

Appendix Two

Partners in Practice

Background

In December 2015, Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham were selected as 'Partners in Practice' with the Department for Education. Over the next four years, the DfE will work with the 12 Partners in Practice authorities across England to develop models of effective practice which will contribute to overall improvement in the sector, with a particular emphasis on deregulation.

Our proposal

We have submitted a proposal to the DfE, which outlines our plans as Partners in Practice in the following areas:

1. *Development of the practice system*

The key vehicle for service improvement in the Tri-borough authorities has been, and will continue to be, our *Focus on Practice* programme. The core objective of *Focus on Practice* is for practitioners to use their professional expertise to help create positive change for families and better outcomes for children and young people. The recent inspections by Ofsted noted the significant contribution that Focus on Practice is having in the three boroughs. Over the next four years we propose:

- Maintaining current clinical staff and expanding to ensure all teams have access to systemic family therapists/psychologists.
- Establishing practice development programmes - Yrs 2, 3, and 4 of systemic family therapy training with the aim of building a cadre of dual qualified expert staff who will lead practice across the authorities. Over time, this will reduce the need for separate clinical posts and will result in a more highly skilled workforce doing higher intensity interventions.
- Earlier identification of children and families who will need intensive services in the future using predictive modelling

2. *Sector Improvement*

We propose setting up a Tri-borough Centre for Social Work as a means of supporting improvement in the wider sector. Using the expertise of the Heads of Clinical practice, family therapists, Specialist Practitioners, senior leaders and others within our three authorities, courses will be developed and delivered by those with expertise in applying systemic ideas to social work practice. We will work initially with 3 local authorities (rising to 5 by 2020), and deliver teaching and coaching to practitioners, managers and senior leaders in those authorities. To support classroom learning, participants from other authorities will have the opportunity to spend time in services in the Tri-borough authorities, as well as coaching by Tri-borough staff in their own authorities.

3. *Deregulation*

As part of Focus on Practice, we have commenced and will continue to explore the system conditions which determine the culture and practice within our organisations, adjusting the practice system in a number of ways including: eliminating unnecessary bureaucratic processes; making sure there is a proportionate balance between assessment and service provision; enabling practitioners to work intensively with families; and most importantly, developing professional accountability for our work in a way which minimises the need to micro-manage and allows the front line workforce to develop creativity and confidence in their interventions with families. Areas we wish to work on in this area include:

- Overhaul of the case recording system
- Reducing duplication in YOS (Youth Offending Service) and social care systems
- More tailored response to UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children)
- Reduce the use of assessments as a response to children in need and develop more dynamic multi-agency planning and action, relaxing strict timescales in order to prioritise change in families over documenting information
- Explore role of IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer) and more proportionate use of their role in some cases

We have submitted our proposal, with costs of delivering these elements, to the DfE and presented these to their Expert Steering Group on 16 May 2016. Following their feedback, we submitted a revised proposal on 2 June 2016, and we understand that this will be presented to Ministers for approval imminently.

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