

Report Author: Ian Phillips

Tel: 863849

<b>THE AWARD OF GRANTS TO FUND SPECIALIST INFORMATION AND ADVICE SERVICES</b>
<b>COUNCILLOR SEATON, CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES</b>
<b>September 2017</b>
<b>Deadline date: <i>n/a</i></b>

Cabinet portfolio holder: Responsible Director:	Councillor Seaton, Cabinet Member for Resources Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director People and Communities Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Councils
Is this a Key Decision?	NO
Is this decision eligible for call-in?	NO
Does this Public report have any annex that contains exempt information?	NO
Is this a project and if so has it been registered on Verto?	NO

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet Member is recommended to:

1. Approve the award of specific grants to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations for the continued funding of specialist Information, Advice and Guidance services relating to the Peterborough Community Assistance Scheme from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2017 up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 as outlined in section 4.6 and below:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Amount requested until March 2018</b>
Kingsgate Community Church	£73,334
Rainbow Savers Credit Union	£34,667
Dial Peterborough	£94,041
Age UK	£20,000
MIND	£20,000
PCVS	£26,667
<b>Total</b>	<b>£268,709</b>

### 1. SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to award grants to a network of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations to deliver specialised information, advice, guidance and support to individuals and families in financial crisis through the Peterborough Community Assistance Scheme (PCAS).
- 1.2 The VCS providers are all specialised in their field and can offer expert advice to cover a range of issues such as physical disability, mental health, financial inclusion and support for older people. Specifically, providers will ensure that clients can receive support in order to claim for appropriate welfare benefits and assist (where appropriate) clients to appeal benefit decisions.
- 1.3 As part of the broad PCAS offer, clients may also be supported with emergency food, furniture/clothing (via foodbanks and CareZone both managed by Kingsgate Community Church).
- 1.4 There has been a delay in agreeing budgets to fund this work which has now been resolved. Unfortunately, this resulted in the CMDN not being completed in time making

the decision retrospective. Despite the delay, voluntary groups have continued to deliver their services to support vulnerable people.

## 2. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 2.1 This report is for the Cabinet Member for Resources to consider exercising delegated authority under paragraph 3.4.3 of Part 3 of the constitution in accordance with the terms of their portfolio at paragraph (g).

## 3. TIMESCALE

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	<b>NO</b>	If Yes, date for relevant Cabinet Meeting	<b>N/A</b>
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## 4. DETAILS OF DECISION REQUIRED

- 4.1 PCAS commenced in April 2013 in response to the Government's decision to cease Social Fund payments and Community Care grants. Each top tier local authority received the funding and responsibility from Government to offer support to individuals who were in financial crisis.
- 4.2 Clients who have specialised needs for advice and support relating to financial crisis and welfare benefits, can access PCAS. The scheme, through its network of VCS providers will help clients claim the welfare benefits they need and are entitled to. Due to the underlying physical and/or mental health conditions clients may face and the complexity of the welfare benefits system, help is required to ensure that clients can receive the financial help that they are entitled to and need.
- 4.3 The Government has announced that from November 2017 the full roll out of Universal Credit will commence. This means that for any new welfare benefit claimant (either in or out of work) will claim Universal Credit instead of a range of other benefits such as job seekers allowance, housing benefit, working tax credits etc. In addition, any existing claimant who experiences a change of circumstances will also move on to claiming Universal Credit. Voluntary Sector organisations will likely see increased demand for their advice services as claimants manage the transition into Universal Credit.
- 4.4 In order to access services, clients must first present to Citizens Advice Bureau where they are individually assessed by trained advisors. Tailored support and advice is then provided to each client including onward referral to other specialised support agencies where required. During 2016/17, PCAS has supported 2788 clients who have been in financial crises. Alongside information and advice to clients, the scheme has also provided:

- 2759 clients with food via the food bank
- 504 clients with furniture and clothing (217 direct PCAS Referrals)
- 315 beds
- 68 microwave/kettle/toaster packs
- 248 energy card payment
- 221 white goods (fridge/freezer or washing machine)

- 4.4 The scheme has been previously funded via a Government grant of approximately £800k. This funding arrangement ceased in March 2015 and the grant was subsumed within the overall Revenue Support Grant offered to Local Authorities. However at the time this happened, Revenue Support Grant was reduced overall.
- 4.5 Funding has been identified within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy to fund PCAS for 2017/18 and beyond, by way of grant. Approval was granted in December 2016 to fund PCAS until 31st July 2017. The Council has given consideration to procuring the entire PCAS service alongside generalist Information, Advice and Guidance services, which is also funded by the Council. The Information, Advice and Guidance services are currently delivered through the Citizens Advice Bureau and are in the process of being tendered for service delivery beyond Spring 2018. After consideration it has been decided to grant funding to specialist providers for delivery of the PCAS.
- 4.6 Approval is therefore sought to fund the following organisations up to 31 March 2018. Future grants are subject to sufficient funds being available and a review of the performance and need for voluntary sector delivery.

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Funding requested August 2017 - March 2018</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Kingsgate Community Church	£73,334	Foodbanks/Carezone management, staffing and running costs. Beds & basic electrical items for PCAS clients. Rental contribution to foodbank warehouse.
Rainbow Savers Credit Union	£34,667	Staff and operating costs for running the Credit Union in Peterborough

Disability Peterborough (DIAL Peterborough)	£94,041	Staffing and running costs to enable the organisation to provide information, advice and guidance to users. Funding is also used to run Shopmobility service reducing social isolation.
Age UK	£20,000	Staffing and running costs to enable the organisation to provide information, advice and guidance to users.
MIND	£20,000	Staffing and running costs to enable the organisation to provide information, advice and guidance to users.
PCVS	£26,667	Staffing and running costs to enable the organisation to provide Information, advice and guidance to users.
<b>Total</b>	<b>£268,709</b>	

4.7 Funding for Disability Peterborough includes £14k per annum to run the Shopmobility service. Over the next year, it is the intention to explore different operating models so that the scheme is self-funding and not reliant on council funding longer term. Shopmobility plays an important role in helping disabled users access a range of services and cultural/leisure opportunities in the city centre. The scheme is co-funded by Queensgate shopping centre.

## 5. CONSULTATION

5.1 Voluntary sector organisations have been consulted regarding their services and options for delivery. The proposed model of delivery has been developed as a result of the sector's views and service pressures they face.

## **6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES**

6.1 By continuing to fund PCAS and broader IAG, we can expect to see the following outcomes delivered:

- Increased capacity of VCS providers to deliver high quality and specialised information, advice and guidance services.
- Closer and improved partnership working between the Council, the Department for Working Pensions and VCS partners, leading to a greater understanding of the issues clients face and the multiple impacts across the wider service delivery of the Council and partners.
- A holistic scheme that provides support to deal with clients' initial crisis and equips them with the relevant information and guidance to prevent reoccurrence
- Prevention of greater debt and poverty.
- Prevention of homelessness
- Increased safeguarding outcomes for children and adults

## **7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS & ANY RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

7.1 PCAS delivers an essential service to those clients who are in financial crisis. The scheme acts as a safety net to the city and supports people who in many cases cannot afford the basics such as food, energy or furniture. As Universal Credit rolls out to families and couples from November 2017, demand for support and services will likely increase.

7.2 Should funding for PCAS not continue, the impact to the Council and wider public sector will be significant and would lead to increased demand on services across numerous areas.

## **8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

8.1 Cease funding to PCAS – this option is rejected for the reasons set out above in terms of the impact it would have to council services, additional costs and impact to vulnerable people.

8.2 Fund PCAS at a reduced level – this option is also rejected as continuity of funding is required until the procurement exercise for a generic information, advice and guidance service (including foodbanks, furniture recycling and credit union facilities).

## **9. IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The implications of not having a PCAS in Peterborough would be significant. The first two years of delivering PCAS has already seen significant demand for clients in crisis and requiring support. We anticipate that demand for PCAS will increase to meet

Universal Credit new claimants. If the VCS organisations were not providing the PCAS scheme it would place considerable pressure upon council services.

9.2 PCAS also funds the Kingsgate Community Church to run and manage eight food banks in the city. Whilst the food itself is donated from across the community, it does require continuous oversight and management from the church in order to deliver an efficient service. The loss of PCAS would likely lead to the close of the food bank network in the city.

### 9.3 Financial Implications

9.3.1 Funding has been identified within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy to deliver PCAS.

9.3.2 Budgets will be monitored monthly to ensure that spend is within scope and does not exceed agreed limits.

### 9.4 Legal Implications

9.4.1 The Council has the legal power to award a grant pursuant to the general power of competence contained in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

9.4.2 A grant agreement will be agreed between the Council and the Recipients which will set out the grant conditions.

9.4.3 State Aid has been considered in the awarding of the grants to the Voluntary Community Sector organisations.

### 9.5 Equalities Implications

9.5.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this decision.

## **10. DECLARATIONS / CONFLICTS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS GRANTED**

10.1 None.

## **11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985) and The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

11.1 None.