

DMPC Decision – PCD 1366

Title: Education Matters – ‘Talk Matters’ & ‘Difference Matters’ Primary School Programmes

Executive Summary:

Since Spring 2022, the VRU has been undertaking scoping work, working with stakeholders including consulting young people to understand the current needs and updated picture of young people in the criminal justice system with hidden unaddressed Special Educational Needs. The VRU has devised a Primary schools’ flagship programme called ‘Education Matters’ which encompasses 2 strands of activity: Talk Matters, and Difference Matters. The total amount of funding allocated to this programme is £4 million across 23/24, 24/25, and 25/26 FYs. This funding decision is looking to:

- Award direct funding for the Primary Programme ‘Talk Matters’ to up to 7 potential boroughs identified across London where the need is greatest in terms of Key Stage 1/2 data and where there is also a correlation with poor outcomes for young people (at the end of Key Stage 4) when they leave statutory education. This direct funding will support the work of the VRU’s Primary schools’ Talk Matters programme, which will specifically look at addressing the correlation between children and young people in the criminal justice system and those that have significant speech and language communication difficulties as well as social, emotional, and mental health needs. This includes 7 direct awards within the 23/24 and 24/25 financial years and uplift in financial year 25/26 as the programme rolls off enabling local authorities to take the helm and address local needs for their local children and families. This allocation has been approved to begin in Financial Year 22/23 in PCD1149, however the work will now begin from financial year 23/24.
- Procure the Primary Schools’ ‘Difference Matters’ Programme to be delivered in the same identified 7 boroughs as Talk Matters, across Financial Years 24/25 and 25/26, allowing for the delivery to be phased, with 23/24 to be used to fully scope the programmes approach. Difference Matters will enable school leaders to be aware and equipped to work with children and young people with neurodiversity. Data informs us that there is a correlation of young people with ADHD and/or other neurodiverse needs being disproportionately affected by school exclusions, and the number of those within PRUs (Pupil Referral Units) and in the CJS.
- The allocation of the remaining £200,000 (PCD 1149) to be spent on procuring a holistic multi-year evaluation of both strands ‘Talk Matters’ and ‘Difference Matters’.

Both strands of Education Matters align with many of the VRU’s objectives in relation to the Outcomes Focused Performance Framework. This includes but is not limited to improving wellbeing, increasing engagement and achievement in education, supporting stronger families, improving understanding of different needs, improving inclusive practice, and giving young people every chance to succeed.

Recommendation:

The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime is recommended to approve:

- The allocation of £2.8 million (PCD 1149) to be split equally across up to 7 London boroughs for the 'Talk Matters' Programme as a direct award with the duration of the grant agreement from 1st April 2023 to March 2026.
- The allocation of £1 million (PCD 1149) carried forward from Mayoral Core funding for the procurement of the Primary Schools' 'Difference Matters' Programme to be delivered in up to 7 London boroughs, across 24/25 and 25/26, allowing for the delivery to be phased.
- The allocation of the remaining £200,000 (PCD 1149) to be spent on procuring a holistic multi-year evaluation of both strands Talk Matters and Difference Matters.
- Approve delegated authority to the VRU Director for awarding the contract to the successful providers for Difference Matters and the Evaluation Contract following a competitive tender process.

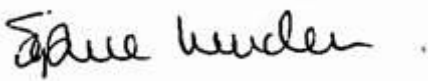
Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

I confirm I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct. Any such interests are recorded below.

The above request has my approval.

Signature

Date 17/02/2023



PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE DMPC

1. Introduction and background –

Talk Matters Primary schools' programme

- 1.1 London's VRU recognises that in areas of high social deprivation, between 40% and 56% of children start school with language delay. Meeting the needs of children, and reducing inequality, requires a system-wide approach as currently needs are frequently unidentified.¹
- 1.2 The Primary phase of the VRU's **Inclusive & Nurturing Schools programme** will serve as a flagship early intervention model that will try to address the prevalence of the correlation between the CYP (Children Young People) involved in serious youth violence, and those with speech and language difficulties.
- 1.3 The Primary Talk Matters programme is designed to address exclusions and violence affecting children and young people by getting to the root cause of children's vulnerability to crime and violence at a primary school age. Evidence shows that poverty, literacy, Special Educational Needs and disproportionality can be key intersecting factors affecting children at a primary school age. Data suggests there is a strong correlation between Speech, language and communication needs ("SLCN") and trajectory into criminal justice system: Children with primary language difficulties are at higher risk of developing behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, which can increase the risk of their exclusion from school.
- 1.4 Over time, these children and young people are identified as having SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities), Social, Emotional and Mental Health ("SEMH") difficulties, and SLCN.² Previous research has shown that children with poor vocabulary skills are twice as likely to be unemployed when they grow up. In the most extreme cases, this pathway into Alternative Provision ("AP") can lead to young people entering the criminal justice system. Speech and language therapy is widely commissioned in custody and in alternative provision and youth offending services however this needs to be addressed much sooner.
- 1.5 Key Statistics
 - 1-2% of general population has significant SLCN
 - 55% of socially disadvantaged children have SLCN at age 5
 - 81% of children with SEMH have significant unidentified communication needs
 - 60% of YP (Young People) excluded (or risk of) from school have SLCN
 - 66-90% of young offenders have language levels substantially and quantifiably below expected level for their age
 - Up to 80% of adult prisoners present with SLCN
- 1.6 This programme is entrenched in the findings from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) research:
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/early-language-3>
- 1.7 There is enhanced need for support, provision, and intervention for preschool children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds where there is a higher rate of children in receipt of free school meals not achieving expected goals in communication and language learning. The EEF research identified 49 intervention studies which met their criteria from the What Works for SLCN database, combined with evidence rating system intended to capture how much confidence one should have in the results of a given intervention. The research classified the studies according to:
 - the focus of the interventions (primary and secondary outcomes) with four outcome categories — phonological awareness, vocabulary, expressive language and receptive language.

- whether the studies were programmes and practices.
- who delivered the intervention.
- the location of the interventions.
- the intensity and duration of the interventions; and
- the effect size of the intervention.

- 1.8 Talk Matters takes the learning from this research and enables investment into a speech, language and communication programme that suits the needs of the local area.
- 1.9 Talk Matters will be delivered across up to 7 boroughs, targeting up to 5 schools within each borough (total of up to 35 schools). Boroughs have been identified by the following criteria: high rates of young people receiving free school meals, the disproportionate number of children with special needs being excluded from primary and secondary school, high exclusion and suspension rates across primary and secondary, and levels of deprivation.
- 1.10 The Programme will see children receive an assessment from a trained Speech and Language therapist followed by weekly/daily sessions and/or classroom support to children with identified SLCN. Support from the therapist will continue up until long-term support is in place (timescales based upon caseload). Boroughs will agree the number of children within each cohort annually.

Difference Matters Primary Schools' Programme

- 1.11 Data in London and nationally identifies large disproportionalities of school exclusions affecting children with SEND (4x more likely to be excluded). This indicates a general lack of identification, support and advocacy for neurodiversity needs in mainstream schools.
- 1.12 The VRU aims to play a role in moving away from the narrative around SEND being one centred around deficit, and one towards championing strengths and positive understanding around neurodiversity, as well as enabling additional needs to be adequately identified and supported.
- 1.13 The VRU's Difference Matters Primary School Programme will provide capacity-building in schools to identify, and support SEND and advocate for inclusive approaches. Intended outcomes include equipping schools, children and families to be able to identify, understand and support needs, reducing school exclusions with a focus on SEND disproportionality, and encouraging a positive narrative that also celebrates strengths and assets around neurodiversity.
- 1.14 Using the evidence of existing data, both programmes will be delivered in up to 7 boroughs where the need is greatest in terms of Key Stage 1/2 data and where there is also a correlation with poor outcomes for young people (at the end of Key Stage 4) when they leave statutory education.
- 1.15 Since Spring 2022, the VRU have been undertaking scoping work, working with stakeholders to understand the evidence-base and current need by talking to borough leads on this subject of hidden, unaddressed needs for our disadvantaged children and young people. Additionally, the VRU has consulted and worked with its Young People's Action Group to review the need and the approaches needed to improve outcomes for primary aged children with speech and language support needs.

2. Issues for consideration

- 2.1. In regard to Talk Matters, the VRU is seeking approval to award direct funding to up to 7 boroughs as allocated in PCD 1149, however the previous approval was for the programme to start in financial year 22/23. Due to the level of scoping and research this programme has been delayed in its commissioning cycle and will now run from 1st April 2023.
- 2.2. Each borough will submit an Expression of Interest detailing the level of need and provision currently in their local area. This will serve as the baseline data and will be incorporated into the VRU's RMEL (Research, Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning) team's OFPF. Where boroughs are unable to take-up the offer (due to capacity issues) of the Primary Education Programme a short-list of 3 other boroughs meeting the criteria would be approached.
- 2.3. By assigning a direct award to boroughs will provide an approach that has been termed as embedding local provision for local needs as the award will enable local authorities' education teams to deploy funding efficiently.
- 2.4. This funding also coincides with the delayed Government response to the SEND & AP Green Paper, *Right Support, Right Place, Right Time*. [SoS for Education on Government's delayed response to SEND & AP Green Paper](#)
- 2.5. Each borough will work with up to 5 nominated Primary schools by providing existing data on a number of datasets including % of High Needs in the borough at Primary for SLCN/SEMH as well as exclusions, current interventions and investment of additional resourced or specialist provision.
- 2.6. The direct award of two years of funding for financial years 23/24 and 24/25, plus top up amount in the closing year 25/26, supports the VRU's approach to multi-year funding, sustainability of funding, as well as providing longer term training opportunities for teachers. Local Authorities and schools have reported significant demands with CYP with high SEND needs and lack of resource i.e., dearth of speech and language therapists. This is having an adverse effect on the children, young people and their families as well as escalating risk of exclusions and vulnerability.
- 2.7. With regards to Difference Matters, the VRU is seeking approval to allocate 1 million (PCD 1149) carried forward from Mayoral core funding for the procurement of Difference Matters, also delivered in the same schools in up to 7 identified boroughs as Talk Matters is delivered in, starting delivery in 24/25, with second year of delivery in 25/26.

3. Financial Comment

- 3.1. This report is seeking approval to award funds totalling £4,000,000 over the next three financial years, of which £3,000,000 relates to Primary Education Schools' Talk Matters Programme, and £1,000,000 relates to the Primary Schools' Difference Matters Programme.
- 3.2. Funds for Primary Education Schools' Talk Matters programme will be awarded over a three-year period of which £200,000 will be used to procure evaluation, and monitoring providers. The balance of funds will be awarded to Talk Matters broken down as follows: -
 - 2023/24 £1,280,000 split equally across up to 7 boroughs
 - 2024/25 £1,280,000 split equally across up to 7 boroughs
 - 2025/26 £350,000 split equally across up to 7 boroughs as the programme rolls off

- 3.3. Funds for the Primary Schools' Difference Matters Programme will be awarded over a 2-year period of which £500,000 will be spent in 2024/25 and the remaining £500,000 will be spent in 2025/26.

4. Legal Comments

- 4.1. MOPAC's general powers are set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). Section 3(6) of the 2011 Act provides that MOPAC must "secure the maintenance of the metropolitan police service and secure that the metropolitan police service is efficient and effective." This is a broad power, and the initiatives appear to be part of a number of proposals which are aimed at supporting victims of crime to enable the efficiency and effectiveness of the police service. In addition, under Schedule 3, paragraph 7 MOPAC has wide incidental powers to "do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of the functions of the Office." Paragraph 7(2) (a) provides that this includes entering into contracts and other agreements.
- 4.2. Under MOPAC's Scheme of Delegation, the award of individual contracts of £500,000 and above is reserved to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime. This includes the responsibility for signing the contractual agreements.
- 4.3. Officers must ensure that the arrangements comply with the Financial Regulations and Contract Regulations.

5. Commercial Issues

- 5.1. VRU is seeking approval to carry out a competitive tender process to procure services for the **Difference Matters Programme**
- 5.2. Section 2.3 in the MOPAC Contract Regulations state that the DMPC is responsible for the approval of; All requests to go out for tender for contracts of £500,000 or above, or where there is a particular public interest if below £500K.
- 5.3. The proposed procurement has a maximum value of £1,000,000 over 2 years and therefore exceeds the relevant FTS thresholds. Accordingly, the procurement will be subject to the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (as amended) ("the Regulations"); specifically, those applying to social and other specific services as contained in Regulation 74 of the Regulations, the so called "Light Touch Regime".
- 5.4. The report proposes using the Open Procedure to tender on the basis that the market for this type of service is relatively small it is proposed that the opportunity will be published on an open basis without the need to shortlist organisations to proceed to the tendering stage - One stage Open Procedure.
- 5.5. It is proposed an evaluation methodology with a Technical: Commercial ratio of **80:20** will be used to select the most advantageous tender. The author of the report has demonstrated clear rationale for the proposed procurement route and contracting arrangements.
- 5.6. As stated in MOPAC Contract Regulation, all tender documentation shall include as a minimum the following:
- 5.6.1. A specification that describes the MOPAC's requirements in sufficient detail to enable the submission of competitive offers.
 - 5.6.2. A requirement for tenderers to declare that the Tender content, price or any other figure or particulars concerning the Tender have not been disclosed by the tenderer to any other party (except where such a disclosure is made in confidence for a necessary purpose).

5.6.3. A requirement for tenderers to complete fully and sign all Tender documents including a form of Tender and certificates relating to canvassing and non-collusion.

5.6.4. Notification that Tenders are submitted to the MOPAC on the basis that they are compiled at the tenderer's expense.

- 5.7. The **Talk Matters** will be delivered through grant funding to up to 7 London Boroughs. The methods used to identify the boroughs can be found in paragraph 1.9 of this report and provides a satisfactory rationale to justify the decision. An Invitation to Apply will be sent to the selected boroughs, proposals on how they seek to meet the local needs of children with SLCN through speech and language therapy will be reviewed by the VRU's Education Team. Where boroughs are unable to take-up the offer (due to capacity issues) of the Primary Education Programme a short-list of 4 other boroughs meeting the criteria would be approached.
- 5.8. VRU is seeking approval to carry out a competitive tender process to procure services for the **Evaluation Contract** for both strands.
- 5.9. The proposed procurement has a maximum value of £200,000 over 2 years. The procurement will be subject to the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (as amended) ("the Regulations"). The VRU will procure this service by running a further competition on the CCS Research & Insights RM6126 Framework. The proposed methodology and documentation mentioned in paragraph 5.5 and 5.6 of this report will also apply to the procurement of this service.

6. Public Health Approach

- 6.1. The spend plan takes a public health approach to tackling violence, which means looking at violence not as isolated incidents or solely a police enforcement problem. Instead, this approach looks at violence as a preventable consequence of a range of factors, such as adverse early-life experiences, or harmful social or community experiences and influences.
- 6.2. Evaluation of good practice to answer the question 'what works and for whom?' which must also happen before policy and programmes can be effectively scaled up and sustained to contribute to population level outcomes (a core requirement for public health programmes).
- 6.3. This piece of work has been informed by discussions and feedback from stakeholders including the use of data to take evidence informed approach to investment.

7. GDPR and Data Privacy

- 7.1. MOPAC will adhere to the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and ensure that any organisations who are commissioned to do work with or on behalf of MOPAC are fully compliant with the policy and understand their GDPR responsibilities. Suppliers will be asked to provide a Data Protection Impact Assessment.
- 7.2. All contracts will include clear provisions relating to compliance in this area, and in relation to the processing of personal data. These terms have been drafted following consultation with MOPAC's GDPR Project Manager.

8. Equality Comments

- 8.1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act), as a public authority the Deputy Mayor/MOPAC must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and any conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good

relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics under the Equality Act are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status (the duty in respect of this last characteristic is to eliminate unlawful discrimination only).

8.2. The VRU are committed to promoting equality and participation in all their activities, whether this is related to the work we do with our external stakeholders or whether this is related to our responsibilities as an employer. As public authorities we are also required to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations when making decisions and developing policies. To do this, it is necessary to understand the potential impacts of the range of internal and external activities on different groups of people.

8.3. We will be carrying out an equality impact assessment across the Talk Matters and Difference Matters programmes to ensure that all protected characteristics are considered in the commissioning and delivery of this work.

9. Background/supporting papers

n/a

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and will be made available on the MOPAC website following approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision, it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.

Part 1 Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? No

If yes, for what reason:

Until what date: N/A

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered as likely to be exempt from disclosure under the FOIA should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a **Part 2** form – No

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION

Tick to confirm statement (ü)

Financial Advice

The Strategic Finance and Resource Management Team has been consulted on this proposal.

✓

Legal Advice

Legal advice is not required.

✓

Equalities Advice:

Equality and diversity issues are covered in the body of the report.

✓

Public Health Approach

Due diligence has been given to determine whether the programme sits within the Violence Reduction Unit's public approach to reducing violence.

✓

Commercial Issues

This is an extension to the original Agreement – due to nature of reason for request no challenge from the marketplace is anticipated.

✓

GDPR/Data Privacy

- A DPIA is not required.

✓

Director/Head of Service

The Assistant Director of VRU has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the MOPAC's plans and priorities.

✓

Chief Executive Officer

I have been consulted about the proposal and confirm that financial, legal and equalities advice has been taken into account in the preparation of this report. I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime.

Signature

Date 13/02/2023

