

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: REVIEW OF EXTERNAL FUNDING TO SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY ABUSE
Meeting: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date: 13 MAY 2014
Author: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES and DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 During the past 4 years, an annual Corporate Funding Review has been undertaken, making recommendations regarding support allocated to external organisations and identifying potential efficiency savings and areas for further review. These recommendations have formed part of Falkirk Council's budgeting process.
- 1.2 During the 2010-2011 review, Corporate Management Team agreed that where possible, organisations should be grouped by category and reviewed across all Services. The purpose of considering organisations by category is to ensure services are being delivered in line with Council priorities and where further efficiencies are identified, to assess the impact on outcomes. On this basis, one of the groupings identified was services for those who have been affected by abuse. This group comprises Women's Aid, Relationship Scotland – Couple Counselling Central Scotland, Central Scotland Rape Crisis & Sexual Abuse Centre, and Open Secret.
- 1.3 During the 2013/2014 process of presenting information to Scrutiny Committee under the mandatory requirements of Following the Public Pound, Members requested that an additional assessment of performance, areas of duplications and to what extent current service provision achieves good outcomes for service users and best value.
- 1.4 The four organisations funded by Falkirk Council within this field, were commissioned based on their specialist knowledge and expertise of a particular type of provision and to a specific client group. All of the organisations have been supported for a number of years with no significant amendment to the original service specification. In order to ensure that the services commissioned by Falkirk Council align with Council priorities, the Single Outcome Agreement and the evolving national policy context, we must ensure that service specifications are regularly reviewed and developed.

2. ORGANISATIONAL OVERVIEW

- 2.1 The four organisations provide a wide range of services for individuals who have been affected by abuse, which currently includes advice, practical support, counselling and advocacy. Information regarding the purpose of each organisation, services currently provided, funding package and performance is contained within Appendix 1. A summary is provided below:

Organisation	Falkirk Council Funding 2013/14	Proportion of Falkirk Council in relation to total organisation income*	Purpose of organisation
Open Secret	£149,442	20%	To work with survivors of childhood trauma, non-abusing parents and families.
Rape Crisis	£15,695	9.14%	To provide a service which works towards the elimination of the effects of rape, sexual assault and child sexual abuse.
Relationship Scotland	£9,353	10.5%	To provide one to one and couple counselling.
Women's Aid	£224,170	69.6%	To support women, young people and children suffering from Domestic Abuse to be and remain safe. Provide advice and information to support recovery.

* The % has been calculated on the organisations total income. The % highlighted in appendix 3 is of the general fund which are unrestricted.

3. OBJECTIVE AND PROCESS

- 3.1 The objective of the review was to ensure that the most appropriate range and quality of support is provided by the right providers, to those most in need within the Falkirk Council area. In addition, an efficiency saving in the region of £70,000 was identified as potentially being able to be achieved following the implementation of the review findings and commissioning of the approved service framework.
- 3.2 In the context of the review, the definition of services for those have been affected by abuse is any service which provides interventions for individuals who have been affected by any form of abuse including domestic abuse and childhood abuse, non-abusing parents of children who have been subject to abuse and also domestic conflict, particularly where there is an impact on children.
- 3.3 It should be noted that a number of other organisations also provide support for people who have encountered abuse, however they have been secondary within the process as this is not their primary client group or they do not currently receive financial support from Falkirk Council, for example, Falkirk and District Association for Mental Health and Victim Support.

- 3.4 During the process of review, all four organisations have been considered on their own merit in terms of how each can deliver priority outcomes. Any previous internal Council priority ranking has not been relevant to the process. A range of baseline information has been gathered from each organisation including services provided, client numbers referral information, waiting lists, organisational income (including external funding and funding from partner agencies and other Local Authorities). The information was used to determine performance for each organisation. Comparison has not been drawn between the organisations, due to the differing funding and delivery structures within the organisations. Areas of duplications were also identified.
- 3.5 A key output of the review of services for those affected by abuse, is a framework for services. The framework sets out the priority services to be commissioned within the Falkirk Council area and provides a focus for the use of Council resources. Importantly, the framework provides clarity and parameters for the organisations providing services. The framework also makes clear which services Falkirk Council does not consider to be a Local Authority funding priority.
- 3.6 It should be noted that the need of and impact on service users has been central to the process.
- 3.7 National and local strategies have been central to the development of the framework. These have included the Scottish Government's draft Domestic Abuse Strategy, Equally Safe (albeit that the draft is likely to be subject to amendment before final approval), Falkirk's Multi Agency Domestic Abuse Partnership Strategy 2011-14 and the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach, delivered via the Integrated Children's Services Plan. The wider policy context was also considered, including Child Protection and Adult Support & Protection, Mental and Sexual Health and Wellbeing – all of which have existing local processes that operate in an integrated, co-ordinated way.
- 3.8 The review process has been taken forward by a group of Council Officers, including representatives from Corporate & Neighbourhood, Social Work and Education Services and the Chair of Domestic Abuse Forum. The group agreed the process and participated in all components. The review process included:
- Gathering a range of baseline information from all 4 organisations;
 - Involving Finance Services to provide an analysis of Audited Accounts;
 - Consideration of Council priorities in order to establish a proposed specification for future services;
 - A briefing session for the 4 organisations to describe the process and proposed specification and invite comment and any points of clarification. The session was also attended by relevant Heads of Service;
 - Follow-up meetings with each of the organisations to allow one to one feedback and discussion regarding the proposed shift in funding model and service specification.

4. REVIEW FINDINGS BY ORGANISATION

Central Scotland Rape Crisis

- 4.1 Rape crisis provide services for those affected by rape and any type of sexual violence, through one to one support and a telephone line which operates during office hours (a national helpline is available for out with office hours). The organisation operates across Forth Valley and is based in Stirling, with 4FTE staff and 2 volunteers. There are currently 19 active service users from Falkirk Council area and no waiting list for support. 75% of referrals are initiated by individuals themselves.
- 4.2 There has been a recent change in the management structure of the organisation and the new manager is actively working to develop partnerships with other organisations, recruit and train volunteers and develop a supervision and support framework for staff and volunteers. Rape Crisis also currently provides a service focussed on awareness raising and prevention, in schools on an adhoc basis. There is currently no formal referral process in place with other organisations in Falkirk, however Police Scotland have recently started to signpost survivors to Rape Crisis as a matter of course. Police Scotland provide no funding to Rape Crisis for this. Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils have yet to confirm funding for 2014/2015. Given the recent changes within the organisation, Rape Crisis is currently considered high risk and to mitigate this, significant ongoing support should be established.

Relationship Scotland – Couple Counselling Central Scotland

- 4.3 Relationship Scotland provide specialist counselling for couples and individuals. A wide range of issues are covered through counselling, including domestic conflict, domestic/sexual abuse, mental health, sexual health, financial problems, infidelity, stress and anxiety, ill health, life stages, grief and not coping generally. Working with couples who are at risk of tipping into an abusive situation allows preventative, educational and early intervention work. The organisation operates across Forth Valley and is based in Falkirk. There are currently 2 FTE staff and 12 volunteer counsellors, who are all fully qualified and a bank of 11 receptionists who work across Forth Valley. 33% of referrals come from statutory agencies, 59% through self referral and 4% from other agencies. There are currently 67 active clients within Falkirk and there is a substantial waiting list. Clients are assessed within 4 weeks, priority is then given to those in crisis, domestic conflict or abuse is an issue or where there is a child protection issue.
- 4.4 Relationship Scotland provide a specialist counselling service which is entirely delivered by fully qualified counsellors. As a result of this, the hourly cost of service delivery is high at approximately £60. Relationship Scotland invite clients to consider making a donation towards the cost of the service, which averages at £20 per session, however no client is refused support. It should also be noted that Falkirk Council's contribution equates to approximately £4.60 per hour. Relationship refer client to other organisations for specialist support, but receive few referrals from other third sector organisations.

Open Secret

- 4.5 Open Secret provides counselling and support for survivors of childhood abuse and non-abusing parents of children who have been affected by abuse. External funding has also been secured to provide services to young people and children in schools and work within prisons. External funding means that most services are provided across Scotland. 27% of those supported are residents of the Falkirk Council area, including those within prison (308 service users of a total 1,148). Support from Falkirk Council is for organisational infrastructure including recruitment and training of volunteers. Falkirk Council contributes to approximately 20% of the organisations total income. It is also worth noting that although Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils have previously provided funding to Open Secret, it has been at a low level, totalling £27,927 per annum.
- 4.6 There remains some lack of clarity regarding what service delivery Falkirk Council is paying for over and above infrastructure costs, although Open Secret argue that the external funding secured across Scotland benefits survivors within the Falkirk Council area. Falkirk Council's contribution supports 5 members of staff. The roles of these staff largely relates to the management of the organisation including securing funding, recruiting and training volunteers. 35 volunteers are currently active within the Falkirk Council area, working across a range of projects. Due to the funding structure, adopting commissioning approach to services could be problematic for Open Secret.
- 4.7 Open Secret endeavour to provide a holistic service which the range of needs presented by service users and therefore referrals in and out of the service are minimal. An example of this Open Secret cited a number of services users as having substance misuse issues, however no referrals have been made to local treatment services within the last 6 months. In addition, Open Secret are currently opposed to adopting a triage model, whereby service users access services via a single point, are assessed and passed immediately to the relevant specialist service within the spectrum of support. A benefit to the Open Secret is the experience that has been developed over their 20 years and the unique ability to provide a 'safe area' for survivors in a dedicated building.
- 4.8 Open Secret appear to have shifted their roots in Community Development. When the organisation was established in 1994, strong reference was made to a Community Development approach, which focussed on linking survivors to community resources, breaking isolation and focusing on peer support, volunteer recruitment from local communities and from past service users, rather than providing 1:1 support to service users. The focus of Open Secret was action that helped people recognise and develop their ability and potential. Supporting the establishment of strong communities that control and use assets to promote social justice. That didn't seem to come across from Open Secret as it is now.
- 4.9 A key strength that Open Secrets have is in delivering training which includes survivors in training delivery - hearing the voices of survivors. This type of training is not accredited but very impactful. If this training was produced in partnership, it could be delivered across the areas and be particularly useful to council staff, foster carers etc.

Falkirk & District Women's Aid

- 4.10 The focus of Women's Aid's service is Domestic Abuse, providing a 3 staged delivery model from crisis management through recovery and then re-integration to community. The service is based and delivered within the Falkirk Council area and over the past 3 years has undergone considerable structure review and development to form a structure that better fits the needs of the client group. Women's Aid employ 8FTE staff and are looking recruit volunteers, but have none at this time. 77% of all referral to Women's Aid come from Statutory and Voluntary agencies, with the remaining 23% being self referral.
- 4.11 The organisation has adopted external quality standards and deliver a range of accredited training. Women's Aid currently refer client to specialist services within other organisations and offer some specialist services through outreach for example, Citizens Advice Bureau provide a service within Women Aid's premises. They have noted the introduction of triage as being a beneficial area of development. As identified within the financial analysis, the organisation holds a considerable level of reserves which are likely to have been gathered from funding allocated by Falkirk Council. This has been a historical decision taken by the Board, however is not sustainable in the current fiscal climate.

5. KEY REVIEW FINDINGS

- 5.1 Overarching key findings have been drawn from baseline information collected, including existing service and partnership work, individual performance and financial structure. Key finding are as follows.
- 5.2 Partnership working is inconsistent, with little formal referral processes in place. There is currently a tendency within some organisations, to endeavour to provide a a range of services to the point that referrals do not appear to be made to other specialist services. This also results in duplication in some service provision.
- 5.3 The nature of the client group means that a relationship of trust must be developed and therefore it could be argued that referral to other organisations may be problematic. It appears that organisations therefore try to develop an expertise across a range of specialisms, out with their own.
- 5.4 Due to the nature of the support provided, the client journey is individual and varies in length and the type of intervention offered. This is a difficult balance and can result in a dependency on the providing organisation.
- 5.5 A lack of partnership working has resulted in a tension between cause and effect. Service users can present at services with mental health, relationship problems, substance misuse issues, criminal behaviour and disclose history of sexual abuse. Where abuse is disclosed as a cause of these issues, the service user has to be ready and capable to work on the cause rather than the effect.

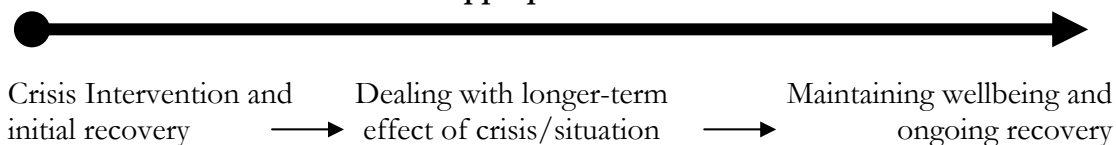
- 5.6 Services must recognise that everyone is different. A triage service could work well to address this issue. Some service users need to work on sexual abuse issues to break the pattern of offending, drinking to excess, toxic relationships with family and/or partners etc, whilst others need to address the pressing problem first e.g. offending, substance misuse, to stabilise before tackling the past, but recognising that the past is impacting on present and future. Some service users would benefit greatly from better integrated services whilst working on issues whilst others need to compartmentalize issues at least to begin with. Some service users are too ashamed to have people know about past abuse details. Part of the journey is to offload the shame and by opening up working in partnership across agencies would help with this and be healthy.
- 5.7 With regard to cause and effect, services report that the symptoms being treated include suicidal intention and coping mechanisms such as substance misuse and self-harm. There are a range of agencies which may be able to provide this support with additional capacity and specialism regarding the cause. The lines are currently blurred between treatment and support services.
- 5.8 There is a lack of consistency regarding quality assurance and accreditation across some of the organisations. This relates to service delivery, staff and volunteer training and training/awareness raising delivered to external organisations.
- 5.9 The funding structures within each organisation vary considerably and in some instances rely on external sources of funding to augment service delivery. The impact of this is that redesign will be challenging for some organisations.
- 5.10 The length of service and experience of organisations is important, but service user outcome is critical. To an extent, there is a focus on organisational sustainability rather than service user outcome i.e. providing service users with the best possible service in a challenging financial climate is key, not the sustainability of any specific organisation.
- 5.11 A critical element to the implementation of a new service model will be to consider the need, views and impact on service users. To date, this has not been undertaken and will be an important next step.

6. UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE FRAMEWORK

- 6.1 There are a number of underpinning principles that will guide the delivery of the framework for those who have been affected by abuse. In order to deliver services in the future, we intend to adopt a model of commissioning. This means that going forward, Joint Working Agreements will clearly set out the specific services that we wish organisations to deliver with resources allocated. Performance indicators will be established to ensure that performance is measured in relation to the commissioned services. Future funding will be dependent on delivering agreed services to appropriate standards.

- 6.2 Where all or part of the organisational infrastructure (core) has previously been funded, we expect that Falkirk Council's allocation would be directed to service delivery rather than infrastructure or management costs. In addition, allocations of support made by Falkirk Council must specifically relate to services being delivered within the Falkirk Council area. This must be evidenced within monitoring returns.
- 6.3 With regards to the services we want delivered, we have developed a service framework which sets out what services we would want delivered and those that while we accept are of value, we would not anticipate Council funding supporting. We would anticipate organisations using other funding or support to deliver these services or more importantly utilising other specialist providers.
- 6.4 In order to deliver the model effectively for service users, it is critical that the organisations establish referral protocols to allow specialist, tailored intervention to be provided as required. This will require organisations to understand their own thresholds of entry and limitations of delivery, recognising that each organisation has a specialism and that put together with other providers creates a full and seamless services delivery model.
- 6.5 Referral process should be established between the four organisations in the first instance, but may also include wider partnerships for example Citizens Advice Bureaux may provide specialist welfare/debt, advice, Falkirk Council Housing Service re tenancy, Signpost Forth Valley re substance misuse etc. In instances where a relationship of trust has been developed between a vulnerable client and one organisation, it may be appropriate to pull on specialist input from another organisation on an outreach basis. An example of this the CAB outreach service being delivered within Women's Aid.
- 6.6 Underpinning the delivery of commissioned services will be the Domestic Abuse Forum (which has been remained as Falkirk Gender Based Violence Partnership) and the GIRFEC approach delivered via the Integrated Assessment Framework. The Domestic Abuse Forum is currently re-developing it's own role within the local area. It is expected that the forum will lead and co-ordinate initiatives relating to awareness raising and training as well as contributing to community planning and regional and national engagement. All four organisations will be expected to participate in the Domestic Abuse Forum, as a condition of funding. Contribution and participation in activities led by the forum are not considered to be commissioned services.
- 6.7 Where services are provided for children, organisations will be required to participate in the Voluntary Sector Children Services Forum. The Integrated Assessment Framework is a process designed to wrap services around the needs of the child, as an integrated co-ordinated way, in line with the GIRFEC approach. Participation within this forum will ensure that services can be delivered based on identified need as opposed to an ad-hoc way or in silos. The desired model is illustrated below:

Continuous spectrum of support relying on partnership working to ensure referral to appropriate service



Underpinning work:

Domestic Abuse Forum: Awareness raising & training
Voluntary Sector Children's Services Forum: Link to Integrated Assessment
Framework providing co-ordinated response to identified need.

- 6.8 It is anticipated that organisations will continue to augment service delivery via sourcing external funding. As independent bodies, it is for the organisation to determine appropriate sources of funding however, management costs from core should not be cited within bids unless the project is to support services identified within the framework and can clearly be separated in terms of monitoring and reporting. If funding is secured to provide services out with scope of specified delivery, project costs must be generated on full cost recovery basis, as these services are not considered to be a funding priority for Falkirk Council. In addition, it would be expected that organisations develop applications in consultation with the Domestic Abuse Forum and/or Children's Commission, to avoid duplication and draw on intelligence and expertise available at a local level.
- 6.9 Organisations must continue to be very clear about the specialism provided by the service and also the difference between treatment and recovery services. For example, drug and alcohol issues; a service may provide support to a person to address the underlying issue (cause), but not support interventions to alleviate addiction (effect). Appropriate referral mechanism should be in place with partner agencies.
- 6.10 All four organisations should be registered with appropriate regulatory bodies. This should be determined on an individual basis and may be dependent on the services users own desired outcome, for example where counselling is provided or where there is a specific outcome of secure tenancy, there is a requirements that groups are registered with the Care Inspectorate, therefore service users should be signposted or referred to housing support providers.
- 6.11 In addition, it is preferable that internal training provided is accredited or in line with national standards or a parent organisation. This will ensure consistency of quality. However, as noted in 4.11, there is also benefit in developing training to include the voice of service users. This type of training is not accredited but very impactful. If this training was produced in partnership, it would be beneficial to Council and partners agency staff. This could apply to all of the agencies working with abuse. Training could be commissioned from external agencies if there was clarity regarding learning outcomes and target audience. This would allow Council to set the standard and then monitor and evaluate training to determine how good the training is rather than the provider.

- 6.12 All four organisations will provide services to any individual with an identified need, living within the Falkirk Council area. This may include those with migrant or refugee status, where there is no re-course of public funding. Interpretation services should also be available to clients, where appropriate and reasonable. Council Services can access interpretation and translation services through approved contractors and information is available on the Council intranet.

7. SERVICE FRAMEWORK

- 7.1 The service framework, which is attached as Appendix 2, has been developed on a tiered approach basis. The framework sets out core services and also supplementary services which go beyond the scope of the domestic abuse strategy. This will ensure the services delivered with Council funds be seen in the wider context including a broader range of clients and needs i.e. beyond women and children.
- 7.2 In relation to services which have been deemed as outwith the scope of local authority funding, organisations consideration will have to be given regarding whether the service should be stopped or funded via an alternative source. The impact on service users will of course be important. An equality and poverty impact assessment has been undertaken in relation to the implementation of the new service framework.
- 7.3 To ensure that the right service is delivered to meet the needs of the client, it is proposed that a triage model is developed. This will mean service users access services via a single point, are assessed and passed immediately to the relevant specialist service within the spectrum of support. This approach could be piloted for survivors of domestic abuse, in the first instance, but subject to successful evaluation, could be rolled out to all abuse related services. 3 of the organisations have agreed that a triage model would better support service users, whilst 1 feels that it would not be a beneficial approach.
- 7.4 A period of transition will be required in order to move to model of commissioned services, as opposed to the current model of providing a grant towards overall service provision or to support the organisational framework. It is anticipated that the process will involve the organisations, to a varying extent, considering their own structure to assess ability to deliver the new model of service. It should be noted that the Council's responsibility lies with service users and the provision of quality services, as opposed to maintaining any single organisation. Council Officers will support this process, where possible.
- 7.5 From the outset of any support provided, organisations must make clear that a progressive pathway is established for clients. One of the critical challenges for the organisations within the review is to ensure that service users progress in their journey towards a point where minimal or no intervention is required. It is recognised that this process can take a significant amount of time and may not be linear; it is however, critical that individuals do not become dependent on any one service. One of the impacts of the change to service may be that organisations have less capacity to provide services on a long term basis. This will have to be sensitively managed.

- 7.6 It is anticipated that for some of the organisations, there will be staff impact as a result of the reduction in overall funding. Detailed discussion will need to take place with individual organisations regarding the commissioning of ongoing services therefore any potential impact on staff will emerge from this.
- 7.7 During the process of commissioning the services described within the framework, it will be important to consider that there are a range of local providers who could potentially provide some of the services. For example, Falkirk and District Association for Mental Health provide a range of services for individuals with mental health issues. It is worth noting that approximately 33% clients cite domestic abuse as an underlying factor in their mental health issue.

8. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW AND IMPACT

- 8.1 There is a significant difference in the funding structure of each of the four organisations. Women's Aid and Open Secret receive funding to support the infrastructure of the organisation and service delivery, where as Rape Crisis and Relationship Scotland receive a smaller contribution towards service delivery, which includes an element of management costs.
- 8.2 Appendix 3 provides an analysis of each organisations audited accounts for the period 2012/2013. It should be noted that due to the varying nature of organisational funding package, the impact of changes to financial contribution would significantly vary. All organisations cite staff reduction and reduced services as an impact. The impact of any change to funding approved by Members, will be considered in detail with individual organisations.
- 8.3 Due to the small contribution of funding towards total organisational costs, it appears that with a reduction in funding, Relationship Scotland and Rape Crisis would be able to continue to provide a service, albeit on a reduced level.
- 8.4 69.7% of Women's Aids funding was allocated from Falkirk Council in 2012/13. This payment funds both infrastructure and service delivery. A reduction in funding would result in a reduced level of service. It is however worth noting that typically, organisations will have a policy of having reserves which equal 3-6 months running costs in order to help them cope with any sudden changes to their funding. In 2012/2013, Women's Aid had reserves of £201,466 in their unrestricted fund which represents 93.4%, or just over 11 months of current annual expenditure. Given that Falkirk Council provides the bulk of the unrestricted income, it would seem reasonable to assume that Falkirk Council has contributed to the bulk of this reserve. It is worth noting that for the last two years Women's Aid have been paid for expenditure incurred as opposed to on a block grant basis.
- 8.5 Open Secret cites closure as a possible impact of a reduction in funding. The current model of service delivery relies on the organisations infrastructure being funded by Falkirk Council, with the majority of service delivery being funded via external sources. Open Secret has secured funding to provide services both within Falkirk Council area but also across Scotland.

- 8.6 It should be noted that two significant sources of external funding are due to end by March 2015; £225k grant from Scottish Government and £135k from Inspiring Scotland. There is likely to be a local impact of a reduction in service provision when this funding ceases irrespective of Council decision.
- 8.7 The current funding structure results in a limited ability to change or influence provision due to external funding requirements and pre-determined project start and end dates. It is however acknowledged that the service has been very successful in securing funding to augment Council funding. Moving to a commissioning approach would pose most challenge to Open Secret.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 In concluding the review there are a number of conclusions and recommendations some of which relate to the way the Council works with these organisations and others which related directly to the organisations.
- 9.2 The overall conclusion is that on the whole the organisations provide invaluable services to some of our most vulnerable citizens. These services are on the whole valued by their clients, our partners and Council services. Most of the organisations have sought to use the review to take a critical / objective view of the services they deliver and how these can improve and thus have a greater impact on outcomes. However there is not be clear link in some instances between the money the Council provides and the services that are delivered.
- 9.3 In order to make sense of these all the recommendations they have been grouped by topic:

In relation to future service delivery:

- 9.4 Falkirk Council needs to be in a position of specifying and commissioning specific services.
- 9.5 There needs to be clarity about what service delivery we are funding and the outcomes of that provision.
- 9.6 We need to ensure that there is little or no duplication between the specialist services that are commissioned. However linked to this, we need to ensure that specialist services are linked by effective referral protocols to provide a continuum of support for service users.
- 9.7 There is a need to ensure a focus on client need, rather than organisation infrastructure.
- 9.8 A consistent approach to service monitoring is critical. The proposed approach is that a monitoring group be formed with relevant Council Service representatives, including representation from the Domestic Abuse Forum and Children's Commission.

- 9.9 A partnership triage approach should be considered for piloting within the local area. The triage service would provide a point of contact and assessment for individuals, with referral onto appropriate specialist services. The triage model would ensure appropriate access to the correct type of support, without individuals assess the individual specialism of organisations, whilst in a vulnerable position. It is proposed the process be developed and established by one organisation, with the potential for the triage model to be rolled out to wider services i.e. that each organisation could carry out a consistent triage/initial assessment and make appropriate referrals, as required. It should be noted that the option would remain available to individuals make direct contact with organisations of their choice, rather than going through the triage assessment process.

In relation to budget:

- 9.10 Organisations should be encouraged to approach partner organisations in the context of Falkirk Community Planning Partnership for support towards services which have a positive impact on their outcomes.
- 9.11 External funding undoubtedly adds value to service provision, and when developed in conjunction with local partners to help to achieve local outcomes, will be endorsed by strategic groups such as the Domestic Abuse Forum and/or the Children's Commission.

In relation to future budgetary provision across the 4 organisations, it is proposed that:

Women's Aid

- 9.12 During the period 2014/2015, Council Officers enter into discussions with Women's Aid to establish a triage service, operating across all abuse related services and utilising that organisations reserves to provide develop and deliver this service. This would develop an infrastructure to support the roll out of the amended service specification and also help reduce Women's Aid's reserves to a level in line with OSCR recommendations. This approach recognises the alignment of services provided by Women's Aid with Council priorities and also the progress and improvements the organisation has made over the past years. Further consideration will be required regarding sustainability to of the triage service, beyond the 2014/2015.

Open Secret

- 9.13 Open Secret's funding be reduced on a gradual basis over the next two years. Open Secret's funding structure and geographic spread of service provision remains an issue in terms of Falkirk Council's outcomes and funding priorities. During the period 2014/2015, funding should be reduced by £34,000. Open Secret have indicated that they could withstand this level of reduction, however further discussion is required regarding where this saving would be made within the organisation. Officers should work with the Board to consider the focus of their provision and how best they could provide services commissioned by Falkirk Council. Continued support for service users should be central to this process.

- 9.14 This would be followed up by a further reduction in 2015/16 of a further £26,000, making the total reduction from 2015/2016 reoccurring, as £60,000. This would reduce the amount paid by the Council annually to £89,000. This graduated reduction would allow Open Secret time to re-organise, focus on the service framework and ensure that resources are aligned with direct service delivery. It again must be emphasised that Open Secret have advised officers that the funding provided by the Council pays largely for their management and administration etc.
- 9.15 If we are unable to develop a commissioning relationship with Open Secret, there are a number of local providers who could potentially provide a similar service, albeit without the considerable experience that Open Secret has gained. In addition Members should be aware that 2 significant stands of external funding used by Open Secret to deliver services will stop during 2014/2015, which will result in a reduction in service provision irrespective of the Council decisions on funding.

Rape Crisis

- 9.16 Rape Crisis is currently in a period of transition and development. There is a willingness within the organisation to develop the service provided in the Falkirk area, including improving relationships with other local service providers. It is anticipated that the organisation will require support to develop, which will have a resource implication on Officers. Funding could be maintained for the 2014/2015 period, with close monitoring. Given the recently established procedure of referral by Police Scotland, the organisation should enter into discussion with Police Scotland regarding the possibility of future funding.

Relationship Scotland

- 9.17 Relationship Scotland provides a specialist counselling service. The service is comparatively expensive; however Falkirk Council's contribution is small and the qualifications and on going personal supervision and development counsellors undertake, ensures quality. The impact of a reduction to funding would be reduced service within Falkirk Council area. The demand for the service is high and there is currently a considerable waiting list.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to:

- 10.1 **Note the outcome of the review;**
- 10.2 **Agree that the Council will commission services as described within the specification and enter into Joint Working Agreements with the four organisations based on this specification;**
- 10.3 **In order to achieve the savings agreed by Council, propose that during 2014/2015, Open Secret be provided notice of a reduction in funding of £34,000 during 2014/2015, with a further saving in 2015/2016 of £26,000, equating to a total reoccurring saving of £60,000.**

- 10.4 Approve that Council Officers enter discussion with Women's Aid to develop a triage service thereby establishing a framework for service provision under the new service specification and reducing the organisations reserves to an acceptable level.
- 10.5 These recommendations be remitted to the Executive for approval.

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DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD

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DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

Date: 10 April 2014
Ref: ABC0514LM – Abuse related Services
Contact Name: Lesley McArthur

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. NIL

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 506260 and ask for Lesley McArthur.