

CABINET

DATE	16 th November 2022
REPORT OF	Councillor Margaret Cracknell Portfolio Holder for Children's Education and Young People
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Janice Spencer, Interim Director of Children's Services
SUBJECT	Start for Life Programme
STATUS	Open
FORWARD PLAN REF NO.	CB 11/22/06

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

Our ambition for North East Lincolnshire is that all of our children are healthy, resilient, safe and are supported to achieve their full potential. This report will help to contribute to the three priorities:

- To deliver high quality statutory, targeted and universal services for children and young people in our borough
- To ensure all children and young people in our community have access to high quality, safe and effective health services when they need it, so they enjoy good health and wellbeing throughout their life
- To ensure our children and young people attain the right skills and learning which enables them to contribute as future citizens, to the continued economic and social development of North East Lincolnshire

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks endorsement to the sign up to the governments Start for Life programme and accept the funding associated with such, in order to deliver a range of services through our Family Hubs. The programme includes new investment for essential services in the crucial Start for Life Period from conception to age two and also for services which support parents to care for their children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Endorses the sign up for the programme and the commitment to deliver the minimum offer required as per the Department for Education and the Department of Health & Social Care guidance.
2. Authorises the Director for Children's Services to accept the funding allocation as per the offer and criteria for delivery.
3. Delegates to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education the responsibility for delivery and implementation of the programme.
4. Authorises the Assistant Director for Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer) to execute all legal documentation arising.

REASONS FOR DECISION

The Council has been identified as one of 75 Local Authorities who are eligible to receive a share of the Start for Life programme funding for the period 2022-2025 which, if approved, will set the future shape and increase the service provision across the Borough for children and families. The funding will also assist with improving young children's home learning environments and help them recover from the effects of the pandemic.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 In July 2020, the Prime Minister asked the Rt Hon Dame Andrea Leadsom MP to chair a review into improving health and development outcomes for babies in England. 'The Best Start for Life: A Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days' report²¹ was published in March 2021, following an intensive period of engagement with parents, carers, sector professionals, volunteers and academics. The report highlighted that the services offered to families in the critical period between conception and age two are often disjointed, making it hard for those who need help to navigate the support available to them. At worst, babies miss out on the best care because parents and carers are unable to access the support they need, or the support they need is not available.
- 1.2 The funding is not subject to a competitive process but will require a delivery plan to be in place which outlines proposed activity against the criteria set out with the guidance for the programme.
- 1.3 The programme will:
 - provide support to parents and carers so they are able to nurture their babies and children, improving health and education outcomes for all
 - contribute to a reduction in inequalities in health and education outcomes for babies, children and families by ensuring that support provided is communicated to all parents and carers, including those who are hardest to reach and/or most in need of it
 - build the evidence base for what works when it comes to improving health and education outcomes for babies, children and families in different delivery contexts.
- 1.4 There are a number of minimum expectations that the Local Authority is required to sign up to and commit to delivering by the end of the programme (March 2025):
 - Perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationship support
 - Support for early language and home learning environment
 - Infant feeding
 - Involvement of parents and carers through engagement panels
 - Publishing the Start for Life offer
 - Parenting support
- 1.5 In addition to the minimum offer we are committed to the 'Go further' offer and are progressing the offer of birth registrations within our Family Hubs. This will not only give families greater flexibility in registration but enable us to work with families from the point of birth of their child and then work with families from a very early stage. Following sign up to the programme we will then be required

to develop a delivery plan which sets out, how our local area will deliver the programme expectations and how this will improve outcomes for babies, children and families and reduce health inequalities in outcomes, experiences and access to services

1.6 The plan will detail how we will offer seamless support for families: a coherent joined-up Start for Life offer available to all families. The universal Start for Life offer should include the essential support that any new family might need: midwifery, health visiting, mental health support, infant-feeding advice and specialist breastfeeding support, safeguarding and services relating to SEND.

1.7 Following sign up and approval the next steps are:

- Refresh needs assessment Sept-Dec 2022
- Create Delivery plan Sept-Dec 2022
- Publish Start for Life offer by April 2023
- Establish parent / carer panels by April 2023
- April 2023 onwards- programme delivery

2 RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

2.1 The main risks are:

- Unable to deliver a programme of support which will improve the life chances of children and support for families.

2.2 The main opportunities are:

- The potential to introduce new ways of working
- Additional funding to support and work with families who have identified unmet need to enhance the development of their children and improve long term outcomes.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Do nothing – would result in a missed opportunity to access additional funding and support which will enable delivery of enhanced services for children and families in the borough.

4 REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Negative reputational risks if we choose not to sign up for the additional funding having been identified as a Local authority eligible for the extra support.

4.2 A programme of communication and plan will be developed and Family Hubs and Network staff will connect families through focused engagement groups. Social media will be used to raise awareness further and we will be required to publish the Start for Life offer.

5 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Indicative funding allocations have been identified: £2.854 million over 3 years:
2022 – 2023 £706,000
2023 – 2024 £1,165,000

2024 - 2025 £983,000

- 5.2 The funding allocated to the programme is divided across the different programme strands with 91% being allocated to service delivery, 4% to publicity and 5% on capital elements needed.

6 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

This programme will have a positive impact on the outcomes achieved for children and young people. The programme aims to transform the way services are designed and delivered, ensure that there is a universal offer which also has tailored support for vulnerable communities.

7 CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None have been identified as a result of this report.

8 CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

There has been no consultation with Scrutiny to date, however reports will be considered as part of programme design and delivery.

9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 On the 8th August 2022 the Council was advised that it has been successful in signing up to the Start for Life programme. In 2022-23 the Council will receive £706k, 50% will be received on sign up, 50% on the completion and submission of a delivery plan. Future years allocations are indicative and shown in para 5.1 and are the lower end of the range.
- 9.2 Funding allocation is based on a fixed rate sum and a % based on population for programmes of activity included in the programme. These include parental support, infant feeding, perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationships and the publishing of start for life offers.
- 9.3 As the programme develops Finance will assist and support service colleagues in respect of returns of compliance with financial processes.

10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Immediate legal implications arising will be around the terms and conditions of external funding and the completion of funding agreements and ancillary documentation. Legal Services are able to support this process, ensuring the interests of the Council are protected.
- 10.2 As the program develops throughout the delivery phase, Legal Services will continue to support colleagues.
- 10.3 The delegations sought are appropriate to an exercise of this nature

11 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

Specific HR advice will be provided where required in respect of any arrangements affecting the workforce in accordance with the recommendations in this report and to comply with the Council's Constitution, legislation and the Council's policies and procedures.

12 WARD IMPLICATIONS

This proposal positively impacts on all wards.

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Department of Health and Social Care programme guide and allocation of entitlement and sign up process, August 2022.

14 CONTACT OFFICER

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