

## Delegated Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker and Portfolio area:</b>	<b>Gerard Jones, Managing Director Children and Young People</b>
<b>Date of Decision:</b>	<b>21 December, 2021</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Homestart Funding 2021- 23</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Shirley Woods-Gallagher, Assistant Director Commissioning</b> <b>Bruce Penhale, Assistant Director Early Help</b>
<b>Ward (s):</b>	All Wards

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

Home-Start HOST Limited is a voluntary sector organisation working with large numbers of vulnerable families across the Oldham borough through a Befriending Service which matches vulnerable and at risk families with a child under five with a volunteer supporter. This timely support improves outcomes for families and reduces the need for escalation to Early Help and other high cost services.

DMT have previously agreed to continue providing grant funding to Home-Start HOST but a decision was not taken on which budget code it would come from for 21/22. Subsequent discussions have taken place with Commissioning, finance and Early Help to rectify this.

DMT are asked to support the continuation of the grant funding for Home-Start HOST for 21/22 and 22/23 from the Supporting Families budget. There is a Demand Management Strategy in development, which includes proposals for investing in an enhanced voluntary, community and faith sector offer to support delivery of earliest possible help to children and families. This would potentially fund the type of activity currently delivered by Home-Start Host in future, but will ensure continuity of the existing offer until a new offer is in place. The current funding envelope is £25,000 per annum.

## **Summary:**

Home-Start HOST is a voluntary sector organisation working with large numbers of vulnerable families across the Oldham borough through a Befriending Service which matches vulnerable and at risk families with a child under five with a volunteer supporter. This timely support improves outcomes for families and reduces the need for escalation to Early Help and other high cost services.

Home-Start Host is well-regarded and highly thought of by professionals and families. They are also a vital contributor at a strategic level and are supporting workstreams such as the development of the new Right Start model.

The organisation has previously been able to attract additional funding into Oldham from sources such as the National Lottery and Comic Relief. However, due to Covid there are currently fewer options to bid for external funding.

Historically, Home-Start Host has used this significant additional funding to enhance the offer in Oldham as they are committed to supporting our most vulnerable families. They currently have full caseloads and a waiting list.

To provide context, funding from neighbouring LA areas for befriending support is as follows:

£125,000 Tameside MBC and a further £25,000 from Action Together

£36,000 Stockport CCG

£37,000 Bolton from Bolton Together (consortium of VCSE organisations) with another bid pending for a further £25,000 from Bolton CVS

£25,000 Oldham Council

## **Recommendation**

Option One:

DMT approve the continuation of funding for Home-Start HOST from the Troubled Families Agenda budget up to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. This will ensure that Home-Start Host is able to continue delivering services in Oldham for our most vulnerable families whilst a new model is developed. This would also enable Home-Start HOST to have a more sustainable footprint in Oldham.

## Option Two:

Cease to fund Home-Start HOST.

If funding is not approved, a beneficial service within the Oldham community could be lost. Action would need to be taken to manage communications to existing families, those on the waiting list and professionals who regularly refer to the service. Consideration would also need to be given as to where these families would be signposted or referred to as an alternative.

Home-Start HOST has already been delivering its Befriending service from April 2021 as previously agreed.

**Recommended Option is option one.**

## Implications:

What are the **financial** implications?

The Homestart service costs are undertaken within Childrens Services on cost centre 38950.

This report is looking to access funding from the Reform investment fund reserves to support costs for the service in the following years as per the preferred option 1:

2021-22	£25,000
2022-23	£25,000

Costs will be met by way of drawdown from the reserve in each year and have been factored into the overall spending profile and use of the overall RIF reserves balance.

No additional costs will arise as a result to the authority.

A further report will need to consider the funding options for years 2023-24 and beyond.

Sadrul Alam, Finance Manager

What are the **procurement** implications?

The Council has an existing grant funding arrangement with Homestart Oldham, Stockport and Tameside. There are no Procurement implications as this report concerns grant funding, However, when paying out monies to external organisation, the Authority must ensure an open and fair process has been followed that will comply with any scrutiny and are in line with the specific grant funding conditions. Mohammad sharif

What are the **legal** implications?

A subsidy control analysis is needed to ensure that the proposed funding is in line with the subsidy control regime. If approved, a suitable grant funding agreement will need to be entered into to ensure the delivery of any funding objectives. The remedy of clawback of the grant would be available should the grant recipient fail to meet objectives.

Sarah Orrell

What are the **Human Resources** implications?

If Option 1 is agreed there are no particular HR issues as identified as it is understood all employees/volunteers are engaged by a third party. It is worth being mindful that there may be redundancy payment entitlements accruing for the 3<sup>rd</sup> part as employee service will increase.

If option 2 is agreed there may be some requirement for additional training/changes to ways of working for internal Oldham staff. There may also be some redundancy liability depending on contractual arrangements with the Home Start employer. Kate Jolley

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

Not required as continuation of this service is the recommended option.

What are the **property** implications

None for the Council.

**Risks:**

Vulnerable families in Oldham who cannot access the befriending service may escalate to a higher level of support need, ending up potentially in crisis and becoming more high cost

Reputational risk to the Council as a valuable and well regarded VCSFE partner is no longer able to deliver core preventative services in Oldham if funding ceased.

**Co-operative agenda**

Work with VCSFE partners is a core principal within Oldham's co-operative agenda, and this service users volunteers to befriend and support other families.

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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

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

**Reason for urgent report**

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

None

<b>Report Author Sign-off:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

Signed : Gerard Jones, Managing Director Children and Young People



Signed

Date: 21 December 2021