

Future Provision of Substance Misuse Counselling Services in Cardiff

REPORT OF DIRECTOR

AGENDA ITEM:

PORTFOLIO: Health, Housing & Wellbeing (Councillor Susan Elsmore)

Reason for this Report

1. To inform Cabinet of the alternative pilot arrangements put in place for substance misuse counselling services and for this to be agreed as the future provision of the service.

Background

2. The Adult Social Services directorate initially proposed changes to the council's substance misuse counselling service within its budget proposals for 2015/16. The changes however did not form part of the final savings proposals contained in the budget. Funding for the service was continued until alternative arrangements were operational allowing time to develop a volunteer counsellor base (including supervision and support mechanisms for the volunteers). The rationale for the original proposal was that following a significant review of local substance misuse services across Cardiff and Vale, it was acknowledged that there was little coordination and some duplication. The Substance Misuse Work Programme is overseen by the Area Planning Board (APB) and includes the management of the Cardiff and Vale Substance Misuse Action Fund (SMAF) grant allocation from the Welsh Government.
3. The APB service reconfiguration programme has resulted in the establishment of
 - the Entry into Drug and Alcohol Services (EDAS) , giving a single point of entry to these services
 - an Open Access & Engagement Service (Taith)
 - 'Footsteps to Recovery' aftercare and recovery support

Issues

4. A pilot team of volunteers has been established with seven members from a diverse group to ensure choice for each client. Most are in the 2nd

or 3rd year of their counselling education and have previous and/or current experience of counselling; two are qualified.

4. The majority of referrals are assessed at EDAS and referred through to the Taith open access and engagement service, which ensures that inappropriate referrals are avoided, by offering a wide range of alternative and more appropriate services for those who are not ready to engage in one to one counselling.
5. The service is open every Monday, between 3pm and 8pm (last appointment offered is 6:45pm) and every Saturday between 9:30am and 1pm (last appointment offered is 11:45am). These are based at Solas, Spectrum house, Cardiff and we have access to four counselling rooms at any given time. From October 2015 the service will also be offer a Wednesday counselling service, to meet the demands of the incoming referrals, and to ensure that waiting time for clients is kept to an absolute minimum (all clients are offered an appointment within three weeks of being referred). The Wednesday service will be based at Taith, Riverside, Cardiff between the hours of 1pm and 7pm.
6. All referrals for counselling have been picked up by this new pilot team. The counselling service is time-limited with an emphasis on developing a trusting and respectful relationship between client and counsellor in order for goals, aspirations and change to be fully recognised and achieved. This is a more outcome focused model than the previous service was offering.
7. Summary of service from 1st June to 1st August 2015.

Client referrals	37
Appointments offered	55
Appointments attended	32 (58%)
Appointments cancelled	15 (27.5%)
Appointments not attended (DNA) with no contact	8 (14.5%)

8. The service has been able to keep DNA's to a minimum, due to the introduction of a texting service reminding clients that they have a counselling appointment the next day.
9. Using the information above and monitoring the outcomes a Results Based Accountability (RBA) performance management framework will be put in place to monitor the success of this service.
10. A professional supervisor is in situ to coordinate the volunteer group, and each counsellor receives 1.5 hours of one to one supervision every four weeks, (as per the requirements of the British Association of Counsellors & Psychotherapists), to provide support and development and to ensure that high standards and good ethical practice are maintained. There is also group supervision every six weeks, to ensure peer support and communication of shared experiences and knowledge.

11. To date, three salaried counsellors (2 FTEs) have been retained on the establishment, to allow continuity in service delivery, while the new model has been developed. It is proposed to allow two (1.5 FTEs) to take Voluntary Redundancy, while retaining one post to provide the supervision and monitoring of the volunteer cohort.
12. The Employee Counselling Service to be retained.

Consultation

13. The substance misuse area planning board (APB) have confirmed that the move from the previous service arrangement to the new volunteer based counselling programme, with oversight, management and co-ordination remaining with the council is fully supported by all partner agencies represented on the board, including Health, Probation, Police and colleagues in the Vale of Glamorgan who are also considering investing in this approach. The newly configured service fits effectively into the broader commissioned treatment and support system for substance misuse, and is an exemplar of the prudent healthcare and co-production national policy drivers in practice.
14. The Trade Unions were sent the cabinet report on 9th September 2015, **awaiting comments...**
15. The report was presented to Communities & Adult Service Scrutiny Committee on the 16th September 2015 and the views of that committee will be made available to inform Cabinet's decision.

Reason for Recommendations

16. For the piloted approach to the future provision of substance misuse to be formally adopted by City of Cardiff Council.

Financial Implications

17. The report refers to changes to the Council's substance misuse counselling service with a piloted move to a new volunteer based counselling programme. The resulting staffing changes referred to in paragraph 12 of the report should offer the opportunity for budget reductions which can contribute savings to 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Legal Implications

18. The Report proposes the future provision of discretionary substance misuse counselling services by the Council through the use of volunteer counsellors. Many of the service users will be vulnerable. The Council will have a duty to ensure that the volunteer counsellors are competent to

undertake the tasks that the service requires of them. Appropriate insurance cover should be in place.

HR Implications

19. The proposals were consulted on with Trade Unions and affected employees when first proposed. Once the final decision is made, this will be confirmed with the Trade unions and employees and the corporately agreed process for voluntary redundancy carried out.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet agree the future provision of substance misuse counselling services as set out in the report.

NAME OF DIRECTOR Tony Young

Date 03/09/2015

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