

Finance and Resources Committee

10.00am, Friday, 10 March 2023

Children's Social Care Safeguarding Support

Executive
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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Finance and Resources Committee:
 - 1.1.1 Approves the extension to the waiver for Children's Social Care Safeguarding Support to Pertemps Professional Recruitment Limited for a total value of £246,000.

Amanda Hatton

Executive Director of Education and Children's Services

Contact: Rose Howley, Senior Manager - Children's Services

E-mail: Rose.Howley@edinburgh.gov.uk

Children's Social Care Safeguarding Support

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report sets out the activity carried out by the Children's Social Care Safeguarding Support Bridging Team and the reasons why this is expected to continue beyond the original estimated date. The extension will impact on contractual arrangements including the requirement to waive the Contract Standing Orders for a short period of time until this area of work is complete.

3. Background

- 3.1 In line with the Promise, and the strategic direction from Edinburgh Children's Partnership to prioritise expenditure on prevention and early intervention, Children's Services, Education and Justice Directorate commissioned a safeguarding support Bridging Team to provide additional capacity for the duration of twelve weeks. A departure from Contract Standing Orders for Pertemps Professional Recruitment Ltd was approved within Delegated Authority limits.
- 3.2 To provide additional capacity and support to the Children's Services teams, on 28th November 2022, City of Edinburgh Council entered an agreement with Pertemps Professional Recruitment Limited for the supply of a Bridging Team comprised of the following
- 1 Team Manager to oversee the work, statutory KPIs, weekly reporting and outcome monitoring, professional supervisions
 - 1 Assistant Team Manager – to work with existing managers, to provide advice and guidance to the workers on re-assessing, to provide advice on recommendations, QA, and oversight of performance/timescale
 - 4 Social Worker – to provide additional capacity and model timely decision making within social care direct.
 - 4 Social Worker – to provide a duty team – 10-day assessments to enable a reduction in children awaiting a service.
- 3.3 In January 2023, the Bridging team produced a mid-term report which identified the need for longer term support and additional capacity, to ensure a safe service

provision at the point of referral in social care direct and to ensure practice teams can allocate all children to a social worker as part of an improvement plan.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The safeguarding support Bridging Team was commissioned as part of the wider plan to strengthen services, provide early intervention to children in need, and prevent escalation to full time accommodation.
- 4.2 In January 2023, following six weeks of intense collaboration, the Bridging Team produced a mid-term report highlighting the need for additional resources to allow the discharge of statutory duties, given the number of unallocated children, some being child protection cases requiring social workers' intervention.
- 4.3 The priority of addressing the allocation of child protection cases impacted both on the ability of the Bridging Team to progress the project activity according to initial timescales, and on the scope for the Director to conclude and progress recommended actions towards improvement.
- 4.4 The proposed extension of the support was discussed with the Corporate Leadership Team who agreed to progress. Not extending the waiver would incur the risk of operating with insufficient staff and consequently being unable to discharge statutory duties in a timely manner.
- 3.3 Committee approval is therefore being sought to waive the Council's Contract Standing Orders and extend the service provided by Pertemps Professional Recruitment Ltd to ensure the continuity and the completion of the project. This is in the interest of the safety of the children and young people in Edinburgh.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Extension to the current arrangements will ensure continuity of the work and necessary support to the existing resources towards the implementation of an improvement plan.
- 5.2 During this time, tried and tested improved ways of working will be modelled with managers in social care direct to ensure managerial oversight, which promotes timely decision making and early intervention for children, young people, and families.
- 5.3 An improvement plan, is in place to manage workflows, allocation and progress timely support for children, young people, and families. This will bring a close to the need for the additional support.
- 5.4 A formal report will be submitted to Education, Children and Families Committee for consideration of the resources required to implement the improvement plan.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The estimated waiver extension value is £246,000. All proposed arrangements are within existing budgetary provision levels.
- 6.3 The requested waiver extension secures Best Interests for the Council in its ultimate balance, ensuring the best outcomes for the children and the young people in the interest of the Local Authority and its community.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 There has been no community engagement due to the sensitivity of the information shared by the Bridging Team.
- 7.2 It is acknowledged that keeping children safe and nurtured, preventing escalation to more intensive resources, is in the interest of the Community.

8. Background/External Reading

None.

9. Appendices

None.