



# City of Westminster Cabinet Member Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration
<b>Date:</b>	30 December 2020
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	Funding for the Clinical Practice Team (Family Services): Partners in Practice (PiP) grant substitution
<b>City for All Summary:</b>	Vibrant Communities:
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	Report seeking £0.578m growth in 2020/21 to fund the Clinical Practice Team (Family Services)
<b>Report of:</b>	Nicky Crouch, Director of Family Services <a href="mailto:Ncrouch@westminster.gov.uk">Ncrouch@westminster.gov.uk</a>

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The work of the Clinical Practice Team is pivotal in maintaining Looked After Children (LAC) and Child Protection numbers at a significantly lower rate than the national average. This report is seeking one-off budget growth of £0.578m in 2020/21 to support the continuation of this work, previously funded by the Department for Education's Partnership in Practice (PiP) programme.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The recommendation is that budget growth of £0.578m is agreed as a means of bridging the gap in funding that will otherwise arise because of the cessation of the Partners in Practice (PiP) programme. This will enable the crucial work being undertaken by the Clinical Practice team to continue in 2020/21 and beyond.

### **3. Reasons for Decision**

- 3.1 The Clinical Practice Team received funding from the Partners in Practice (PiP) programme between 2016/17 and 2019/20. The team has been pivotal in keeping Looked After Children (LAC) and Child Protection numbers at a significantly lower rate than the national average.
- 3.2 The annual cost of the team is £0.578m, however costs avoided because of lower than average LAC numbers and Child Protection orders when compared to the national average are estimated at £5.700m.

### **4. Background, including Policy Context**

- 4.1 The Partners in Practice (PiP) programme was funded by the Department for Education (DfE) and aimed to be a genuine partnership between local and central government by bringing together the best practitioners and leaders in children's social care to improve the system. The Partners in Practice were seen as being among the strongest local authorities in the country and through the programme they:
- demonstrated what works and drove innovation to build understanding of the conditions needed for excellent practice to flourish;
  - drove sector led improvement through peer support to authorities who need to improve;
  - supported the DfE to shape and test policy on wider programmes and reform
- 4.2 Since the introduction of the clinical service, the number of Looked After Children (LAC) and the number of Child Protection orders has reduced significantly – by 28% and 31% respectively. This is against the national trend that has seen an increase in numbers over the same period of around 12%. Although this data could be an indicator of numerous things and cannot simply be attributed to systemic social work practice, there is a likely correlation between the organisation being trained in systemic practice and better outcomes for families and vulnerable children.
- 4.3 The Clinical Practice Team has also been key in the council's commitment to systemic social work training. This has helped create a competent and stable workforce with high staff retention. As a result, Westminster's reliance on agency staff is lower in comparison to other London boroughs, reducing the overall staff costs.
- 4.4 Ongoing funding of the Clinical Practice Team will support the Council's City for All Vision, promoting our commitment to Vibrant Communities. The team deliver services to the most vulnerable children and families, ensuring they can continue to be cared for within their own communities. In supporting mental and physical well-being and tackling inequality the team contribute to ensuing greater inclusivity and opportunities.

### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The financial regulations state that any virement (budget transfer) with budget and policy changes over £500k requires Cabinet member sign off. This request for £0.578m will be funded centrally from the allowance made corporately for pressures as part of the 2020/21 budget, as presented to full council in March 2020.

## 6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Children Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in need in their area. The funding is being managed in accordance with the Council's financial regulations.

## 7. Staffing Implications

N/A

## 8. Consultation

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact:**

Nicky Crouch, Director of Family Services  
[NCrouch@wesminster.gov.uk](mailto:NCrouch@wesminster.gov.uk)

Amanda Anerville, Strategic Finance Manager (Bi-Borough Children's Services)  
[Amanda.anerville@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:Amanda.anerville@rbkc.gov.uk)

## BACKGROUND PAPERS:

N/A

NB: For individual Cabinet Member reports only

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration**

**Declaration of Interest**

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed:

Date:

NAME:

**Councillor Melvyn Caplan. Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration**

State nature of interest if any .....

*(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)*

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled **Funding for the Clinical Practice Team (Family Services): Partners in Practice (PiP) grant substitution** and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed .....

Councillor Melvyn Caplan, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration

Date .....

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:

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If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Director of Law, the Executive Director of Finance and Resources, and, if there are staffing implications, the Director of People Services (or their

representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.

## **Other Implications**

- 1. Resources Implications**
- 2. Business Plan Implications**
- 3. Risk Management Implications**
- 4. Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment including Health and Safety Implications**
- 5. Crime and Disorder Implications**
- 6. Impact on the Environment**
- 7. Equalities Implications**
- 8. Staffing Implications – see paragraph 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 of guide**
- 9. Human Rights Implications**
- 10. Energy Measure Implications**
- 11. Communications Implications**

Note to report authors: If there are particularly significant implications in any of the above categories these should be moved to the main body of the report.