

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING WITH CABINET MEMBER, HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

22 September 2015

Report of the Director of Public Health

GRANT FOR COMMUNITY SPECIALIST NURSE FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

1. Purpose of the Report

To approve the provision of grant funding of £42,500 to Avenue House Medical Centre, Chesterfield for a Community Nurse Specialist post for homeless people for 2016-17.

2. Information and Analysis

- 2.1 Studies have consistently shown that the experience of homelessness and living in temporary accommodation can exacerbate existing problems and disadvantage families in a number of ways. This can include the quality and type of accommodation which homeless households are placed in, the disruption to social and other support networks and the negative impact on the education, health, and well-being of homeless families.
- 2.2 Pathways has been operating in Chesterfield since 2007. It is the only agency of its kind providing help and support to homeless and vulnerably-housed individuals in Chesterfield and the surrounding area. Operating initially on a part time basis it engaged with 37 individuals in its first year. By 2014 this had increased to over 150, a figure already surpassed in the first 6 months of 2015. 54 of those have been supported into accommodation of whom 22 were rough sleeping and a further 10 people have been supported to avoid eviction. By the end of this calendar year Pathways will have supported approximately 300 people in housing crisis.
- 2.3 In 2012, after the completion of 5 years of Big Lottery funding, Pathways was forced to downsize premises and reduce staffing levels in order to survive. Despite this, the service continued to deliver improved outcomes thanks largely to the successful implementation of a new service model. This new model has attracted funding and Pathways is now in its second year (of three) of funding from the Henry Smith Charity (£40k) as well as its second year of financial support from the Lloyds Foundation (£7k). Coupled with strong support from the community (circa £30k) the future of the service remains secure into

the 2016/17 financial year. Acknowledging the need for sustainability Pathways has now committed to exploration of forming a social enterprise to not only improve sustainability but also as a means to further fulfil its social mission.

- 2.4 Individuals registered with Pathways present with a multitude of health and social care problems linked to their homeless status. This includes low or no income, debt, poor literacy and numeracy skills, lack of general work skills, alienation from family, poor general physical health, poor oral health, mental health problems, and drug and alcohol dependency.
- 2.5 Many homeless people have complex health needs that impact on their daily functioning, wellbeing and life expectancy (the average life expectancy of a rough sleeper is 42, almost half the average life expectancy in England which is 79 for men and 82 for women). They are more likely to suffer poor mental, physical and emotional health than the rest of the population, and ill health is often associated with poverty and homelessness. Homeless people are arguably the group most likely to experience the worst inequality in health.
- 2.6 For some homeless individuals, difficulties in accessing integrated care means they present late in the pattern of illness, with problems that could have been prevented or treated at an earlier stage.
- 2.7 In December 2013, Derbyshire County Council agreed to provide grant funding for the provision of a community nurse specialist to provide healthcare to Pathways' clients. Since 2010, the post had previously been funded through Derbyshire Primary Care Trust. The service is hosted by the Avenue House Medical Centre. The post holders (job share) work out of Pathways and are key members of the team. The nurses provide specialist clinical support to enable clients to understand and manage their health condition.
- 2.8 Liaison with other health, social care organisations and voluntary agencies is a key aspect of the role. This can help to facilitate a more effective and co-ordinated approach in supporting homeless people with their health and social care needs. During the past year this has included:
 - Working with the Mental Health service at the Hartington Unit, Chesterfield Royal Hospital to offer a support service to patients discharged from inpatient care. The Hartington Unit have a specific referral form to simplify the referral process and individuals can be referred for support in relation to mental health needs, housing needs or both.
 - Working with local schools offering them the opportunity for Pathways to visit and discuss health and homeless issues. One school has adopted Pathways as one of their chosen charities.
 - A member of the local community podiatry team currently attends and hosts a clinic on site at Pathways every fortnight (or as the

need requires) during which Pathways clients are assessed and treated for any foot issues they have.

- An application for funding of a Deep Tissue Massage Clinic was successful and as a result, Pathways now have a regular clinic run by 'Affordable Community Massage' every 2 weeks that is open to Pathways clients, to help with anxiety, aches and pains, discomfort, stiffness and sciatica. Its effectiveness is measured and so far this has been an extremely beneficial service with clients reporting to feel more relaxed with increased positivity after each session.
- A local optician hosts a monthly clinic, which has seen positive results for Pathways clients who have required glasses- but did not have them for a variety of reasons. The optician is able to assess the client and if appropriate send prescription glasses through the post to Pathways- for their client to collect (which eliminates any possible delays in individuals receiving appropriate eyewear).
- Pathways clients were asked what they would like to see at Pathways, or what they felt could be improved upon. The clients stated that they would like more of a social aspect to the service, as Pathways is now appointment based rather than 'drop in'. As a result of this the nurses have set up a 'Wednesday Collective' whereby clients are invited to attend the social group and participate in activities whilst gaining support from not only the nurses, but from their peers.
- The nurses continue to forge relationships with local services and have continued to work closely with the Community Mental Health Team and The Crisis Team- referring Pathways clients into mainstream services and also accepting referrals from mainstream services where appropriate. The nurses also work closely with GP's in the area, assisting with the registration process for those clients who are not registered with a GP.
- Following assessment, the nurses are able to refer and sign post individuals to appropriate services, including, Rethink, psychological therapies and the Employment and Health Support Initiative.

The addition of these services helps in the delivery of a more holistic, robust service to Pathways clients. The team have also held various weeks focusing on oral health, mental health and sexual health aimed at providing information and raising awareness. The volume of individuals presenting with some kind of health issue is on the increase and the team continue to work to ensure that some of the most vulnerable members of the community receive a high standard of health care. Supporting this community service will make a valuable contribution to Derbyshire County Council's commitment to reducing health inequalities.

The nurses working at Pathways have developed great skills and expertise in engaging with and treating homeless people. They are a key asset to their organisation and to the local health community. It is

recommended that the Council ensures that this very vulnerable group of people receives consistently high quality health care by confirming its funding for the next three years.

3. Financial considerations

£42,500 a year has been allocated recurrently in the Public Health budget for the provision of this service.

4. Human Resources considerations

DCC are providing funding only and accept no employment or future redundancy liability for the post, and that the employment and related matters are managed by the Avenue House Medical Centre/NHS.

5. Legal Considerations

The standard grant agreement prepared by the Director of Legal Services will be used, which provides for clawback of funding in certain circumstances and also provides that the Council is not liable for any employment liabilities.

6. Other considerations

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

7. Key Decision

No

8. Call-in

Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No

9. Background Papers

Healthcare for Single Homeless People March 2010 by the Office of the Chief Analyst Department of Health.

Health and Homelessness: Understanding the costs and role of primary care services for homeless people. St. Mungo's July 2013

Various documents in public health

10. Officer's Recommendation

That the Cabinet Member, Health and Communities approves the provision of grant funding of £42,500 to Pathways for the provision of a Community Nurse Specialist post for the homeless for the 2016-17 financial year.

Elaine Michel
Director of Public Health