

Report for: INFORMATION
Item Number: 12

Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	NO
Title	Proposal to the Department of Education Innovation Programme – Adolescents in and on the edge of care
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Portfolio(s)	Cllr Binda Rai – Lead Member Children and Families
For Consideration By	Corporate Parent Committee
Date to be Considered	4 th December 2014
Implementation Date if Not Called In	
Affected Wards	All
Keywords/Index	Innovation Fund, Adolescents, Looked After Children

Purpose of Report:

The authority has submitted a bid to the Department of Education Innovation Programme to transform its response to adolescents in care and on the edge of care and their families. This report highlights the proposal which if successful will be implemented between Jan 2015 and April 2016.

1. Recommendations

1.1 That Members note that an Innovation bid has been submitted to DfE and a decision will be publically announced shortly.

1.2 That Members continue to review progress on the programme if successful, over the coming year, as it has significant implications for the way in which we support adolescents in care and on the edge of care and their families.

2. Reason for Decision and Options Considered

2.1 The proposal has significant implications for the authority in its corporate parent role as it affects adolescents in care and on the edge of care.

3. Key Implications

3.1 The Children's Social Care Innovation programme is a two year programme supported by £30m in the first financial year 2014/15 and substantially more in the second – an additional approx. £70m. The programme's key objective is to support improvements in the quality of services so that children who need help from the social care system have better chances in life.

3.2 The government's view is that greater innovation is needed both to deliver better outcomes for adolescents and their families and achieve higher quality and better value for money.

3.3 This opportunity is very timely as it not only provides a chance to address critical value for money issues linked to the authority's placement strategy. It also offers an opportunity to develop an increasingly adolescent focused service responding to many of the issues raised in the extensive looked after children and care leavers customer survey undertaken earlier this year and previously reported to the Corporate Parent meetings.

3.4 The authority submitted an expression of interest last summer to the DfE Innovation Programme which was approved. We were then invited to progress to delivering a fully worked up proposal supported by 20 days of external consultancy to build and test the proposal and submit this in early October.

3.5 Authorities were encouraged to develop bids with partners to increase the innovation aspects of the proposals and start to develop new alliances. Ealing has submitted its bid with two external partners – Catch 22 and iMPower.

3.6 Catch 22 are a leading youth charity with significant national expertise in provision of services to adolescents and care leavers who will be providing strategic support and advice to the programme. iMPower are a business consultancy who are undertaking wider activity with the council on value for money and managing demand with a particular focus on increasing the supply of local in-house foster carers.

3.7 Ealing's proposal:

Ealing has bid for £3.5m to transform its support for adolescents in care and on the edge of care.

The proposal has several key themes which include:

- Transforming our placement strategy and recruiting and supporting many more local foster carers to prevent looked after children being placed far outside the borough.
- Engaging more effectively with the needs of adolescents in care and on the edge of care and responding in more innovative ways to their needs to help deliver better outcomes and improve their life chances.

3.8 The key details of Ealing's proposal are built around the following changes to the system:

- **Re-designing how we deliver our services:** We will create groups of multi-disciplinary teams that will comprise of a range of core professionals that have smaller caseloads and more time to work intensively with the young person and their family/carer. We will re-organise their responsibilities around the young people they work with and broaden our support package offer, more closely integrating the work we currently do with the third and community sectors into our day to day delivery.

- **Shifting power and decision making:** We will devolve responsibility for decisions where possible to young people, their families and carers (i.e. young people will choose the lead professional that they work with, foster carers will make day to day decisions around parental contact, overnight stays etc). Our staff will make challenging judgements about risk, learn to let go, trusting parents/carers and listening better to young people.
- **Providing intensive early support to young people, families and carers:** Our multi-professional teams will work intensively at an early stage with families whose adolescents are identified as being on the edge of care, to ensure prevention of family breakdown. This approach will also prioritise foster placements at risk of disruption to reduce placement moves. This work will be underpinned by a consistent, intensive, relational approach and we will train staff and carers in this model.
- **Identifying one lead professional, chosen by the young person,** to work closely with the adolescent and coordinate the support plan. This could be a youth worker, peer mentor or teacher and we would like the flexibility to consider delegating the statutory social work function to the lead professional, with appropriate supervision and oversight.
- **Providing responsive 24/7 services** delivered from our new Westside Young People's Centre rather than a traditional social work office. Support will be available to the young person, family or carer at weekends and evenings when crises more often occur for adolescents, and someone who knows the young person and the carer will be available to respond. Peer led Helplines will be available and focus on issues such as gangs and crime, substance misuse, sexual exploitation and safeguarding.
- **Increasing choice and power for the young person, expanding support to adolescents on the edge of care:** Giving them access to the same support as those in care - positive activities, education, training and employment support, specialist services for those at risk of involvement in gangs and sexual exploitation, access to delegated budgets.
- **Radically reshaping our Fostering service:** We will recruit and retain 45 new local Foster Carers; change the nature of their role requiring them to provide permanent homes supported by specialist training and 24/7 back up.

We will start this transformation of our system by working with at least 120 young people in and on the edge of care during 2015/16.

3.9 As well as delivering better outcomes for our children and young people and their families the proposal will also ensure the authority achieves better value for money.

The authority has bid for £3.5m resource from the Innovation Programme. This will build on the work the authority is already undertaking with iMPOWER to transform our placement strategy and deliver significant savings, as well as better manage demand

and support more adolescents to remain at home with their families with improved care packages and interventions.

3.10 Whilst the programme is for 16 months only it is felt that the £3.5m programme funding would enable the authority to set up all the relevant systems and supports and transition to a new pattern of service by 2017/18. This will be financially sustainable from savings generated through a new placement strategy. Key to this strategy will be significant reduction in reliance on expensive long distance residential and independent foster placements and an increased pool of well supported local in-house foster carers. In addition there will be a wider range of local supports and interventions for young people. The model will be supported by an intensive therapeutic training programme in partnership with the Maudsley and local CAMHs service.

3.11 The authority attended for interview for the proposal in early November and a decision is expected to be announced by the Minister shortly.

4. Financial

a) Financial impact on the budget (mandatory)

If successful the authority will access £3.5m to implement the programme from January 2015 – March 2016. There will be specific grant requirements to ensure the authority delivers on its proposal.

5. Legal

The proposal is set within existing Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004, the Leaving Care Act 2000.

6. Value for Money

The proposal will enable the authority to work towards delivering increased value for money from the substantial budgets allocated to children's placements each year through increasing the local supply rather than reliance on more expensive out of borough and residential placements.

7. Sustainability Impact Appraisal

N/A

8. Risk Management

There will be risks associated in transforming the authority's placement strategy but these will be reviewed on a case by case basis with the aim of reducing risk whilst increasing protective factors for young people.

9. Community Safety

Increasing community safety and reducing risk of young people's involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour will be part of the proposal

10. Links to the 5 Priorities for the Borough

If none, say so. Please keep to one paragraph.

The 5 Priorities are:

- **Making Ealing Safer**
- **Securing Public Services**
- **Securing Jobs and Homes**
- **Delivering Value for Money**
- **Making Ealing Cleaner**

11. Equalities, Human Rights and Community Cohesion

By better responding to young people's expressed views regarding their placements and wish to remain locally community cohesion will be enhanced.

11. Staffing/Workforce and Accommodation implications

These implications will be considered once the authority has learnt the outcome of its proposal.

13. Property and Assets

There are no property implications.

14. Any other implications:

N/A

15. Consultation

Consultation with young people, staff and foster carers underpins the proposal.

16. Timetable for Implementation

It is planned that if successful the proposal will be implemented from January 2015 until March 2016.

17. Appendices

N/A

18. Background Information

N/A

Consultation (Mandatory)

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent to consultee	Date response received	Comments appear in paragraph:
Internal				
e.g. Martin Smith	Executive Director			
e.g. Helen Harris	Director, Legal Services			e.g. 5. Legal
e.g. Adele Taylor	Director, Finance			e.g. 4. Financial
e.g. Julian Bell	Leader / Cabinet Member for:			
External				
	eg voluntary organisation			

Report History

Decision type:	Urgency item?
For information	NO
Report no.:	Report author and contact for queries: Marcella Phelan First and surname, job title Marcella Phelan Asst Director Children and families Ext 8848 Phelanm@ealing.gov.uk