

**DMPC Decision – PCD 1542****Title: Children's Rights in Education - Rights Respecting Schools London (UNICEF UK)****Executive Summary:**

We know that children and young people are safer in school. That is why tackling exclusions and driving up attendance is at the heart of the London Violence Reduction Unit's (VRU) prevention work.

The London-wide Inclusion Charter is a partnership approach. It's built on the voices of young people and informed by parents and carers, schools, education specialists and local authorities.

London's Inclusion Charter will galvanise, promote, and invest in inclusive practices. It will tackle stark disproportionalities and seek to embed anti-racism across education. Children's rights and the experience of teachers will be at its heart.

The VRU's vision for safe and inclusive school's places children's rights at the centre, as one of the foundations, to achieving its aim to promote healthy relationships and inclusive practices to reduce exclusions and disengagement with education. That is why the VRU will be investing in a service that provides training, resources, tailored support, and an accreditation to schools, providing a framework to embed children's rights strategically and practically into a school context.

UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award is a well-evidenced approach that supports schools to embed children's rights in all aspects of the life of the school, including the curriculum. As the only organisation to provide such services nationally, the VRU are seeking permission to directly award UNICEF UK a £1,400,000 contract to provide the Rights Respecting Schools Award free to all schools in London from 2024-2028.

**Recommendation:**

The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime is recommended to:

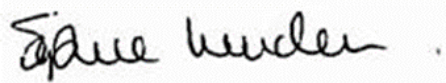
- Approve the allocation of £1,400,000 from the VRU Budget Smoothing Reserve to award a grant to UNICEF to deliver Rights Respecting Schools London, from February 2024 – March 2028 (across 50 months over 5 financial years).

**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**

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**Date**

22/11/2023

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

### **1. Introduction and background –**

#### **1.1 London's Inclusion Charter**

Work towards London's Inclusion Charter will include shining a light on promising practice, celebrating inclusion, and recognising that working in partnership to tackle all forms of exclusion, including absenteeism, suspension and managed moves, must go hand-in-hand with increasing young people's sense of belonging and safety so that they can thrive.

1.2 The Charter is backed up by investment in schools and their staff, building on their commitment and dedication to supporting children and young people following the challenges presented by the pandemic.

1.3 The Charter will be shaped by a set of agreed key principles around inclusion. It builds on last year's VRU education summit, in which headteachers, education professional, young people, parents and carers and local authorities, supported an inclusion charter for London that prioritises education that is fully inclusive, fair, and available to all.

1.4 Three foundations underpin the work of London's Inclusion Charter. This is where we will target our support to enable schools, boroughs and trusts to take forward initiatives to develop more effective inclusion of all London's children and young people:

- Children's rights
- Investing in Learning
- Learning Partnerships

#### **1.5 Children's rights**

The VRU has identified the need for a provider to promote and embed children's rights in all schools across London. Incorporating children's rights into the heart of every school, including their policies and practices is key to ensuring children have a voice and can participate.

1.6 When children know about their rights, they are empowered to claim them and to understand others have rights too. This is important because it leads to a myriad of other positive gains in equipping both young people and adults with a shared language for conflict resolution leading to improved capacity for resolving disputes and increased feelings of safety. Living and learning through rights inspires pupils to a deeper sense of engagement in their school and their community. Children have an improved respect for themselves and for others, leading to greater appreciation of diversity.

1.7 Creating a shared language of rights and respect improves a child's sense of belonging to a school community, increasing wellbeing, and self-esteem. At a school level, this approach leads to better attendance, behaviour, relationships between students, and between students and staff, improvements to safeguarding, and ultimately a reduction in suspensions and exclusionary practice.

#### **1.8 UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award**

Investing in UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting School Award for all schools across London to access

free of charge would enable the VRU to start delivering the first foundation of the London Inclusion Charter, putting children's rights at the heart of education.

- 1.9 The service will be a rights-based, whole school improvement programme, centred around an accreditation directly linked to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This service will provide training, resources, tailored support and an accreditation to schools, providing a framework to embed children's rights strategically and practically into a school context.
- 1.10 It is important that the service delivered is sufficiently flexible to adapt to the context of the boroughs it is being delivered in and is sustainable. The service will build the capacity of staff to embed children's rights within and across schools. To this end, UNICEF UK will be expected to work with all London boroughs, to develop Children's Rights Steering Groups that will build local support networks and communities of schools, who can share learnings and best practice with each other. Steering group members will be trained to become assessors of the accreditation, capacity building and futureproofing the sustainability of the service locally.

## **2. Issues for consideration**

- 2.1. Working in education is a priority for London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). Building a rights respecting culture within and among schools has the potential for significant and positive long-term influence on developing a strong culture of inclusion for young people and their communities, whilst also contributing to the violence reduction agenda offering a unifying and cohesive thread of child rights through all other initiatives relating to safety, wellbeing, voice, and participation.
- 2.2. Rights Respecting Schools Awards (RRSA) are offered by UNICEF UK at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. The approach is well-evidenced and supports schools to embed children's rights in all aspects of the life of the school, including the curriculum.
- 2.3. Over 1.6 million children in the UK go to a Rights Respecting School and around 5,000 schools in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are working through the Award, of which 350 are from London (approximately 13% of all London schools). UNICEF UK are contracted by Manchester, Cardiff and Scotland to deliver RRSA across all their schools, and these partnerships have demonstrated that by removing the cost barrier, significantly more schools engage in the programme and make faster progress towards recognition.

## **3. Financial Comment**

- 3.1. The total budget requirement for this work totals £1,400,000. Costs will be funded from the VRU budget smoothing reserve. The programme will be delivered across 50 months (February 2024 – March 2028). The profile of spend is set out in the table below.

	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Programme Costs	0	350,000	350,000	350,000	350,000	1,400,000

#### 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 can confirm that the DMPC has the legal authority to agree this decision.

#### 5. Commercial Issues

- 5.1. This decision is seeking to award UNICEF a grant of £1,400,000 to deliver a rights-based, whole school improvement programme, centred around an accreditation directly linked to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This service will provide training, resources, tailored support, and an accreditation to schools, providing a framework to embed children's rights strategically and practically into a school context.
- 5.2. A subsidy assessment was made on the award of the grant and it was determined that the award is not a subsidy as the services being offered is not being offered by other organisations. In order to determine this a PIN Notice was published on Contracts Finder and Find a Tender inviting organisations that could deliver the services to express their interest. We received no response to the notice. This also provides a clear rationale that UNICEF UK are the only organisation to offer a rights-based, whole school improvement programme, centred around an accreditation directly linked to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- 5.3. UNICEF UK's RRSA London programme represents significant value for money. An average primary school with 200 pupils usually pays £400 per year and a large secondary with 1900 pupils pays £1,500, if UNICEF UK worked with only 700 schools per year, at an average cost of £900 per school, this would cost close to double (£2,520,000) what it costs through this programme
- 5.4. The grant agreement will include key milestones relating to borough steering groups being set up, and schools signing up to the programme and schools gaining the accreditation. Payments will be made following the completion of these milestones.

## **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. This programme is part of the London Violence Reduction Unit's Education portfolio. The programme acknowledges that violence affecting children and young people is preventable, and the education system, in partnership with communities, voluntary sector organisations, parents/carers, and local authorities, have a unique role to play in intervening early and ensuring that children and young people get access to the interventions and support services that they need.
- 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 will be drafted following consultation with MOPAC's GDPR Project Manager.

## **8. Equality Comments**

- 8.1. MOPAC is required to comply with the public sector equality duty set out in section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. This requires MOPAC to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations by reference to people with protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 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 Rights Respecting Schools London programme to ensure that all protected characteristics are considered in the commissioning and delivery of this work.
- 8.4. The United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK) sees the explicit purpose of the Rights Respecting Schools Award as promoting the human rights of children and young people as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Award is based on principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination, and participation. Schools engaged with the programme find that it complements and strengthens their work on equality, diversity and inclusion.

## **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	<i>Tick to confirm statement (ü)</i>
<b>Financial Advice</b> The Strategic Finance and Resource Management Team has been consulted on this proposal.	√
<b>Legal Advice</b> Legal advice is not required.	√
<b>Equalities Advice:</b> Equality and diversity issues are covered in the body of the report.	√
<b>Public Health Approach</b> Due diligence has been given to determine whether the programme sits within the Violence Reduction Unit's public approach to reducing violence.	√
<b>Commercial Issues</b> The Contract Management Team has been consulted – the VRU confirmed through testing the market that there were no other enterprises offering the same services, and therefore no challenge from the marketplace is anticipated.	√
<b>GDPR/Data Privacy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A DPIA is not required.</li> </ul>	√
<b>Drafting Officer</b> Coralyn Burge has drafted this report in accordance with MOPAC procedures.	√
<b>Director/Head of Service</b> The 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.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Hannah Chetford', is written over a light blue horizontal line.**Signature****Date** 20/11/2023