

Committee	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub Committee	23/07/2018
Subject: Progression of Workforce Development Commissioning Arrangements	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

Throughout 2018, the Workforce Learning and Development for the People's Directorate within the Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS) will be tendering to appoint a service provider to deliver a wider range of learning opportunities for staff across the Directorate.

A range of options have been explored for the delivery of learning and development to specifically meet the needs of social care staff across the service areas within the People's Directorate. The Workforce Development Group, consisting of Senior Managers and Human Resources personnel, agree a tendered service would best meet the identified need. Funding for this new service has been sourced from the Departmental Local Risk budget. This will fund the development and deployment of a two-year tendered contract to deliver learning and development activity within the Directorate.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. Staff in the People's Directorate are required to meet a range of compliance and regulatory requirements for continued practice. This includes: social worker registration with the Health and Care Professions Council; compliance with

specific learning to hold the roles of Registered Manager and Approved Mental Health Practitioner; and the forthcoming National Assessment and Accreditation Service for children's social workers. In addition, Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and other auditing bodies report on the quality and content of the learning and development offer, as well assuring that the workforce is appropriately qualified to deliver social care services.

2. It is universally accepted that staff in all roles should receive appropriate learning and development opportunities relevant to their role; and they should be prepared via learning and development for progression and the constant changing needs of service user populations. Learning and development, or the lack of such opportunities, impacts on the morale and retention of staff and also affects future recruitment and the reputation of an organisation.
3. Due to the small size of the social care teams, and individual roles within the City of London Corporation compared to social care teams in other local authorities, it has historically proven difficult and costly to ensure that the specific learning required for each role has been achieved.
4. Compliance of essential learning has mostly been achieved. However, the process for doing so is time-consuming and costly for Team Managers and the Workforce Development Co-ordinator.
5. It should be noted that the learning activity described is separate from the Corporate Learning and Development programme offered by the City Corporation's Human Resources Department which, while extensive, does not meet the specialised requirements for the People's Directorate.

Current Position

6. Currently the learning and development of practitioners across the People's Directorate is achieved through a mix of learning events sourced from various providers, commissioned packages, conferences, one-off learning events held on-site at the Guildhall and, when appropriate, attending learning activity held by the Corporate Learning and Development team. Current learning provision fails to meet the full needs of the range of staff roles within the Directorate and requires an increased spend per person to meet the range of learning requirements.
7. The Workforce Development Group for the People's Directorate explored options, which are to either: make no changes to current provision; continue to deliver the ad-hoc approach to learning and development activity; or to tender for a learning provider that can meet the learning needs of the range staff roles.

Taking no action would mean that the directorate continues to spend in an unplanned way with limited options for staff to have long-term developmental programmes.

The alternative of tendering for a learning provider will provide a wider range of learning opportunities. It will allow for tailored learning programmes and specific learning programmes for staff with regulatory body mandated learning

requirements. In addition, the new service will provide opportunities for City Corporation staff to train alongside their peers. This will remove the risk of professional isolation and expose staff to learning and service-based discussions on new trends and case needs that are rarely seen within the City Corporation's cohort of children and families requiring support.

8. The tendering of the learning and development programme provides the best opportunity for the People's Directorate to ensure that staff are provided with a wide range of learning opportunities appropriate to their role and regulatory requirements. This will also result in cost savings for the City Corporation over the duration of the contract, as single training purchases will reduce as learning is delivered en masse within the partnering organisation.

Furthermore, tendering the learning and development offer will reduce some of the negative impacts of the small team and structure within the City Corporation's Social Care teams. For example, the small size of the team means that multiple roles are held by one person who has to fulfil the statutory requirements; this increases the risk of staff becoming professionally isolated or not maintaining their current knowledge and practice due to the low number of specific case types. Through attendance at regular training opportunities with staff from another authority, staff will be able to have wider case discussions and liaise with and learn from with a wider group of professionals.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

9. The tendered learning and development service will support and underpin the People's Directorate to meet the needs and aims as set out in:
 - a. Corporation Learning and Development Policy
 - b. Workforce Plan and Strategy for the People's Directorate
 - c. Preparation for the National Assessment and Accreditation Service for Children and Family Social Workers
 - d. Children and Young People's Plan
 - e. DCCS Business Plan.

Implications

10. The Workforce Development Group noted the following potential implications during the development of the tender exercise:
 - a. Funding – the current allocated funding source allows for a two-year contract – an alternative funding source or new learning offer will need to be developed at the end of year 2.
 - b. Lack of interest from potential delivery partners – the pool of delivery partners has been identified as narrow. However, 'soft' market testing undertaken by the Commissioning and Contracts Team has provided evidence of several organisations interested in exploring working with the City Corporation on one or more lots within the tender.
 - c. Lack of engagement from City Corporation staff – this will be managed by direct line managers and the Workforce Development Co-ordinator.

- d. Reporting systems – the supplier will be expected to provide regular reporting on attendance, learner engagement and compliance as part of the key performance indicators agreed on award of contract.

Conclusion

11. It is widely recognised that, for all staff to be appropriately trained and supported to undertake their role, the ownership and responsibility is placed on the employer to provide appropriate training and development opportunities. The current offer meets the baseline requirements for staff. However, it does not provide the learning and development required, or meet the wants of staff to develop services and practitioners to step up and deliver improved services. Expectations for learning and development of staff will increase in the next two to five years with the introduction of the National Assessment and Accreditation Service for Children's Services, the expected extension of this to Adult Social Care staff, and the changing nature of service user needs. Therefore, with current resources available and the need to deliver an improved learning offer, it is the recommendation of the Workforce Development Group – consisting of Senior Management within the People's Directorate – to contract out the learning and development offer to meet and exceed these requirements over the next two years.

Appendices

- None.

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