

## **Delegated Officer Report**

**Decision Maker:** Jill Beaumont, Director Children's Social Care and Early Help

**Date of Decision:** 29 August, 2018

**Subject:** Establishment of a 'Together With' Team

**Report Author:** Gerard Gudgion, Operational Manager Early Help  
Ext 1183

**Ward (s):** N/A

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### **Reason for the decision:**

#### **Summary:**

The tiered structure of service provision, Universal through to Specialist, has led to a default thinking position of "that's not my role it needs to be done by a dedicated, specialist, practitioner". This culture of 'passing forward' to specialists has effectively minimised the 'offer' from first touch and universal services. It has also encouraged the evolution of a dependency culture for other, so-called, expert services, both for individuals and services.

It also contributes to speculative and inappropriate referrals of issues into children's social care which could have probably been effectively resolved at a universal level given the right training and approach.

Universal services play a pivotal role in the early identification of need. This is particularly important given the recognised significance of the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) such as domestic abuse, bereavement and having parents with substance misuse problems, and the subsequent need to identify and address these at the very earliest opportunity.

Universal services are ideally placed to help with early identification and early interventions to prevent or reduce the impact of ACEs.

As such, it is proposed that a team be created which will support a culture of change, facilitate learning opportunities and help skills development geared to enable universal and first touch services to become more able to:

- Identify needs at the earliest opportunity, particularly those associated with ACE
- Initiate early intervention measures which remove, reduce or mitigate the adverse impact of ACE
- Engage and support in a way ('Together With') which encourages them to find and implement their own solutions to issues and which help them to become more resilient and self-reliant.
- Reduce dependency on specialist tier 2 and 3 services

The team will work closely with universal and partner agencies, modelling the 'Together With' approach, to identify, in conjunction with them, support, learning and skills development opportunities. This will include the development of specialist training interventions designed around the needs of universal and first touch staff. The work of the team will also inform future service and staff development needs.

#### **Wider Benefits**

A universal workforce skilled at engagement, early identification and early intervention will help reduce demand across a range of services and will also help encourage a culture of being less reliant on services and more reliant on self.

#### **The Team**

The proposed 'Together With' team will comprise of 5.2 FTE positions, all to be employed on a permanent contract basis.

- 1.2 FTE x 'Together With' Supervisor (Grade 8)
- 4 FTE x 'Together With' worker (Grade 5)

There are 1.2 FTE Supervisor roles proposed as this role will also be engaging directly to provide support and challenge to managers and leaders in universal services.

The Team would be organised to support work across three areas of Oldham aligned to the school collaborative clusters, with two workers covering each.

Grades have been confirmed through the job evaluation process.

The roles will be advertised both internally and externally.

***What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):***

**Option A Do Nothing**

Doing nothing would mean that we would continue to see speculative and inappropriate referrals 'passed on' to children's social care and other specialist services taking up their time and resources to resolve.

**Option B Achieve under current capacity**

Significant time and effort, over recent years, has been expended, attending meetings, training events, seminars etc. with universal services to help them better understand the role they and social care play in the provision of services. This has been undertaken by key staff in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub over and above their current duties. It would be those same staff who would be expected to achieve the proposed culture changes and skills learning. It is highly unlikely that they would be able to achieve the change and learning required, nor would they be able to dedicate the time required and be able to undertake their 'day job' responsibilities.

**Option C Establish a new "Together With" team**

Given our experience with implementing and embedding the early help approach we know that there is a very high chance of success if we have the ability to deploy a dedicated resource.

Working alongside those services, modelling the 'together with' approach, will:

- Promote a better understanding of the needs and limitations of all services.
- Facilitate a degree of self-awareness amongst professionals about the part they can and should play in the early identification of need (including that relating to ACE) and appropriate early interventions.
- Skill front line workers in engagement methodologies which help them to be able to establish effective working relationships with parents, children and young people.
- Lead to earlier resolution of need
- Reduce the need to 'pass forward' to other services.

***Consultation: including any conflict of interest declared by relevant Cabinet Member consulted.***

The Cabinet member Policing and Community Safety has been consulted as the lead member for Early Help.

***Recommendation(s):***

Option C - establish a new 'Together With' team

## Implications:

### *What are the financial implications?*

The total anticipated costs for establishing the 5.2 posts is shown in the table below at a sum of £654k over the four years to 2021/22. Costs shown are based on bottom of scale and are inclusive of on-costs with an incremental rise each financial year. Costings are based on an assumed start date of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018 and ceasing at the end of March 2022 (in line with grant timeline).

	2018/19 £k	2019/20 £k	2020/21 £k	2021/22 £k	Total £k
Together With Supervisor 1.2 FTE (G8)	32	56	57	59	204
Together With Worker 4 FTE (G5)	69	123	127	131	450
<b>Total Cost to Reform Investment Fund</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>654</b>

Funding for this initiative is available via the Reform Investment Fund grant, which is available from 2018/19 until 2021/2022. The total available and anticipated grant is £2,573k and there is sufficient uncommitted resource to support this investment in the 'Together With' team.

As the posts are for a period of four years, redundancy costs may be payable upon termination. Subject to a review of the grant conditions there is a possibility that redundancy costs are not a permissible use of the grant funding. If this were to be the case the cost would fall to the Service and would need to be factored into the financial management process at the appropriate time.

(Jenny Howarth – Senior Accountant)

### *What are the legal implications?*

Comments from both finance and HR are noted. No comments from legal.

Radhika Aggarwal Principal Employment  
Solicitor  
N/A

### *What are the procurement implications?*

**What are the *Human Resources* implications?**

I support the option recommended due to the positive impact the reduced dependency on other teams will have on their workload, which will therefore have a positive impact on the performance, attendance, engagement and well-being of our staff.

Recruitment to the new posts, and termination of posts at the end of the funding period if applicable must be made in line with Oldham Council's Policies and Procedures and relevant employment legislation.

(Lauren Jones – HR Business Partner)

**Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment attached or not required because (please give reason)**

An initial equality impact assessment has not identified any adverse consequences arising from the proposals, and the activity of the Team is intended to improve outcomes for disadvantaged groups.

**What are the *property* implications**

N/A

**Risks:**

There are no corporate level risks associated with the decision.

**Co-operative agenda**

The delivery of ambitions for Children and Early Help will support the corporate objective to deliver good value services that support a co-operative borough by having a clear 'resident focus' which will encourage those residents to 'take ownership' of their issues whilst 'driving change' in services.

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Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution? Yes


Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget? Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? No

**List of Background Papers under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:**

There are no background papers for this report

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<b>Report Author Sign-off:</b>	
	Bruce Penhale Assistant Director Communities and Early Intervention
<b>Date:</b> 30/8/18	

In consultation with Director/Executive Director

Signed : J. Beaumont Date: 30.8.18

Jill Beaumont, Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help