

	<p><b>ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS BY OFFICER</b>  <b>13 December 2016</b></p>
<p><b>Title</b></p>	<p><b>Authorisation to commission workforce learning and development based on systemic principles for children’s social care</b></p>
<p><b>Report of</b></p>	<p>Assistant Director Children’s Social Care</p>
<p><b>Wards</b></p>	<p>All</p>
<p><b>Status</b></p>	<p>Public</p>
<p><b>Enclosures</b></p>	<p>None</p>
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<p><b>Summary</b></p>
<p>This report seeks authority to commission workforce learning and development based on systemic principles to the value of £150,000 over the contract lifetime for children’s social care, and relevant practitioners, to support the Family Services Practice Improvement Plan.</p>

<p><b>Decisions</b></p>
<p><b>1. Authority to commission workforce learning and development based on systemic principles, up to the value of £150,000 in 2016-17 and over the contract lifetime, for the children’s social care workforce and relevant practitioners.</b></p>

## **1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED**

1.1 Family Services has reviewed its current training offer and take a decision to work more thematically in how the social care workforce are trained, in order to achieve better outcomes for children. Family Service's Practice Improvement Plan has 3 key elements:

- To empower and equip the social care workforce to understand the importance and meaning of purposeful social work in Barnet;
- To ensure that Barnet's organisational culture, systems and tools support the delivery of high quality social work;
- To retain, attract and grow a cadre of effective social workers who are child focussed, curious and inquisitive about what they are seeing and assessing.

## **2. REASONS FOR DECISIONS**

2.1 The multi-agency Children and Young People Plan 2016-2020 outlines Barnet's vision to become the most 'Family Friendly' borough by 2020. This means that children, young people and their families are safe, healthy, resilient, knowledgeable, responsible, informed and listened to. Family Services will advance this agenda through the Resilient Families: Resilient Children model.

2.2 Across the council and partners, a resilience-based model has been introduced to achieve the Family Friendly vision. This resilience-based model builds on existing practice, and has been embedded across Family Services. It applies to all internal and externally commissioned services for children, young people and families. In Family Services, the Signs of Safety framework sits within the resilience-based model and is enhanced by a range of tools.

2.3 This decision contributes to Barnet's resilience agenda by enhancing the ability of leaders and managers to think critically, examine situations from multiple perspectives and promote purposeful social work through purposeful leadership. The providers will be asked to put forward learning and development based on systemic principles to support the resilience-based model through delivery of this contract.

2.4 The current workforce learning and development offer does not provide sufficient focus on the key thematic issues that are central to the Practice Improvement Plan and this learning and development package is of critical importance for Barnet to improve practice.

2.5 Research evidence and examples from high-performing local authorities demonstrate that systemic-based practice can empower practitioners to work

in a more holistic, dynamic and collaborative way with children and families. This will enable Barnet to realise its Family Friendly Barnet: Resilient Families, Resilient Children in an evidence-based way. It also facilitates the creation of a workplace culture that encourages constructive challenge and solution-focussed thinking. These elements are central to achieving the 3 key elements of the Practice Improvement Plan.

- 2.6 This decision supports the implementation of the workforce quality and retention elements of the Practice Improvement Plan, through the commissioning of learning and development that is based on systemic principles for the social care workforce, and relevant practitioners. It supports all three strands of the Practice Improvement Plan, in particular the third:
- To empower and equip the social care workforce to understand the importance and meaning of purposeful social work in Barnet
  - To ensure that Barnet's organisational culture, systems and tools support the delivery of high quality social work
  - To retain, attract and grow a cadre of effective social workers who are child focussed, curious and inquisitive about what they are seeing and assessing
- 2.7 This decision will help to drive the three elements of the Workforce Strategy 2015-19, which has the core aims of reducing turnover, strengthening staff performance and raising the confidence of staff.

### **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- 3.1 An alternative option is the 'do nothing' option. However, as noted above, although the current provision is meeting some training needs, it is not addressing key thematic issues.
- 3.2 An options appraisal was undertaken in Barnet in June 2016 to appraise the systemic approach against other approaches identified by the DfE. It complemented and built on a number of strengths inherent to a range of evidence-based tools, some of which are present or being introduced to Family Services.

### **4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

- 4.1 Following the decision, there will be engagement with potential providers and a procurement route will be identified, either through existing competitive frameworks or through a direct procurement exercise with the market. The procurement route, as set out in Appendix 1 of the Contract Procedure Rules, will conform to contracts with a procurement value of £10,000 to £164,176. This requires a minimum of 2 written quotations received. Following this, a Council Officer as approved by the Scheme of Delegation, can accept the contract, which will then be recorded and published as a summary DPR.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

### **5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

#### **5.1.1 The council will continue to ensure a great start in life for every child and that young people are well prepared for adulthood.**

High quality social work practice is fundamental to achieving the Family Friendly Barnet vision of Resilient Families: Resilient Children, and one of the three core pillars of the Practice Improvement Plan, all of which aim to improve outcomes for children. It is linked to the findings of Quality Assurance over 2015/16, namely that there is inconsistent practice in the following areas: assessment, planning, diversity, voice of the child and management oversight and supervision.

#### **5.1.2 Keeping well and promoting independence, the overarching themes of the Health and Well Being Strategy, outline Barnet's vision for its residents and cover the following themes:**

- Preparing for a healthy life
- Wellbeing in the community
- How we live
- Care when needed

### **5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

#### **5.2.1 The cost of this element of workforce learning and development provision will be a maximum of £150,000 in the 2016-17 financial year, and up to this amount over the contract lifetime. It will be funded from the Family Services Transformation budget. The procurement process is summarised in 4.1.**

#### **5.2.2 This decision directly relates to the development of high quality staff and retention of staff. It provides value for money as it drives a number of key service priorities and improvement plans through raising the quality of frontline practice, namely the resilience-based practice model, the Practice Improvement Plan and the Workforce Strategy.**

#### **5.2.3 In line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, there will be engagement with potential providers and the procurement route as set out in 4.1 will be followed.**

### **5.3 Legal and Constitutional References**

#### **5.3.1 The Council has a legal duty to provide social work services to children and families who it require it, as defined by the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004 and the Children and Families Act 2015.**

#### **5.5.2 The Children and Young People Scheme of Delegation (found here: <https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s30360/Children%20and%20Youn>)**

[g%20People.pdf](#)) gives authority to the Assistant Director, Social Care, to authorise procurements between £25,001-£164,176.

5.5.3 Appendix 1, Table A, paragraph 'C' of Barnet's Contract Procedure Rules sets out the Authorisation and Acceptance threshold for contracts of a value between £25,001 to £164,176. The requirement is for either (i) the procurement to be contained in the Procurement Forward Plan; or (ii) a full Officer (Director/Assistant Director) DPR. The procurement procedure will follow the route as set out in this (see 4.2 for a summary).

5.5.3 In addition to compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, the Council is statutorily bound to comply with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 when seeking to procure the workforce learning and development provision.

#### 5.4 Risk Management

5.4.1 The Family Services Practice Improvement Plan sets out the activities that are required to improve the quality of social work practice in Barnet. The risk of not agreeing this decision is that the key workforce element of the Practice Improvement Plan cannot be implemented and this risks the delivery of quality improvement of social work services for children.

#### 5.5 Equalities and Diversity

5.5.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies **to have due regard** to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.

The delivery of workforce learning and development supports children's social care staff to meet the diverse needs of Barnet' communities.

#### 5.6 Consultation and Engagement

5.6.1 There is ongoing consultation and engagement with the social care workforce and the development of a stronger and broader learning and development offer is supported by the workforce. There are also a number of forums for children and young people to share their views and experiences of Barnet's services and the learning from children and young people will feed into future staff learning and development.

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

6.1 None

**7. DECISION TAKER'S STATEMENT**

7.1 *I have the required powers to make the decision documented in this report. I am responsible for the report's content and am satisfied that all relevant advice has been sought in the preparation of this report and that it is compliant with the decision making framework of the organisation which includes Constitution, Scheme of Delegation, Budget and Policy Framework and Legal issues including Equalities obligations.*

**8. OFFICER'S DECISION**

**I authorise the following action**

8.1

**Signed**            Assistant Director Children's Social Care

**Date**              13/12/2016

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