

Delegated Decision Report

Decision Maker and Portfolio area:	Richard Lynch – Director of Education, Skills & Early Years
Date of Decision:	18 January 2022
Subject:	Early Identification of Need Project
Report Author:	David Shaw, Assistant Director SEND Andrea Weir, Senior Commissioning and Partnerships Manager
Ward (s):	All Wards

Reason for the decision:	<p>Oldham Council, through Department for Education (DfE) Opportunity Area grant funding, have developed a bid to improve the early identification of special educational needs, including Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This project is called the Early identification of Need project and Oldham is one of three other areas to receive this additional funding.</p> <p>Grant funding was confirmed by the DfE on 13 December 2021.</p> <p>The overall ASD Diagnosis Support Service is delivered within scope of a contract with Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust who sub-contract an element of delivery to Parents of Oldham in Touch (POINT). This also supports Oldham's co-production and partnership principles. ASD primary need accounts for c.35% of the EHC plans maintained by Oldham Council, and continues to increase locally and nationally.</p> <p>An additional grant of £30,000 has been identified for pre-diagnostic support work as part of the Early Identification of Need Project. It is proposed this is delivered by POINT under the</p>
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arrangements outlined above as this would strengthen and extend the existing offer to Oldham families. The current offer in Oldham already exceeds the GM agreed minimum standards, and this opportunity would benefit Oldham families further.

Approval is sought to seek agreement from Pennine Care to vary their existing post diagnosis contract with POINT to include a pre-diagnostic element from January 2022 up until 31 August 2022 as part of the pilot project. This element will be delivered by POINT with a funding envelope of £30,000. Contract monitoring will be completed by Pennine Care following their existing arrangements.

Summary:

Oldham Council, through Department for Education (DfE) Opportunity Area grant funding, have developed a bid to improve the early identification of special educational needs, including Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This project is called the Early identification of Need project. The project has three aspects as outlined below;

1. Enhancing school level practice and ability to identify and meet SEND through direct support from specialist school colleagues.
2. Enhancing the opportunity to support families understand and support their child(s) neurodiversity without having to wait for a formal diagnosis.
3. Develop formal external evaluation of the strategies developed, with schools and families, to identify best practice/impact for children/young people/families and inform future commissioning work in Oldham and nationally.

This report relates to the second aspect, enhancing the support for families before a diagnosis of need takes place.

Grant funding was confirmed by the DfE on 13 December 2021.

The overall ASD Diagnosis Support Service is delivered through an existing contract between Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust and

POINT. This also supports Oldham's co-production and partnership principles.

An additional grant of £30,000 has been identified for pre-diagnostic support work as part of the Early Identification of Need Project. It is proposed this is delivered by POINT under the arrangements outlined above as a pilot for a period of nine months from January 2022 up until 31 August 2022 with a funding envelope of £30,000.

The proposal includes the extension of a range of the current parent/carer workshops programmes to practitioners who work with children and young people with ASD and/or Social Communication Disorder.

This will ensure by utilising the existing well respected, comprehensive workshop programme, Oldham will have an enhanced yet consistent approach that supports, awareness, knowledge and skills, supporting early identification of need and improved outcomes.

POINT's training programme will compliment the approach to upskill mainstream settings with effective support strategies and ensure a robust and holistic package of support for practitioners is in place enabling Oldham to realise it's ambition of being an Autism Friendly locality

POINT will deliver a rolling calendar of workshops for practitioners in the contract period, enabling flexibility in access to the programme to meet practitioner need. Workshop capacity would be 20 delegates per session in order to ensure a delivery model that encourages delegates to case study and explore live examples and build their expertise.

The programme capacity would therefore support delivery to 240 delegates per workshop over the course of the programme.

Full details of the pilot are included for information at the end of this report within the background papers section.

Initial discussions with Pennine Care confirm that they, and the provider POINT, would agree with the requested approach.

Recommendation

Option One:

Approval is sought to seek agreement from Pennine Care to vary their existing post diagnosis contract with POINT to include a pre-diagnostic element from January 2022 up until 31 August 2022 as part of the pilot project. This element will be delivered by POINT with a funding envelope of £30,000.

Option Two:

A full procurement exercise is undertaken to appoint a provider for this element of Opportunity Area funding.

This option would not enable delivery of the service to be in place within the given time frames and therefore is not recommended.

Recommended Option is Option One.

Implications:

What are the **financial** implications?

The preferred option is for Pennine Care to vary their existing post diagnosis contract with POINT to include a pre-diagnostic element from January 2022 up until 31 August at a cost of £30,000. The proposal will be fully funded through additional Early Identification of Need project funding which the Council bid for and which was subsequently confirmed by the DfE on 13 December 2021.
Andy Cooper

What are the **procurement** implications?

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

<i>What are the legal implications?</i>	Legal Services have taken on board the lead procurement officer's comments above that there are no procurement implications. The client department must ensure that they use the grant funding in accordance with any grant funding conditions. Sukie Kaur - Legal
<i>What are the Human Resources implications?</i>	No specific HR issues identified Kate Jolley, HR Strategic Lead
Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment attached or not required because (please give reason)	. Not required as continuation of this service is the recommended option.
<i>What are the property implications?</i>	None for the Council.
Risks:	Reputational risk to the Council as a valuable and well regarded VCSFE partner is unable to deliver preventative services in Oldham
Co-operative agenda	Work with VCSFE partners is a core element within Oldham's co-production principles.

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?	Yes
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Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?	Yes
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Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?	No
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Reason(s) for exemption from publication:

Reason for urgent report

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



Oldham SEND
Workshops ASC Off

Report Author Sign-off:	
Date:	

Signed :



Managing Director of Children & Young People:

Date: 1 Feb 2022