

OFFICER DECISION RECORD

For staff restructures, please also complete an RA1 form to update the HR Portal. This is attached at Annex 2.

Decision Ref. No:

2122076

Box 1

DIRECTORATE: LOSC

DATE: 22nd December 2021

Contact Name: Riana Nelson

Tel. No.: 01302 737800

Subject Matter: Allocating the Social Care Support Grant for Doncaster Children's Services Trust caseload pressures

Box 2

DECISION TAKEN:

To approve costs of up to £510,000 for additional Doncaster Children's Services Trust caseload pressures to be funded from the £2,975,000 Social Care Support Grant delegated to the Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills and Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Skills.

Box 3

REASON FOR THE DECISION:

ODR 2122001 approved the planned spend of £2,975,000 for additional Social Care Support grant, which is delegated to the Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills and Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Skills. The planned spend included up to £795,000 to Doncaster Children's Services Trust (DCST) for additional Social Workers during 2021/22. ODR 2123023 approved that £167,000 of the £795,000 was reallocated to additional staffing capacity and resource required to support a targeted follow up of safeguarding concerns raised regarding a provider across Children's and Adult Services in the Borough; leaving a revised allocation of £628,000.

Following the Contract Meeting between Doncaster Council and Doncaster Children's Services Trust on 22nd July 2021 the Trust was asked to provide a position statement on current staffing to evidence the need for additional funds. Originally the additional funds were identified for additional social workers capacity but the Trust asked the Council to consider that a broader view should be applied that additional workload pressures have also affected IROs, Legal, business support, amongst others. Additionally there has been a need to increase agency social worker pay.

Subsequently Doncaster Children's Services Trust submitted a business case to Doncaster Council requesting funding of up to £510,000 for the following pressures due to increased caseloads:

IROs/CP Chairs £100,000

The Trust's MTFs for 2021/22 included a £100k saving within this Service but this will now not be achieved in 2021/22 due to caseload demand. The caseloads for IROs have increased from March 2020 to date by 65 – according to the IRO handbook they should carry cases of 50-70, which equates to 1.6 FTE posts that need to be retained within Safeguarding and therefore require funding.

Legal Services £106,000

Since March 2020 the number of section 31 Care and PLO cases have increased by 75. Senior Legal Officers should carry cases of c.16 and the Trust has increased SLO by 0.8fte meaning cases over capacity is 54 – c. 3.2fte. The actual additional staffing is for 2.8fte: 1.0fte LO locum (10 months) + 2.0fte SLO locum (full year). The overall additional cost is reduced due to utilising the release of a balance sheet accrual of £50,000 (judicial process complete) and £104,000 Covid funding already received from the Council. These agency staff (all in post) will continue to be monitored and released when caseloads allow.

Administration increase £75,000

The additional caseload and CIC numbers creates pressures and a need for additional administration support. This includes team business support as well as, for example, HR support to recruit and manage the HR processes. Therefore this funding will be utilised to increase administrative support for Teams and HR temporarily although the vast majority will be used to support the Social Work Teams. This provides funding for 7 x G7 agency for 4-4.5 months, including the agency premium.

Agency rate increase £95,000

Neighbouring authorities are paying agency social workers £38-£40 per hour compared to the Trust's hourly rate of £32 - £35 per hour leading to some workers leaving the Trust. To retain staff and remain competitive in the market the Trust has increased its hourly rate to £38 per hour. The additional funding will provide for 17 agency social workers uplifted to £38 per hour for 8 months.

Assessments Project Team (Team 5) £134,000

To relieve the pressure on the Front Door an additional project team has been put in place for 12 weeks as team 5. This has enabled the Trust to have 4 full teams and the 5th team as the additional resource/project team which will allow the Trust to:

- Explore the issue of increased pressure on the Front Door further
- Understand the demand and if this can be met by 4 teams (with a 5th team supporting with the current demand and high caseloads)
- 5th team will pick up cases each week when a team can't take anymore – this will give the Trust a better picture of the allocation process and duty process

This will allow the Trust to understand this further and consider what issues might be present and better understand how we prevent this being a re-occurring issue.

The business case requesting funding totalling up to £510,000 was approved by the Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills and Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151).

Box 4

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED & REJECTED:

The increased caseloads and CIC numbers have resulted in additional budgetary pressures which require adequately funding. The levels of funding and interventions have been considered, resulting in the proposals outlined in this decision record. The option of not providing adequate funding for the pressures has been rejected.

Box 5

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

In accordance with S17 Children's Act 1989,

(1) It shall be the general duty of every local authority (in addition to the other duties imposed on them by this Part)—

(a) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and

(b) so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.

The Council provides these services through its wholly owned Company Doncaster Children's Services Trust and there are mechanisms within the arrangements between the Council and the Trust to provide this additional budget.

Name: Scott Fawcus Signature:  Date: 12.01.22

Signature of Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services (or representative)

Box 6**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The Council's Revenue budget approved at the Full Council meeting on 1st March 2021 allocated, in 2021/22 only, £2,975,000 additional Social Care Support grant to provide for additional Children Social Care pressures, delegated to the Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills and Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Skills.

As outlined in the body of the report the additional Doncaster Children's Services Trust caseload pressures are up to £510,000 broken down as follows:

ROs/CP Chairs £100,000
Legal Services £106,000
Administration increase £75,000
Agency rate increase £95,000
Assessments Project Team (Team 5) £134,000

The total cost of up to £510,000 for the additional Doncaster Children's Services Trust caseload pressures will be funded from the £2,975,000 Social Care Support Grant.

Name: Aaron Bathgate **Signature:**  **Date:** 22/12/21

Signature of Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Director of Finance (or representative)

Box 7**OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS - HR**

There are no direct HR Implications in relation to this ODR and the Allocation of the Social Care Support Grant for Doncaster Children's Services Trust and the caseload pressures

Name: Claire Rudd **Signature:**  **Date:** 10/01/22
Signature of Assistant Director (or representative)

ANY IMPLICATIONS SENT TO DEPARTMENTS SHOULD GENERALLY BE SUBMITTED AT LEAST 5 WORKING DAYS IN ADVANCE TO ENSURE THESE CAN BE GIVEN THE RELEVANT CONSIDERATION.

BOX 8

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS: (To be completed by the author).

The grant funding addresses the needs of the most vulnerable children and young people in the borough.

BOX 9**RISK IMPLICATIONS:** (To be completed by the author)

The Council will comply with any conditions of the grant and mitigation in relation to the spending of grant monies will be through the robust contract management process of DCST.

**BOX 10
CONSULTATION**

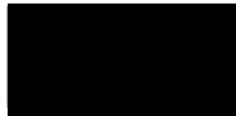
This decision has been discussed and agreed by the Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills and Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151). The relevant portfolio holder has also been consulted.

**BOX 11
INFORMATION NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, it is in the Public's interests for this decision to be published in full, redacting only the signatures.

Name: Riana Nelson

Signature



Date: 22.12.2021

Signature of FOI Lead Officer for service area where ODR originates

**BOX 12
BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Please confirm if any Background Papers are included with this ODR: /NO

**BOX 13
AUTHORISATION**

Name: Riana Nelson

Signature: 

Date: 13.01.2022

Director of Learning Opportunities, Skills and Culture

Does this decision require authorisation by the Chief Financial Officer or other Officer

YES

If yes please authorise below:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151)

Consultation with Relevant Member(s)

Name: _

Signature: ___

Date:

Designation _____

(e.g. Mayor, Cabinet Member or Committee Chair/Vice-Chair)

Declaration of Interest NO

If YES please give details below:

PLEASE NOTE THIS FORM WILL BE PUBLISHED ON THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE IN FULL UNLESS IT CONTAINS EXEMPT OR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.

Once completed a PDF copy of this form and any relevant background papers should be forwarded to Governance Services at Democratic.Services@doncaster.gov.uk who will arrange publication.

It is the responsibility of the decision taker to clearly identify any information that is confidential or exempt and should be redacted before publication.