

## **Delegated Officer Report**

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	<b>Elaine Devaney, Director of Children's Social Care</b>
<b>Date of Decision:</b>	<b>18 November 2020</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Additional staffing to support MASH development</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Bruce Penhale, Assistant Director Family Connect</b>
<b>Ward (s):</b>	<b>N/A</b>

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**Reason for the decision:**

During October 2020 – March 2021 there will be a number of inter-connected changes to improve the Early Help support offer for children and families, and the process for triaging need in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). These include:

- Restructuring of the Early Help and Family Support teams to a district model of working, including linking closely with schools and other local services;
- Development of an integrated Children's Services team in the MASH;
- System changes to: move Early Help casework onto the Mosaic system; introduce a single children's services contact and referral record; and replace the existing online referral form with a children's services referral portal which links directly to Mosaic.

The report seeks approval to create additional temporary capacity in the Early Help service to:

- support development of the place-based delivery model for Early Help; and to
- prevent any decline in the timeliness or quality of Early Help decision making and service delivery during a 6 month period in which service structures and systems are in transition.

These temporary arrangements are critical to the creation of an integrated MASH team across Children's Social Care and Early Help, which was identified as a key area of improvement by Ofsted.

**Summary:**

The report relates to the following proposals:

1. Using an Early Help Development Team supervisor to support Early Help development

activity in relation to the team around the school and community model. This would involve using half the time of this post to support delivery of externally funded activity (adopting and adapting the Team Around the School model). Reflecting the use of this post, 50% of the costs of the post would be funded from external grant (DfE social care transformation funding for Team Around the School) delivering a saving to the mainstream budget of £14.8k.

2. Strengthening Early Help capacity within the MASH by:
  - a) Appointing an agency Senior Practitioner for a 6 month period from 1 December 2020 – 31 May 2021 to provide additional capacity in triaging Early Help casework at a cost of £34k. This will ensure continuity of leadership within the Early Help team in the MASH during a period in which structures are changing, avoiding any reduction in the timeliness or quality of decision-making for children and families;
  - b) Temporarily increasing Early Help capacity in the MASH by extending an existing maternity cover arrangement for a Customer Service Officer to receive an honorarium to act as an Early Help Process officer (increase of 4 scale points from Grade 4 to Grade 5 at an additional cost of £2.2k from 27 September 2020 – 31 March 2021);
  - c) A Children's Social Care MASH Customer Service Officer to receive an honorarium to act as Early Help Process officer to support development of the skills of the Early Help front door team in social care systems (increase 2 scale points from Grade 4 to Grade 5 from 1 September 2020 – March 2021 at an additional cost of £0.8k)
  - d) Increasing the hours of a Grade 2 Business Support officer from half-time to full-time for six weeks to input data on currently open cases into the Mosaic system as part of the transition of all Early Help casework with children and families into this system, at an additional cost of £1.6k

Because these costs relate to development of the Early Help offer, they can be funded through the Reform Investment Fund. This is Troubled Families funding from government, which is held in a ring fenced reserve for supporting this area of activity.

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

**Option A** Do not create this additional temporary capacity

**Option B** create the additional temporary capacity

Option B is recommended. Without introducing the additional capacity during the period in which structures and systems are in transition, there is a risk that the quality of the service to children and families will be impaired, so that they do not receive the right support in a timely fashion and therefore risking an escalation of need.

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

There has been consultation with managers within Early Help and Children's Social Care

**Recommendation(s):**

**Option B** Create the additional capacity

**Implications:**

*What are the **financial** implications?*

This Delegated Decision seeks approval for **Option B** which is to create additional temporary capacity within the Early Help Service to:

- support development of the place-based delivery model for Early Help; and to
- prevent any decline in the timeliness or quality of Early Help decision making and service delivery during a 6 month period in which service structures and systems are in transition.

The proposal is looking at temporary arrangements over a six month period as detailed within the summary within points 1 and 2 above by drawing down on two reserves as follows:

1. Funding an existing post via £14,800 from the GMCA Targeted Children's Review Reserve, creating a saving on the mainstream budget.
2. Strengthening Early Help capacity within the MASH by putting in place 4 temporary arrangements and funding this by drawing down £38,600 from the Reform Investment Fund reserve.

In total a reserve request drawdown of £53,400 is being requested as part of this report.

Given the significant financial challenge that the Council is facing, one of the principles that has been agreed is to limit the call on reserves in 2020/21. Whilst reserves have been identified for the above proposal - GMCA Targeted Children's Review and Reform Investment Fund, should the need arise, these reserves would have to be called upon to support the overall financial resilience of the Council. In agreeing to use the reserves, the decision maker must be clear that this is of the highest priority to the Council given

all other pressures and that no alternative funding sources are available.

Vicki Hayes/Sadrul Alam

What are the **legal** implications?

n/a

What are the **procurement** implications?

n/a

What are the **Human Resources** implications?

The proposed and preferred option of temporary arrangements will provide critical additional capacity around the development of early help in addition to supporting essential change in the operation of the children's front door in the MASH. Demand is currently an issue in addition to the current period of change the service finds itself in. The service have reviewed if the work can be undertaken differently or elsewhere, however, there is no viable alternative.

The additional resource provided will support the changes evidenced within the service.

Pay & Reward have reviewed the information in regards additional payments and agree that the proposals comply with the current Council policies. (Stewart Hindley, Strategic HR Business Partner)

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

The proposals will not have an adverse impact on any section of the population, and will help prevent any adverse impact on vulnerable children and families during a period of service transition.

What are the **property** implications

n/a

**Risks:**

There are no corporate level risks associated with this post.

**Co-operative agenda**

Early help services provide support to families which builds their capacity to be in control of their own lives.

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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? n/a

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

**Reason(s) for exemption from publication:**

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

There are no background papers to this report

<b>Report Author Sign-off:</b>	
Bruce Penhale	
<b>Date: 18/11/20</b>	

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In consultation with Director of Children's Services, Elaine Devaney



Signed :

Date: 18 November 2020

In consultation with the Director of Human Resources, (or representative)



Signed :

Date: 18 November 2020