



## Executive Director/Director Non-Key Executive Decision Report

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**Report to:** Executive Director Communities

**Date of Decision:** 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017

**Subject:** DCLG Domestic Abuse Fund – Funding to help support victims of domestic abuse

Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? Communities

Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken? Yes  No

If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 1232

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes  No

If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-

### **Purpose of Report:**

In November 2016 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) invited bids for a national £20 million fund to help support victims of domestic abuse.

The new fund was made available to increase refuge spaces and other accommodation for women fleeing domestic violence, covering a range of services, from providing somewhere safe to live and recover, to providing education, employment and life skills training and helping victims rebuild their lives.

The Housing Independence Team submitted an application on behalf of Sheffield City Council and was successfully awarded a grant of £93,500 to be spent over a two year period (2016/17 and 2017/18).

This report seeks permission for Sheffield City Council to accept the grant funding from DCLG and to pass on this year's funding of £23,500 to Sheffield Area Refuge

and Support (SARAS) for improvements to the refuge service and to kick-start work on the expansion of the Sanctuary scheme within BME communities.

Proposals for payment of the 2017/18 grant funding will be the subject of a further report.

**Recommendations:**

1. To approve the acceptance of £93,500 grant from the DCLG Domestic Abuse Fund for expenditure in accordance with the bid submitted.
2. To approve expenditure, in consultation with the Director of Finance, of the £23,500 received for 2016/17 in accordance with the bid. Payment of £23,000 will be made to SARAS as grant and £500 spent on the development of proposals for the Sanctuary scheme.

**Background Papers:**

Grant Application Form  
Offer Letter and Grant Determination

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: M.Wassell
		Legal: Sarah Bennett
		Equalities: Liz Tooke
<p><i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i></p>		
2	<p><b>Lead Officer Name:</b> Ann Ellis</p>	<p><b>Job Title:</b> Strategic Commissioning Manager</p>
	<p><b>Date:</b> 16/03/2017</p>	

## 1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 In November 2016 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) issued a bidding prospectus for a national £20 million domestic abuse support programme.

This new fund aimed at increasing refuge spaces and other accommodation for women fleeing domestic violence, covering a range of services, from providing somewhere safe to live and recover, to providing education, employment and life skills training and helping victims rebuild their lives.

The deadline for submissions was Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016. A project group of officers was convened to consider how the potential funding could add value to the existing provision and planned developments within the City. In preparing a bid the group had been mindful that:

- The grant was an opportunity to enhance some of the services provided by the refuge service provider, Sheffield Area Refuge Service (SARAS) and the Sanctuary scheme which provides target hardening to enable people to continue living in their own home. Both services are funded by the Housing Independence Service.
- The grant needed to be targeted at service improvements for BME groups
- The timescale was very tight.
- Partners needed to be included in the bid.

The bid was prepared with SARAS, who, in accordance with the application requirements, are joint signatories to the bid.

The grant awarded by DCLG is for the period March 2017 until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2018, comprising £23,500 for the financial year 2016/17 and £70,000 for the financial year 2017/18. It is proposed that the funding will be used as follows:

	<b>2016/2017</b>	<b>2017/2018</b>
Broadband and wifi to the two refuges	£12,500	
IT – computers, fittings for the refuge		£ 2,500
Childcare support (1post) for the refuge	£500	£ 24,000
Translation services for the refuge		£ 1,000
Refuge staff training, consultancy and materials to provide more psychologically informed therapeutic support	£ 10,000	£ 10,000
Sanctuary Scheme	£500	£ 32,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 23,500</b>	<b>£ 70,000</b>

However, at this stage authority to spend the grant is sought only for the 2016/17 funding. That funding needs to be spent promptly and cannot await final details of the proposal for 2017/18 to be agreed.

It is proposed that the funding will be used to expand and develop the services provided by SARAS and the Sanctuary scheme currently run by the Council.

Once fully completed, the expansion of the SARAS refuge services will provide:

- a) Improved internet connectivity and wifi at both refuges and basic training for service users on the use of computers.
- b) Additional childcare provision in order that women based at the refuges can take advantage of the new support offer
- c) Training and support to refuge staff to embed psychologically informed practice to improve the support they provide to service users
- d) Enhanced access to translation and interpreting service to help women without English as a first language to access training and the support offer

Once fully completed, the expansion of the Sanctuary scheme will provide:

- a) Additional resources to expand the service to the private sector, registered housing providers and owner occupiers targeted at areas of the city popular with BME communities

The estimates were based on quotations obtained by SARAS, appropriate salary and on-costs for staffing, and recent charges for language services. It is possible for the IT work to be carried out in March. It is intended to agree a programme and expenditure forecast with SARAS for the training and consultancy support for the psychologically informed support work, in advance of the introduction of the Council's own procurement of a service.

Although the timetable for 2016/17 is tight, it was considered advantageous to include in the current financial year as much expenditure as could be practically and quickly committed by SARAS, and worth the effort to obtain funding to improve services.

The grant offer letter received on 6<sup>th</sup> March states that the grant is made under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 towards expenditure incurred to support the provision of accommodation based support services and the local reforms needed to meet the Priorities for Domestic Abuse Services for 2016/17. There are no particular conditions set out in the grant determination. The DCLG Domestic Abuse Team will require Council officers to engage in their national discussion about the development of best practice for the client group.

## **2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?**

2.1 The proposal will contribute to the Corporate Plan priorities for focussing on better health and wellbeing, thriving neighbourhoods and communities and tackling inequalities. The Corporate plan also recognises that to achieve these outcomes we will need to do things differently and this includes how we work collaboratively with our partners and individuals facing the greatest challenges. This Domestic Abuse proposal aligns with the following Corporate Plan objectives:

- **An in-touch Organisation** – using our customer insight to ensure that we develop services that meet the needs of our diverse communities will be a key part of developing the Action Plan to support the delivery of the Strategy.
- **Better Health and Well-Being** – Work with others to keep adults at risk of

abuse and neglect safe and Help thousands of people to get early help and access services to remain independent, reducing hospital admissions

- **Tackling Inequalities** – we want to ensure that the proposal is used as a tool to tackle inequality through identifying the need for targeted interventions for our most vulnerable customers. We also want to support those who face obstacles to find lasting work in gaining financial independence.

The proposal also aligns with the Communities Portfolio themes (2016) relevant to this project of Keeping People Well and Active Joined Up Support as it supports women by providing a focal point for their family, support network, and any providers or organisations involved in helping them achieve their goals.

### **3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

Consultation specific to the bid took place with SARAS. However the bid has also been informed by consultation carried out prior to this:

- Meeting of SCC Drug and Alcohol/Domestic Abuse action Team (DACT) with Roshni and BME groups in November 2016
- Call for Evidence held August 2015, which revealed that there is growing research evidence that clients with histories of neglect, abuse and trauma benefit from an approach which creates an enabling environment where practice supports the management of psychological and emotional difficulties but not in the structured way that clients would reject.

### **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

#### **4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications**

- 4.1.1 There are positive implications for women and children, fleeing and/or recovering from abusive relationships. There are positive implications for BME women and men recovering from domestic abuse. There are positive implications for the VCF sector in terms of staff training and support and the recruitment of 2 FTE staff.

#### **4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications**

- 4.2.1 The total grant will be received in two instalments: £23,500 (2016/17) and £70,000 (2017/18) The £23,500 grant allocation for 2016/17 has no specific conditions attached to it and it is the intention of SCC to pay up to this allocation to an external third party to deliver the required outputs as identified at para 1.1. The 2017/18 grant allocation (£70,000) will follow at a later date with the proposed spending plan also identified at para 1.1

No alternative funding sources have been identified should there be any ongoing costs after the grant allocation has ended,

The Business Unit Manager will need to comply with all of the relevant SCC financial processes and procedures when paying grant monies to a third party.

#### 4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 The Council has a duty under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 to secure that advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness is available to persons in its district, and powers to give assistance by way of grant or loan to any persons providing such advice and information and to voluntary organisations concerned with homelessness or matters relating to homelessness. Utilising the Grant Money for the purposes as set out in the DCLG application form attached, will be in accordance with these powers and allow the Council to develop and expand existing support where gaps in current service provision have been identified.

#### 4.4 Other

The Council (Housing Independence Service) has a contract with SARAS for provision of refuge services for women and will work with them on this project to ensure value and sustainability in accordance with the Council's objectives. The DACT and HIS will monitor expenditure, outputs and outcomes and report to the DCLG Domestic Abuse team. Officers are in contact with the team in relation to recent and continuing work on complex needs.

### **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

#### 5.1 At bid stage officers considered:

a) Bidding with other sub-regional authorities. A cross boundary bid was the preferred option from DCLG but preliminary discussion with other sub-regional authorities indicated that 1) some of them were already bidding for separate bids; 2) there was little communality of intent on the areas of service to be targeted.

b) Not bidding due to timescales and capacity. However it was felt that additional investment would both mitigate against increased budget pressures and allow for SCC to test new approaches.

- 5.2 An option now would be to wait for DCLG to issue an offer letter and run the risk of not passing on the funding to SARAS and Action this financial year. At this stage we know who to give the funding to, what the sums to be passed on are to be spent on, and that they are in line with the estimated costs.

### **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The grant from DCLG will allow the Council to both mitigate against future reductions in budgets, to test new approaches to support, and to enhance existing service provision to victims of domestic abuse.