

Report

Report to:	Social Work Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	17 March 2021
Report by:	Director, Health and Social Care Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Peer Support for Justice Services
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ update the Committee on a joint funding bid from the Alcohol and Drug Partnership and Justice Social Work Services submitted to the Drug Death Task Force

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that two full-time Peer Support Assistant posts are established within Justice Social Work Services for a fixed term period of 18 months subject to the approval of funding from the Drug Death Task Force in mid-March.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Drugs Deaths Taskforce (DDTF) was established in July 2019 by the Minister for Public Health and Sport, supported by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice. The Taskforce membership includes those with a background in developing and delivering policies and services across Health, Social Services, research, Police, Criminal Justice, Emergency Services and people who bring lived experience of drug and addiction issues. They are tasked with protecting those at risk of a drug related death (DRD) by identifying evidence-based strategies and working with organisations to develop a programme of measures across a range of touch points.
- 3.2. The Taskforce consists of four sub-groups all working across six areas of strategic development. The focus for the Multiple Complex Needs (MCN) sub-group is to improve the management of the risks of DRD to those with persistent, problematic, and interrelated Health and Social Care needs. Evidence indicates that people with MCN's face intersecting experiences of homelessness, problematic substance use, and poor physical and mental health, which individually can all be predictors of DRD. Many justice service users have multiple and complex needs.

- 3.3. The DDTF have offered funding to support several tests of change, one of these focussed on a peer-delivered navigator model of support. Alongside providing access to practical elements of support and building connections with Community-Based Services, peer navigators who have lived experience will be skilled at developing trusting relationships with those who can be difficult to engage. They will make connections and promote access to a range of services including substance use services, health, and housing, offer hope, and build self-esteem which could be protective against DRD and other negative outcomes.
- 3.4. The justice system provides an opportunity to detect, intervene or signpost people into treatment and support, and the unique perspective offered by peer support assistants with lived experience will support better outcomes in terms of health, addictions and offending.
- 3.5. South Lanarkshire Council Alcohol and Drug Partnership has a strong focus on reducing the drug related harm and deaths in the local area. Rights, Respect and Recovery (2018) outlines that persons not engaged in services are at greater risk of harm. National research from Dickie et al (2017) indicates that persons with lived experience are a key ingredient in supporting persons with substance use issues. Peer support assistants are said to be “experientially qualified” to bridge the gap for service users and support them to engage with treatment, Health, Social Work, and other services. The Beacons Recovery Hubs in South Lanarkshire have already successfully recruited to peer support posts and have witnessed outcomes in many of these areas. Many persons with substance use issues are also involved with Justice Services.

4. Current Circumstances

- 4.1. To improve outcomes for persons with substance use issues who are involved with Justice Services a joint bid from South Lanarkshire Council and the Alcohol and Drug Partnership has been submitted to the multiple and complex needs sub-group of the drug death task force. The bid is for two Support Assistants with lived experience to support persons with substance use issues who are also in the justice system. The post holders who are “experientially qualified” will work in partnership with Justice Services to reduce DRD and service users will be invited to work with them on a voluntary basis whilst subject to Diversion from Prosecution or on Community Payback Orders.
- 4.2. Support Assistants will be expected to build trusting relationships with service users whom they will work with through the transition from statutory to mainstream services. They will connect them to the local Beacons Recovery networks, support them to register with GPs and to access the medication required to meet their needs. Shorter and longer-term outcomes will be measured internally using Outcomes Star, an evaluation tool accredited for use by this service user group and via the Scottish Drugs Forum. Outcomes will consider factors such as engagement with peer navigators, Substance and Health Services and the wider impact on drug related harm and on levels of offending behaviours.
- 4.3. Persons recruited would be expected to complete standard protecting vulnerable groups (PVG) checks and adhere to the South Lanarkshire Council Codes of Practice.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. The following posts should be added to the Social Work Resources' establishment on a fixed term basis subject to confirmation of funding in mid-March. Specification of the posts are outlined in the table below:

Post	Proposed Number of Posts (FTE)	Grade	SCP Range	Hourly Rate	Annual Salary	Gross Cost inc on costs 30.3%	Total Costs
Peer Support Assistants	2.0	Grade 1 Level 4	30 - 31	£11.12	£20,292	£26,441	£52,882
				–	–	–	–
				£11.29	£20,603	£26,845	£53,690

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. Funding for the posts would be provided following confirmation of monies from the drug death task force.

7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 7.1. There are no implications for Climate Change associated with this report.
- 7.2. There are no sustainable development issues associated with this report.
- 7.3. There are no Environment Implications associated with this report.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. There are no other issues associated with this report.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy, or recommend a change to existing policy, function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required.

Val de Souza
Director, Health and Social Care

Paul Manning
Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

25 February 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Focussed on People and their needs
- ◆ Working with and respecting others

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Rights Respect and Recovery 2018
- ◆ Dickie et al (2017) Drugs Related Deaths rapid evidence review: keeping people safe

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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