

WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF DECISION

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF FUNDING FOR THE EARLY YEARS SIB PARENT CHILD HOME PROGRAMME AND APPROVAL OF DELIVERY

Notice is hereby given that , Cabinet Member for Family Services and Public Health, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration, has made the following executive decision on the above mentioned subject for the reasons set out below.

(
Cabinet Member approvals sought.
)

Summary of Decision

Recommendations

1. That the Cabinet Members agreed funding of £0.295m to deliver the Parent Child Home Programme over a 4-year service delivery period.
2. That the Cabinet Members approved an outcomes-based grant agreement approach in appointing Family Lives to deliver the Parent Child Home Programme.

Reasons for Decision

1. The 2016 data collected at school entry - % achieving at least expected across all prime areas of learning - in Westminster was 76% compared with 78.1% for England. This figure masks huge variations across the borough, particularly in areas of deprivation. Primary Head Teachers are stating that significant numbers of children are not school ready, and this has a negative impact on the whole class cohort. This is particularly marked in social and emotional development where schools are increasingly seeing children who are not potty trained, cannot feed themselves and have had little experience of early play. The introduction of this programme will support the take up of the 2 and 3-year old childcare entitlement and work alongside this early learning opportunity.
2. Speech and language is a growing area of importance with national government attention. This project will provide us with an opportunity to identify a more robust offer and effective speech and language intervention in Early Years for vulnerable families. It is also in line with a redesigned health model and part of our overall strategy of redesigning the 0-5 pathway. Working within the context of reduced grant funding, the non-cashable efficiencies because of this project will contribute towards the mitigation of these pressures.
3. The Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP) as an early learning opportunity has strong evidence of proven outcomes. This home-based intervention enhances school readiness through Early Learning Specialists building meaningful relationships with families and supporting parents in realising their role as their children's first and most important teacher and using engaging books and stimulating toys to generate an enthusiasm for and understanding of learning through verbal interaction. Children who have completed programme are 50%

more likely to measure ready for nursery, score 2.5 times higher on social-emotional skills assessments than control groups, enter school performing 10 months above their chronological age, and have 30% higher graduation rates than their peers. Studies have also shown stronger language skills compared to control groups, more pro-social competence, and reduced need for special education classes for PCHP graduates. These results have been validated by several RCTs and extensive independent evaluations.

4. Having obtained Legal advice, Officers believe there are sound reasons for continuing to treat this as a grant.
5. Outcomes based grant agreements have previously been utilised for Social Impact Bonds and can work well in delivering the project as it is a more collaborative approach than a contract.
6. Commissioners will be instructing Legal Officers to ensure the Grant Conditions protect the Councils' and service user's interests, and proper use of public money.
7. Failure to deliver to deliver the services and/or meet the Grant Conditions will result in the Grant being terminated – just as with a contract.
8. There is only a single licensed provider (Family Lives) in England for this programme who is an established partner for Westminster City Council. Appointing Family Lives for this project would strengthen the relationship and allow for more collaborative and joint working.
9. Bi-Borough Children's Services would be managing the grant awarded by Central Government (DCMS) originally awarded to the provider as the lead applicant.
10. This project represents a pioneering and pilot approach to achieving enhanced school readiness within a particularly vulnerable population group. Although experimental approaches like this are needed to remain at the forefront of service delivery the constraints of austerity limit both the council's appetite and ability to innovate. The introduction of outcomes-based commissioning, which could be a core part of how we redesign our 0-5 pathways, paired with social investment however shifts the risks of non-achievement of social outcomes from the council to the provider and social investor. This enables the council to undertake innovation with significantly reduced risks. Furthermore, the rigorous monitoring and evaluation framework attached to these initiatives allows the council to accurately track the efficacy of its interventions, something which was previously difficult to do. This directly enables value for money investment. The social investment toolkit employed here will be increasingly required in an environment of ever complex social problems requiring a collaborative working model both across directorates and across organisations outside local government.

Reasons for Decision

**Stuart Love, Chief Executive,
Westminster City Hall,
64 Victoria Street
LONDON SW1E 6QP**

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Implementation Date:

Reference: