



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE

12 January 2023

Report of the Executive Director - Adult Social Care and Health

Interim Grant for Befriending Services
(Cabinet Member for Adult Care)

1. Divisions Affected

Countywide.

2. Key Decision

2.1 This is a Key Decision as it affects all divisions.

Purpose

2.2 To request Cabinet Member's approval to:

- Provide grant funds to the nine organisations that currently provide eleven befriending services for a period of up to 1 year from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 as set out in this report. The total sum being funded through these grants is £160,652.

3. Information and Analysis

3.1 On 28 July 2022, Cabinet considered the findings of the consultation on the voluntary sector grants review proposals and approved recommendations as follows:

- The Council adopts the principle of no longer supporting the award of grant funding to any organisation in the future without a fixed or scheduled end date (save for in exceptional circumstances).

- The Council will commission identified activity where appropriate.
- Agree the criteria for grant reviews, to be used in assessments which will determine whether funding should be secured in the future through commissioning.

3.2 Adult Care have been paying nine organisations an annual grant for several years, over which time we have seen many changes in departmental structures, which in turn have created gaps, duplication and an inequitable allocation of grant funding across the County. Every locality has different models of delivery, and each locality has differing needs for its population. There are also many more organisations which claim to deliver a befriending service, that do not receive any funding from the Derbyshire County Council.

As part of the Voluntary Sector Grants Review, these nine organisations have been themed as delivering a similar service to facilitate a coherent review of current provision and future requirements.

3.3 According to the Derbyshire Observatory, 22% of the Derbyshire population is 65 years old and over, 175,000 individuals from this cohort living within Derbyshire in 2019, comprising 22% of the population. This is significantly lower than the England and Wales proportion. These estimates indicate that Amber Valley has the largest over 65+ population (28,192), followed by Erewash (23,074) and Chesterfield (22,029). However, Derbyshire Dales locality has the largest % of residents over 65+(26%) when comparing its overall population.

3.4 Social isolation has been highlighted as a cause of ill health and more so since the Covid 19 pandemic, with several publications, including the Local Government Association 'Must Know-Loneliness-Is your council actively tackling loneliness' December 21 evidencing the need. 'One of the highest risk factors for experiencing loneliness is age. Around half of people aged 75 or over live alone; 17 per cent are in contact with family, friends and neighbors less than once a week, and for 11 per cent it is less than once a month. Associated risk factors in old age are low income, poor physical or mental health, and living alone in isolated rural areas or in deprived urban communities.'

The Local Government Association in partnership with National Association of Local Councils, has published 'Reaching Out' 2019, where the provision of befriending is highlighted as one of the services that helps positively tackle social isolation.

3.5 Befriending is considered prevention activity, decreasing social isolation by visiting and telephoning individuals on a one-to-one basis,

for a chat, this supports people to live independently, reducing dependency on health and social care services. For the future it would be pertinent to consolidate these befriending grants into a new fund that providers can bid from, in order to have a fair and equitable distribution and to consider the possibility of transferring this budget to Public Health to support its prevention agenda.

4. Consultation

4.1 Not required.

5. Alternative Options Considered

5.1 The Council could do nothing and allow the current grant to end on 31 March 2023. This would impact those organisations currently delivering befriending activity and potentially leave some vulnerable people without support. By making an interim fixed term grant agreement this would ensure continuity of service until alternative arrangements are identified.

6. Implications

6.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

7. Background Papers

7.1 Report to Cabinet - Voluntary and Community Sector Review 30 July 2020

7.2 Report to Cabinet – Voluntary and Community Sector Review 29 July 2021

7.3 Report to Cabinet – Voluntary and Community Sector Review 6 December 2021

7.4 Report to Cabinet – Voluntary and Community Sector Review 28 July 2022

7.5 Report to Corporate Management Team – Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Review and Infrastructure Provision Update 15 November 2022

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 - Implications

9. Recommendation(s)

That the Cabinet Member approves

- a) the provision of grants totalling £160,652 to the nine organisations that currently provide befriending services for a period of up to 1 year from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 as set out in this report.

10. Reasons for Recommendation(s)

- 10.1 The assessments completed for the befriending activity, determined that future funding should be secured through commissioning. The commissioning process will not be in place by 1 April 2023. The interim grants proposed in this report align to agreed grant policies and processes and will bridge any gap between the current provision and future commissioning pathways to ensure continuity of service whilst commissioning plans are executed. In addition, they will allow time for a fair and robust application process to be put in place by no later than 31 December 2023, for funding to be made available from 1 April 2024.

11. Is it necessary to waive the call in period?

- 11.1 No

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Implications**Financial**

1.1 The Adult Care revenue budget for 2023/34 covers the annual grant funding set out in the Table below at Paragraph 1.2. As commissioning plans are executed there is likely to be a resource saving on commissioning staff time.

1.2 Grant funding table

Telephone and 1-1 Befriending Activity	12 months
Age Concern (Chesterfield, NED, Bolsover)	10,741
Age UK Derby & Derbyshire (Erewash)	4,500
Age UK Derby & Derbyshire (High Peak and Dales)	48,099
Amber Valley CVS	6,457
Connex Community Support (High Peak and Dales)	3,000
Derbyshire Dales Careline	2,010
Erewash Voluntary Action CVS	3,000
Erewash Voluntary Action CVS (extended service)	31,711
New Mills Volunteer Centre (High Peak)	250
South Derbyshire CVS	33,848
The Volunteer Centre (Chesterfield)	17,036
Total funds	160,652

Legal

- 2.1 The Council has power to provide grants to voluntary and community sector organisations under the general power of competence set out in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 2.2 The Council's Financial Regulations state that grants below £0.100m require Cabinet Member authorisation.
- 2.3 The Council's standard grant agreement shall be used to set out the terms and conditions for which the grant is made. This includes

conditions for clawback of funding in certain circumstances and states that the Council is not liable for any employment liabilities.

3. Human Resources

- 3.1 The voluntary and community sector organisations currently funded by the Council as part of this report are independent of the County Council and therefore there are no human resources considerations.

As funding is redesigned or withdrawn, then there could be a specific HR impact on the individual organisations which were fully ascertained through the review process. There may also be structural and resourcing implications for internal services which will be fully scoped as commissioning plans progress.

4 Information Technology

- 4.1 There are no Information Technology considerations associated with this report.

5 Equalities Impact

- 5.1 An EIA has been completed from formal consultation feedback.

The analysis indicates that the majority of grants under review are within the Adult Social Care department, and therefore, are related to activities which involve older people or those with a disability.

Funding relates to this protected characteristic in three different ways:

- Funding provides activities specifically to fulfil duties regarding this protected characteristic
- Funding provides activities which target people older people or those with a disability
- Funding provides activities which appeal to a particular age group or those with a disability.

Where grants are commissioned, the Council believes that this would have a positive effect through providing a more stable funding platform by which organisations can grow and enhance their offer.

Where funding is proposed to be thematically redesigned, it is anticipated that this would have an overall beneficial impact on Derbyshire residents as it would put in place a longer term funding approach and emphasis on better outcomes with the funding provided.

The consultation confirmed that many organisations would have to stop this activity if funding was withdrawn. Therefore, as commissioning plans are executed, individual exit plans for the organisations affected to manage the potential loss of grant funding or for the preparation of commissioning arrangements. This would also ensure individual beneficiaries impacted are supported through any transition.

With any change, it is anticipated that regardless of the outcome, there will be a level of anxiety in respect of the recommissioning of funding, especially as some of these groups have been long standing and provide activities to vulnerable groups. The Council will work with closely with organisations ensure that plans and timeframes are clear and any transitions can be managed as effectively as possible.

6 Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 6.1 By making an interim grant this will assist those organisations to retain staff, who otherwise may begin to look for alternative employment. This would ensure continuity of service for those people supported which in turn would reduce dependency on other services. As it is expected to have longer term funding arrangements in place in the new process, this will assist with staff retention for those successful providers.

7 Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

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