

**MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
REPORT FOR RESOLUTION**

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL
DATE: 27 MAY 2009
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
SUBJECT: THINK FAMILY – ESTABLISHMENT OF HEAD OF SERVICE
POST

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To set out the vision for improving services to children, young people, families and Manchester's local communities through promoting and embedding a 'whole family' approach across key City Council Services and Partner agencies. "Think Family" is term used by the Department of Children's, Schools and Family (DCSF), that builds on Children's Trust arrangements and the recommendations from the Social Exclusion Task Force that clearly indicate the importance of improved collaboration and working arrangements between services that support children and families.

To outline the grant funding received by Manchester to drive a Think family approach and the requirements of the funding streams awarded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Agree the establishment of a Head of Service Post – Think Family as a fixed term role until end March 2011 on a salary of £57,915.
2. Grant delegated authority to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Head of Corporate Personnel to develop the job description and person specification for this post.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS

1. This post is to be funded from the Youth Crime Action Plan resource recently confirmed as allocated to Manchester for this purpose. £175k per year for two years (09 – 11) has been allocated for the Think Family and Family Intervention Project reforms. The Think Family Head of service post and associated support costs will be resourced from this allocation.

2. The funding arrangements have changed this financial year and the grant is allocated to Manchester through our Parenting Commissioner. All resources that relate to challenge, support and development for parenting is allocated through a single point. This now enables us to ensure synergy between parenting programmes, parent and family support within a Think Family model.
3. There are no financial implications for capital budgets.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Think Family – Improving the life chances of families at risk. Social Exclusion Unit
Jan 2008

WARDS AFFECTED: All

IMPLICATIONS FOR:

Anti poverty	Equal Opportunities	Environment	Employment
Yes	Yes	No	Yes

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Ed Miliband, Cabinet Minister responsible for social exclusion, said: "The primary responsibility for a family's success or failure will always lie with parents, but government can make a significant difference to the chances of success. There should be no wrong door to help for families, so that whenever vulnerable parents turn to local services they receive support that recognises the needs of the whole family". "If we're going to break the cycle of inter-generational exclusion, we must empower local services to always 'think family' and enable families to help themselves."
- 1.2 A 'think family' approach encourages local services to adopt the following basic principles:
- No wrong door - contact with any service offers an open door into a system of joined-up support, e.g. a probation officer or housing officer identifies the adult language difficulties of a client and refers them to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) training;
 - Look at the whole family - services working with both adults and children take into account family circumstances and responsibilities, e.g. an alcohol treatment service combines treatment with parenting classes while supervised childcare is provided for the children;
 - Provide support tailored to need - tailored and family-centred packages of support are offered to all families at risk, e.g. a Family Intervention Project works with a family to agree a package of support best suited to their situation;
 - Build on family strengths - practitioners work in partnerships with families recognising and promoting resilience and helping them to build their capabilities, e.g. family group conferencing is used to empower a family to negotiate their own solution to a problem
- 1.3 With this at the heart of the drive to improve outcomes for a range of young people and families, funding has been made available to Local Authorities through the Youth Crime Action Plan to drive reforms in how we both engage and persist with families who have behaviours that are not in the best interest of children's outcomes.
- 1.4 Discussions with the Youth Task Force throughout the development phase of the youth crime action plan clearly articulated the view that the scale of reforms that were being both measured and expected needed to be driven by a senior post with sufficient experience and skills to influence change. There is recognition that despite resources being allocated to the most deprived areas and difficult to engage families there has not been a significant and sustained improvement of outcomes.

2. CONTEXT

- 2.1 Members will be aware of the range of initiatives to improve the quality of life for Manchester families that are being developed on a collaborative basis in the city. No Wrong Door, Residents Wages and the Neighbourhood Focus are key to considering our approach that needs to be further developed to both engage with families who can be resistant to change and also sustain that engagement through challenge and support. Raising aspirations is a priority for the city both at children and young people level but also for their parents.
- 2.2 In order for children and young people to thrive and do well, closer attention is needed on the situation of the entire family. We need additional traction on understanding and addressing how the needs and presenting issues of adults, who are parents, affects their parenting capacity. The issue of worklessness within a family, for example, should be considered and addressed within assessments and interventions delivered by Children's Services. Likewise within specialist services for example Drug and Alcohol Treatment or Mental Health Services there needs to be more attention paid to the whole family context and in particular the needs of any children and young people affected by their parents'/carers' presenting issues. We need to aim for a solution-focussed approach for the whole family, with the aim of improving outcomes across the household.
- 2.3 There needs to be more effective and sustained improvements in the engagement of families with entrenched problems. Families' present issues that are often evident over generations, and we need to overcome the barriers to sustained engagement in order to achieve improved outcomes for both individual family members and the family unit as a whole.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 The proposal to create a Head of Service – Think Family allows us to set the strategic direction and achieve increased pace and change through the additional capacity. It will ensure we have:-
- Stronger strategic leadership for Think Family both within Children's Services and across the Council
 - Linkages with other related initiatives, e.g. residents wages
 - Clear allocation of responsibilities and accountabilities of the work streams of a Think Family approach to all staff
 - Concentration of emphasis on some of the potential barriers to progress. E.g. data sharing, workforce development

3.2 To do this we will adopt an approach that leads us towards:-

- A single joined up holistic assessment of the family's strengths/resources as well as their challenges and issues
- Longer term holistic family support provided through and co-ordinated by a named key worker with enough clout and access to resources to make things happen in the family and for the family
- Multi-faceted interventions, delivered by well-trained, well-supported and well-supervised staff with manageable caseloads.
- Recruitment and workforce development that delivers assertive, resourceful and empathetic family workers
- Maintenance of regular, intensive and on-going contact with families over at least a 12-month period
- Innovative opportunities to empower families to own their own challenges and solutions by actively involving and engaging them in their own family assessment, and in the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of interventions.

3.3 The main duties of the Head of Service – Think Family are: -

- To achieve better outcomes for young people by delivering Manchester's vision of a Think Family Approach, facilitating collaboration across all partners and providers, driving the development of the improved integrated approach to families. Manchester City Council meets its legal requirements through effective partnership working and management of internal and external funding streams.
- Lead on the development of the Local Authority's strategy and policy for Think Family, incorporating the range of initiatives into the development e.g. residents wages
- Lead and develop an approach to Think Family that contributes to improved outcomes for children, young people and their families, on behalf of partners including Manchester Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the City Council.
- Lead and improve the development of the engagement of families with entrenched problems and barriers to sustained engagement leading to their improved outcomes as both individual family members and as a family unit.

4. GOVERNANCE

- 4.1 It is intended to develop a new Think Family Board to provide the governance and accountability. Currently parenting initiatives are governed through a Manchester parenting board. It is proposed to disestablish this and merge both responsibilities into a Think Family Board that reports to the Children's Board.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This Head of Service Post is a vital element in enabling MCC to develop an integrated approach to improving quality of life for Manchester families. The challenge for us is to improve outcomes across a whole family through integrating skills of our workforce to engage with the whole family.
- 5.2 Given that we have been granted funding through the Youth Crime Action Plan for a senior post illustrates the national recognition that for some families previous interventions and support have not been sustained long term and we are challenged to develop new and innovative approaches to both engage with families and influence their contribution to local neighbourhoods. This includes raising their aspirations. Together these will have both an immediate impact on the city through an ability to provide sustained support and challenge for disadvantaged families as well as along term impact if we can begin to raise the aspirations and attainment of our children and young people and will support our workforce development approach to equip worker to consider cross family improvement.

6. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF PERSONNEL

- 6.1 I have discussed this new post with the Director of Children's Services and support the proposals set out in the report.
- 6.2 I believe the proposed salary of £57,915 is appropriate and reasonable in line with positions of comparable responsibility across the Authority.
- 6.3 I will support the Director of Children's Services in the development of a job description and person specification for this post and with arrangements for the subsequent advertising and recruitment process.