

17th March 2016

Item 12

TITLE OF REPORT: Mental Health Support Worker

Purpose of the Report

To request matched funding from DSG reserves for a mental health worker.

Background

On Thursday 7th January 2016, the LA received notification that £1m funding was awarded to Health Education England (HEE) from the Department of Health (DoH). The funding underpins the conclusions of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Taskforce Future in Mind report which establishes a clear direction and some key principles about how to make it easier for children and young people to access high quality mental health care when they need it.

Applications are invited from any organisation working to improve the quality of mental health services to children and young people aged up to 18 years.

The maximum amount of funding that can be applied for is £200k.

The timetable for applications is very tight with applications having to be received by HEE 15th January 2016 before 17:00.

After much debate it was felt that the gap already identified by the work of the PRU Planning Group was the need to provide support for mental health and that mental health workers would be suitable for the bid. The bid will be for the mental health workers to work with:

- Children who are displaying anger and mental health issues that are creating barriers to their learning
- KS3 and KS4 children at risk of permanent exclusion, to help with intervention and transition either back into mainstream school or on to an appropriate alternative provision
- Children who have been permanently excluded to support the children's transition to either an academic or alternative provision.

Locating the MHW in the PRU allows for the establishment of relationships with the pupil and their families over a period of time prior to the transition taking place, this will allow for the identification of those factors which can prohibit a successful transition e.g. family cohesion, self-esteem, learning and achievement factors, resilience issues etc. which can be addressed, before, during and/or after the transition has taken place, thereby maximizing the chances of success.

We know that often these young people are reluctant to engage with these services, they don't like or are not confident to travel independently and when they are in crisis they need immediate support, therefore the intensity of the work with pupils would be proactively driven through the establishment of a 1:1 relationship with the MHW.

The benefits of the post would include; increased attendance, academic progress, increased resilience, positive aspirations and longer term a reduction in NEET, financial independence and employability.

The potential risks might be lack of engagement from the young person-but locating the MHW within the PRU, will allow for the development of relationships before the transition back into mainstream/alternative education occurs.

This proposal supports the vision of Future in Mind; caring for the most vulnerable, by improving the care of children and young people who are most excluded from society-we know that the cohort of young people at our PRU include some of the most vulnerable.

The proposal supports the Workforce Development priorities identified in the Local Transformation Plan. The plan highlights consideration must be given to developing the workforce that delivers these mental health services and outlines the future direction of a workforce strategy to ensure that professionals across education, social care and health are confident in promoting good mental health and wellbeing and able to identify problems early.

The proposal also supports the Local Transformation Plan-access to Psychological Therapies. We also know that often vulnerable groups refuse to engage with services due to their location and this would allow for greater access to services from vulnerable groups.

Finally, the Proposal links to the work being carried out by the 'Expanding Minds, Improving Lives' project group, which has been established to drive forward the transformational change in Gateshead and Newcastle. The learning from the implementation of the proposal will be shared with

Newcastle, as part of the collaborative approach, to help inform and support any future changes in delivery.

The bid requested £72k funding for a high quality mental health worker.

The breakdown of these costs are:-

- £60K for salary, including on costs
- £12K for overheads including supervision, training, travel and resources.

Unfortunately the bid was not successful due to the high levels of application and demand for funding. HEE is in discussions with the DfE for 2016/17 funding. If funding becomes available applications that were not successful for 2015/16 funding will be reviewed.

One mental health worker for Looked After Children (LAC) will be funded from LAC Pupil Premium.

There is still a need for the mental health workers to work with these vulnerable children.

Proposal

That Schools Forum funds a mental health worker for one year from DSG reserves at the cost of £72K.

Recommendation

Schools Forum approves the funding of £72k from reserves to provide matched funding for the HEE Innovation fund application.

For the following reasons:-

- To secure funding to address a known gap in provision for vulnerable children and young people

CONTACT: Carole Smith