

## Record of operational decision

<b>Decision title:</b>	To award the Community Support Network for staff and volunteers across Talk Community who have undertaken Mental Health First Aid Training – Covid Recovery Funding
<b>Date of decision:</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> November 2021
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Assistant Director All Age Commissioning, Community Wellbeing Directorate
<b>Authority for delegated decision:</b>	<p>Decision taken by Cabinet to approve the COVID 19 Recovery Plan on 24 June 2021: That authority be delegated to the Director of Economy and Place, Director Adults and Communities, Director Children and Families and Director of Public Health be authorised to take all operational decisions to implement recommendation including, but not limited to, the procurement and commissioning of the identified projects (as set out in the detailed action plan)</p> <p><a href="http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ielIssueDetails.aspx?IId=50037702&amp;PlanId=0&amp;Opt=3#AI58109">http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ielIssueDetails.aspx?IId=50037702&amp;PlanId=0&amp;Opt=3#AI58109</a></p>
<b>Ward:</b>	All wards
<b>Consultation:</b>	<p>The COVID Recovery Plan was approved by Cabinet on 24 June 2021 which provides funding of £6m to support economy, community wellbeing and organisational recovery. The plan provided an overview of the schemes for delivery, which included the “Mental Health &amp; awareness” scheme and all appropriate consultation was undertaken at this time.</p> <p>The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and supportive of the project.</p>
<b>Decision made:</b>	<p>The support service will include development of a peer support network for volunteers across the county and will provide a network for the volunteers that have completed the mental health awareness and mental health first aid training.</p> <p>The main scope of this short term project will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a preventative, low level support service that identifies people early to prevent increasing needs.</li> <li>• Develop a wide network of sport and guidance for volunteers who may be supporting people with developing mental health conditions.</li> <li>• Develop a number of alternative support strategies which may include Facebook / WhatsApp support groups, knowledge and skills sharing networks</li> <li>• Develop links with existing community based organisations, including the diocese, HVOSS, Social Prescribers and established mental health providers.</li> <li>• Support and enable volunteers to understand the limitations of their role, and know when and how to seek professional support for people whose developing mental health support needs</li> <li>• The network should aim to be self-sustaining by the end of the project.</li> </ul>

	<p>4 locally based voluntary organisations that have experience of developing similar type of provision were identified and asked to submit a quotation for the provision of the service.</p>
<p><b>Reasons for decision:</b></p>	<p>Herefordshire Council is committed to its approach of working in partnership with the community and voluntary sector and acknowledges its value in supporting the county and its residents.</p> <p>It is recognised that volunteers in the community who may be offering support to people with developing mental health conditions, may find themselves coming under stress. It was felt important to put in place a community network where volunteers could get guidance and support from their peers with links into established community based organisations.</p> <p>Training in Mental Health First Aid and mental health awareness is being provided to volunteers in the Talk Community Hubs and volunteers across the county, but it is essential that those volunteers are not then left without support for themselves so that volunteers with limited training do not find themselves drawn into trying to support people who should be directed to their GP or professional mental health services.</p> <p>The objectives of this project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers with limited training around mental health conditions, have the availability of peer support and a wider network of groups and organisations able to provide guidance, information and support</li> <li>• These networks should be developed in such a way, working with a wide range of groups and organisations, that by the end of this funded project the community networks should be well established and continue in a self-sustaining way.</li> <li>• Support and guidance to be provided to volunteers in Talk Community Hubs to develop a range of activities and forums to enable people with low level or developing mental health issues to manage and improve their mental health and general wellbeing.</li> <li>• Make use of asset-based community development (ABCD) to facilitate conversations and efforts framed around the strengths and assets of the community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</b></p>	<p>There are no legal risks or implications associated with this decision.</p> <p>There are no financial risks.</p> <p>The contract is for 12 months and funding is provided via the agreed COVID 19 Recovery Plan funding. Given the relatively short timescale to develop and implement the Community Support Network, there could be a risk that the proposed service would take too long to put in place and become established. This risk was mitigated by the decision to award the contract to one of 4 potential providers, all of which are Herefordshire based and have existing links with other VCSE and statutory agencies, this will greatly reduce the lead-in time to get the service operational.</p>
<p><b>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</b></p>	<p>Consideration was given to running an open tender exercise via the procurement portal, however this ran the risk of a large number of organisations submitting quotes. It was agreed therefore that this opportunity should be offered to a local VCS organisation as they would</p>

	already be familiar with existing services and understand the potential challenges of developing a service across Herefordshire.
<b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b>	None

Signed..... Date:

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