

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

22nd October 2013

Report of the Director of Public Health

Community Nurse Specialist for the homeless

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 the homeless.

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 households 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 households and their children, including their development
- 2.2 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). 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.
- 2.3 A recent report by the Royal College of Physicians acknowledged that some health problems are both a cause and a consequence of homelessness. This includes infections, musculo-skeletal disorders, poor diet and nutrition, stress and depression, substance misuse and addiction.
- 2.4 These issues are compounded by the difficulties many homeless people face in accessing health and social care. It is uncommon for homeless people to be registered with a GP and this often leads to inappropriate and frequent attendances at A and E departments. In 2010 the Office of the Chief Analyst Department of Health estimated that potential cost per annum per homeless person accessing A and E was £4,092 compared to £856 for the general population.

- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 Derbyshire homeless watch surveys have consistently demonstrated that Chesterfield is second to Derby city in the number of rough sleepers and the number of homeless presentations to local authorities and support agencies. Services to support the needs of the homeless are therefore provided in these locations. Homeless people in the south of the county tend to gravitate to Derby to access services.
- 2.7 In 2012/2013 80 people were accepted by Chesterfield Borough Council as either being homeless or threatened with homelessness. In recent months the Borough Council has reported a 6% increase in homeless applications.
- 2.8 Pathways Day Centre 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. Since 2007 the centre has worked with over 500 clients. During this time the number of new individuals each year presenting as homeless has increased from 37 in 2007/08 to 150 in 2012/13
- 2.9 Clients registered with Pathways present with a multiple of health and social care problems linked to their 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. In the past 6 months initial assessment of clients has indicated that:
- 40% stated they have mental health problems
 - 32% stated they have physical health problems
 - 27% stated they are drug users or in recovery
 - 20% stated they are problem drinkers or in recovery
 - 21% stated they have dual needs i.e. drugs or alcohol and mental health needs
- 2.10 In 2010 Derbyshire Primary Care Trust agreed to fund a Community nurse specialist to provide healthcare to homeless individuals in Chesterfield and surrounding areas. Avenue House Medical Centre agreed to host the service. The post holder works out of Pathways and is seen to be a key member of the team. The nurse provides specialist clinical support to enable clients to understand and manage their health condition.
- 2.11 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 homelessness people with their health and social care needs.

3. Financial Considerations

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

4. Human Resources Considerations

The Council is 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

By awarding the proposed grant funding, Avenue House Medical Centre will not be contractually obliged to deliver any particular services although the Council may be able to claw back grant if it is unspent or misapplied. To provide a more suitable contractual basis, the Council could seek to agree a service level agreement with the Centre.

6. Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: equality and diversity, prevention of crime and disorder, 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 agrees to provide grant funding to the Avenue House Medical Centre, Chesterfield, for the provision of a Community Nurse Specialist post for the homeless.

Elaine Michel
Director of Public Health