

Agenda Item No. 4(a)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER - HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

20 September 2016

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities

SV2 COUNSELLING SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

(1) **Purpose of Report** To seek approval for the provision of a grant to SV2 of £81,120 up till the end of March 2017, for the on-going provision of counselling services for victims of rape and sexual assault and reduction of counselling waiting times. This is pending a review of the sexual violence pathway in Derbyshire for 2017 onwards by statutory agencies/commissioners.

(2) **Information and Analysis** SV2 is a charity jointly commissioned by NHS England (lead Commissioner), Derbyshire Constabulary and Derbyshire County Council to provide the County's Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) service, which provides support for victims of rape and sexual assault in Derbyshire. This support includes crisis worker support, forensic medical services, on-going support from an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor and access to a 24/7 advice line. SV2 also provides a therapeutic counselling service, but this service is not part of the SARC specification/contract and as such, it does not have a sustainable funding stream.

At the week commencing 5 September 2016, SV2 had 90 clients in counselling services and 200 clients, aged 14 upwards, on its waiting list for therapeutic/counselling services. Of the 200 clients waiting, 37 have been on the list for over six months and a further 67 waiting between three and six months. One of the significant issues for SV2 currently, given the high number of referrals, is the time it takes for the counsellors to undertake an initial assessment, which can lead to some clients losing confidence in the service and subsequently dropping out. SV2 employs two counsellors and sub-contracts work to 14 other counsellors as funding allows. At present referral to sub-contracted counsellors is minimal due to lack of funding, which is impacting negatively on the waiting time.

The numbers of victims seeking this kind of support continues to rise for a number of reasons, but not least, the on-going media reporting around historical sexual abuse cases and the national enquiry now chaired by Alexis

Jay. SV2 receives self-referrals from victims, as well as referrals from GPs and other health and statutory services, and does not anticipate any downward trend in the referral numbers in the foreseeable future. SV2 is working with the Police and Crime Commissioner, NHS England and Clinical Commissioning Groups to assess needs and to encourage commissioning and funding of a sustainable service, but this is currently only in the consideration stage. SV2 is also writing a bid for submission to the Big Lottery to try and secure funding for three years for therapeutic services, but it is likely this process will take approximately eight months to complete before a decision on funding is known.

The proposal is to grant SV2 £81,120, to facilitate a reduction in the waiting list. This would allow one of SV2s employed counsellors to reduce their current caseload and become a dedicated assessor over the course of the next three months, which would create a consistent timely approach to assessment of clients, thereby improving client confidence and reducing the drop-out rate. It would also allow SV2 to increase referrals to its sub-contracted counsellors. SV2 offers 26 weeks counselling as standard, and assesses the need via a recognised assessment CORE34. Cost per client for 26 sessions is £780. The funding would enable to SV2 to engage the 104 clients on the waiting list for three months upwards. The Police and Crime Commissioner has also agreed to fund £25,000 which will assist this proposal and the dedicated assessment approach. Whilst SV2 aims to reduce the waiting list to three months over the course of the next three - six months, it is anticipated that referrals will also continue to be made to the service.

(3) **Financial Considerations** The funding of £81,120 can be met from the Communities budget.

(4) **Legal Considerations** A grant agreement shall be used to set out the terms and conditions for which the grant is made. The recipient of the grant is not contractually obliged to deliver the services, although the Council would seek to claw back the grant in appropriate circumstances were there to be significant non-performance.

(5) **Human Resources Considerations** Responsibility for appropriately qualified therapists' lies with SV2 and the required counselling sessions can be met by existing sub-contracted therapists.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, environmental, health, and property, social value and transport considerations.

(6) **Key Decision** No.

- (7) **Call-in** Is it required that call-in be waived for any decision on this report? No.
- (8) **Background Papers** Held of file within the Economy, Transport and Communities Department. Officer contact details – Lisa Morris, extension 38482.
- (9) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That the sum of £81,120 be granted from the Communities Budget to SV2 for the on-going provision of counselling services for victims of rape and sexual assault, and the reduction of the counselling waiting list, up to the end of March 2017.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director - Economy, Transport and Communities