skills in risk assessment. Following the disaggregation of the training grant by the Department of Health between adult and children's social care workforce, over the last 2 years children's social care have been underfunded for the training package that was in place in 2008/09 and which is felt essential to the effective development of front line child protection staff. It is proposed that some of the social work improvement fund is used to enhance the training package for front line workers focusing on the assessment and analysis of risk, areas where there have been identified shortcoming in Bromley as evidenced in recent serious case reviews.
- 3.8 The interim report of the Munro Review has criticised the unnecessary bureaucracy created for child protection social workers by the Integrated Children's System (CareFirst in Bromley). Some work has already been undertaken in Bromley which will make significant time saving for front line social workers and front line managers. However, there are still correctable weaknesses to the system. It is therefore proposed that some of the social work improvement fund is used to enhance the changes being made by providing time limited floor walkers to assist front line social workers to manage the changes.

- 3.9 In order to keep experienced practitioners in front line teams many authorities are developing or exploring enhanced training packages which will result in an advanced practitioner status. These training packages aim to ensure that advanced practitioners develop the ability to manage complex cases with knowledge, skill and sensitivity, lead and mentor colleagues in reaching appropriate decisions, overcoming difficulties and resolving dilemmas and offer effective leadership. It is hoped this will persuade front line staff to remain in those teams rather than move to alternative workplaces or other boroughs. Two neighbouring boroughs are already operating advanced practitioner courses and the intention is that Bromley will commission places on those courses.
- 3.10 In order to continue to recruit the best newly qualified social workers Bromley is working closely with Goldsmiths College, a producer of high quality social work masters graduates, to develop a bursary scheme for students in their final year, who would then need to contract themselves to work for Bromley for a defined period (usually 2 years).
- 3.11 It is therefore proposed that the social work improvement fund be used as follows:
- £20,000 on a training package to develop in house first line managers
 - £40,000 to enhance the training programme for front line child protection social workers
 - £20,000 on additional support to the improvements to the CareFirst system
 - £20,000 to release 5 experienced front line practitioners to develop advanced social work status.
 - £30,000 to secure 3 final year social work masters students as employees of Bromley.

Newly Qualified Social Workers

- 3.12 For the past 2 years CWDC's has run a Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) programme, enabling employers to offer a consistent, high quality, 12 month support package to those in their first year of employment as a social worker. Bromley, along with 134 other local authorities, is currently using the programme to help achieve recruitment and retention objectives for front line social workers.
- 3.13 £4000 of funding is made available for every NQSW registered on the scheme and the authority is granted another £15,000 for a programme coordinator to provide independent evaluation at the end of the NQSWs first year.
- 3.14 In accessing this funding the authority commits to provide the following for NQSWs:
- Regular supervision
 - A protected caseload
 - A training and development plan
 - 10% of their time ring fenced for training and development activity.
- 3.15 The NQSW funding for Bromley for 2010/11 is £39,000, based on the 6 NQSW who have been registered with CWDC. Support for these registered NQSWs has already commenced.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The grant concerned would contribute to the delivery of priorities for children's services as set out in the Children and Young People's Plan, under the Every Child Matters outcomes framework.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Details on the use of this funding from the Children’s Development Workforce Council are in paragraph 3.9.
- 5.2 This report requests Members to agree to the release of this funding for 2010/11 only to offset existing expenditure. Any funding in future years will be built into the Council’s budget development process.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Legal Implications Personnel Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	