

**Executive Member for Children & Young
People's Services and Advisory Panel**

17 July 2008

Report of the Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services

**Report of Children's Early Intervention Fund – transitional
arrangements**

Summary

1. This paper :
 - Provides an update on the development of the commissioning approach for the Children's Early Intervention Fund and the links to the wider commissioning agenda in the city through Children's Trust arrangements;
 - Recommends an extension of transitional arrangements for work currently funded through the Children's Early Intervention Fund, subject to robust monitoring, to secure the continuing legacy of work undertaken by the Children's Fund in York.

Background

2. The Children's Early Intervention Fund (EIF) is building on the legacy of the Children's Fund in providing a range of targeted early intervention and preventative support services aimed at vulnerable children aged 5-13. There is national funding committed by the government for the period up to March 2011.
3. This fund currently supports regular work in York with some 3850 children annually and supports strategic developments in the city in terms of partnership, participation and prevention. A new process of commissioning is being developed to ensure that this work is meeting the needs of children and young people in the city as expressed in the current Children and Young People's plan and in the plan being developed for 2009 –12.
4. A paper was taken to the December 2007 meeting of the Children's Services Executive Member and Advisory Panel.. The recommendation from officers and the panel was that there be:
 - A coherent multi-agency commissioning process developed for and piloted by Children's Fund which can be utilized for wider commissioning;
 - Transitional arrangements put in place for a 6 month period to ensure that the legacy of the Children's Fund can be preserved and then built upon

and developed. Cost of transition arrangements would be a maximum of £177k for the 6 months with an additional funding for Nurture groups over the year of £25,000.

- To reinforce the fact that these are transitional arrangements a slight change in name from Children's Fund to Children's Early Intervention Fund be introduced.
5. The decision of the Executive Member was that the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed. The reason being that this option will ensure an effective commissioning process for Children's Fund monies. It will utilize this process to develop a wider more coherent commissioning process. It will ensure that the legacy of the Children's Fund can be built upon. It will facilitate the development of services under the new funding arrangement.
 6. The commissioning process is underway as part of the wider commissioning process being developed under Children's Trust arrangements. Key aspects of the commissioning framework in York are:
 - Setting up a Integrated Commissioning Group (ICG) as a sub group of Yor-Ok Board – an initial meeting has been held to develop the terms of reference for this group;
 - Establish partnership sub groups of the ICG. These groups will include an Editorial Reference group to develop the Children and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP) and a group to oversee EIF commissioning.
 7. Over time a common outcome based approach to commissioning will be developed. The Children's Trust Unit is developing a common set of tools to support commissioning.
 8. Early Intervention Fund commissioning activity continues. It is subject to robust monitoring and scrutiny.
 - All work has a Service Level Agreement Work which sets out the aims and objectives, how they will be achieved and the maximum level of funding allocated;
 - There is a quarterly monitoring cycle which asks for written reports on activities (set against the key aims), current and future challenges and budgetary information;
 - There is on-going dialogue with the Programme Manager, which supports the delivery and monitors spending levels.
 9. It has become clear however that the commissioning process for the Children's Early Intervention Fund will not be completed in order to fully commission work from 30 September as originally envisaged.

10. The implication is that much of the Early Intervention Fund work would not be able to continue beyond 30 September as there is no mandate to continue funding beyond this time.
11. Given the need to manage a smooth exit actual work with children and young people would quickly come to a halt.

Consultation

12. Issues and themes contained in this report have been discussed with The Children's Early Intervention Fund Commissioning group, which is made up of representatives from across the Children's Trust including membership from partner agencies and the voluntary sector. The group agrees with the recommendation.

Options

13. **Option 1**
 - Extend the Transitional funding period of the Children's Early Intervention Fund for 6 months until March 31st 2008 (see Appendix A for exact details) subject to the monitoring process outlined above;
 - The Commissioning of the Children's Early Intervention Fund will proceed through the Integrated Commissioning Framework.
14. **Option 2**
 - Do not extend Transitional funding.

Analysis

15. Option A will ensure that commissioning of the Children's Early Intervention Fund will:
 - Synchronise with the development and priorities of the Children and Young Peoples Plan. A new plan will be agreed in January 2009 and launched in April 2009. Consultation on this plan is currently taking place and will continue until November;
 - Be robust: Work funded by the Children's Early Intervention Fund have been evaluated and this has generally shown them to be meeting their targets. However these targets were initially set in 2002/3, albeit with some updating. There is a need to re-align the work to the current and future priorities in the city and the current systems as to how those priorities are met;
 - Be seamless and ensure stability; The process needs to ensure that this work is supported and that any transition is as smooth as possible for children and young people, organisations and the workforce without causing undue anxiety or instability. This principle would be in keeping with the VCS (Voluntary & Community Sector) Compact (which calls for a 12 week notice period) and experience gained through previous commissioning processes.

16. Option B will mean that work currently underway would come to a halt. This would have a disruptive effect on the provision of services. There would be a need to provide some funding beyond that already agreed in order to provide for a smooth exit from work commitments. This would be in line with good practice and the VCS Compact. This would amount to approximately £30k (1 months funding).

Corporate Priorities

17. This work will contribute to the corporate priority to 'Improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city'

Implications

18. **Financial** Notification of the continuation of funding for the 'Children's Fund' for the next three years to the end of financial year 2010-11 has been received from Government. The City of York has been allocated £1,067,793 over three years, equivalent to £355,931 per year.
19. Attached at Annex A is a breakdown of funding, by project, for the year from April 08 to March 09. As this is a 3 year funding pot, it makes good business sense that this funding is not allocated on an equal amount each year, but is larger in each successive year (to take account of inflation). This is currently being explored.
20. **Human Resources (HR)** These proposals do not have any direct HR implications. However consideration may need to be given to the impact on the post of Children's Fund Programme Manager and other posts that are used to deliver this programme, if commissioning arrangements change significantly from those currently in place.
21. **Equalities** This programme includes work which supports children and young people from minority groups in the city.
22. **Legal** There are no legal implications
23. **Crime and Disorder** There are no Crime and Disorder implications
24. **Information Technology (IT)** There are no IT implications
25. **Property** There are no Property implications

Risk Management

26. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, the main risks that have been identified in this report are those which could lead to the inability to deliver ongoing, well received, services to children and families, the subsequent damage to the Council's image and reputation and impact on partners.

27. Option 1 would prevent this risk and ensure that the re-commissioning process will build on the legacy of the Children's Fund and meet the priorities being developed through the Children and Young Peoples Plan Process.
28. Option 2 would lead to the inability to deliver these services to children and families, the subsequent damage to the Councils image and reputation and impact on partners.

Recommendations

29. The Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to agree Option 1:
- Extend the Transitional funding period of the Children's Early Intervention Fund for 6 months until March 31st 2008 (see Appendix A for exact details) subject to the monitoring process outlined above;
 - The Commissioning of the Children's Early Intervention Fund will proceed through the Integrated Commissioning Framework.

Reason:

This option will ensure that the commissioning process for Children's Early Intervention Fund can link into the wider more commissioning process. It will ensure that the legacy of the Children's Fund can be built upon by facilitating the development and evolution of current work.

Contact Details

Author:

Bernie Flanagan
Children's Fund Programme Manager
Children's Trust Commissioning Unit
Ext 4463

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Peter Dwyer
Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services

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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Richard Hartle Head of LCCS Finance Ext 4225	Mark Bennett Senior HR Business Partner Ext 4233
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Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers

None

Annexes

Annex A - 08-09 Children's Early Intervention Fund - Recommended Budget Version