

## Executive Decision Taken under Cabinet Delegated Authority

<b>Subject:</b>	Temporary emergency grant funding to sustain domestic violence and abuse support projects
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Prevention and Protection, Neil Cox
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Delegation Reference</b>	In accordance with the authority delegated to Chief Officers to act on matters within the authority delegated to them under Part 3 of the Council's Constitution
<b>Contribution towards Vision 2030:</b>	Ambitions 2, 4 and 5
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Justin Haywood - Operations Manager: ASC Commissioning

### 1. DECISION RECOMMENDATION

To endorse the decision taken by the Director of Prevention and Protection at the Adult Social Care DMT on the 13 November 2020 to approve emergency grants to be awarded temporary funding to the following organisations:

- (1) Families Together run by Family Action £39,724
- (2) MASH IDVA Post employed by Black Country Women's Aid £13,750
- (3) Our Future Project run by Black Country Women's Aid £30,250

## **2 Reason(s) for Recommendation**

- 2.1 The Director of Adult Social Care was approached in his capacity as Chair of the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership to consider providing temporary emergency funding for 3 elements of support around Domestic Violence and Abuse.
- 2.2 This report seeks authorisation by Strategic Officers Group of the decision taken by the Director of Prevention and Protection in consultation with the Director of Adult Social Care to award temporary emergency grant funding to enable to short term continuation of the Families Together and Our Future projects and facilitate the extension of the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) post within MASH employed by Black Country Women's Aid.

## **3 Alternative Options considered and discounted**

- 3.1 All other alternative sources of funding have already been explored hence the request made to the Director of Adult Social Care as Chair of DASP. Whilst this decision provides emergency funding of last resort for these projects through to the 31 July 2021 the future of these projects and the source of any continuation funding beyond this date will need be discussed corporately and with the involvement of the Children's Trust.

## **4 Purpose of the report**

- 4.1 As stated above this report seeks authorisation from Strategic Officers Group of the decision taken by the Director of Prevention and Protection to provide temporary grant funding to continue the Families Together and Our Futures projects and provide funding to facilitate the continuance of the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) post within MASH which is employed by Black Country Women's Aid, through to the 31 July 2021.
- 4.2 Without this temporary funding the Families Together project will cease on the 30th November 2020. The staff are currently under notice and consultation for redundancy on or before 30th November unless emergency funding can be found.

- 4.3 The Families Together project was previously funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner and is intended to provide a unique programme designed to support men, women and children to recognise and overcome domestic abuse, enabling families to develop their awareness, confidence and self-esteem resulting in supporting families to feel safer and have the tools to improve their relationships.
- 4.4 Funding from the PCC has been diverted elsewhere and leaves the project with no funding beyond the 30 November 2020.
- 4.5 The Our Future project and the IDVA operating and supporting within MASH have funding up until the 31 March 2021 therefore the emergency funding being proposed for these will be from 31 March 2021 to 31 July 2021.
- 4.6 The Our Future project is a regional school-based support service for children and young people affected by domestic abuse at home. Our Future is delivered by Black Country Women's Aid (BCWA) across the Black Country. The project was first funded by the Home Office Children Affected by Domestic Abuse Fund from January 2019 to March 2020, with a second phase funded from April 2020-March 2021.
- 4.7 Funding for Our Future expires on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and staff attributed to this project will be in a similar position to those working on the Families Together.
- 4.8 The IDVA working within MASH ensures that referrals involving Domestic Violence and Abuse made to MASH are made to organisations like Black Country Women's Aid and indeed Families Together and Our Future project. Statistics show from a period where MASH didn't have a dedicated IDVA referrals to the organisations and projects names above dropped significantly.

## **5 How does this support Vision 2030?**

- 5.1 The proposals contained within this report support the Council Vision 2030 as stated in Ambition 2, "Sandwell is a place where we

live healthy lives and live them for longer, and where those of us who are vulnerable feel respected and cared for”.

Ambition 4 that Our children benefit from the best start in life and a high quality education throughout their school careers with outstanding support from their teachers and families; and

Ambition 5 that Our communities are built on mutual respect and taking care of each other, supported by all the agencies that ensure we feel safe and protected in our homes and local neighbourhoods.

## **6 Current position/Background Details**

6.1 As set out above, without this emergency funding the 3 projects will cease to operate at respective dates in the next six months leaving a gap in provision around Domestic Violence and Abuse services particularly affecting families, children and young people.

6.2 In terms of a direct award to these groups, these are existing projects and it would be unviable to look to award this grant funding to alternative providers that said Black Country Women’s Aid are the Councils primary provider of Domestic Violence and Abuse support services.

## **7 Implications**

<p><b>Resources:</b></p>	<p>This total of this emergency grant funding is for £83,724.55</p> <p>£20,429.77 to Family Action for the Families Together project will be in the current 2020/21 financial year.</p> <p>This will be funded from projected under spends against allocated Adult Social Care (ASC) budgets in 2020/21.</p> <p>The remainder, £63,294.78 will be for the 2021/22 financial year with £19,294.78 being awarded to Family Action for the Families Together project, £13,750 being awarded to Black Country Women’s Aid to support the IDVA post within MASH and £30,250 again to Black Country Women’s Aid, to fund the Our Futures project</p> <p>This emergency funding will come from existing Adult Social Care budgets through to 31 July 2021.</p> <p>This will be funded from one-off resources from historic under spends (2018/19) approved for carry</p>
	<p>forward within the ASC Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p> <p>There is no ongoing budgetary provision for this activity within ASC.</p> <p>It is recommended that a conversation will then need to be had corporately and involving the Children’s Trust, quite soon as to what happens to the projects beyond 31 July 2021 when this emergency funding expires.</p> <p>This is to avoid the Council and each respective provider being in this position again.</p>
<p><b>Legal:</b></p>	<p>The grants will be awarded under the Director of Prevention and Protections Delegated Authority and this decision is subject to endorsement by Statutory Officers Group through this report.</p>

<b>Equality:</b>	There are no significant equality issues arising from this report. Continuance of these projects will ensure that vulnerable people in need of support around domestic violence and abuse will continue to benefit at least until the end of July 2021.
<b>Risk:</b>	The recommendation if approved would prevent in the short term the two projects and one post having to be withdrawn which would result in a reduction in support to address domestic violence and abuse issues in the Borough.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	Again, the proposed actions set out in this paper would prevent in the short term the two projects and one post having to be withdrawn which would result in a reduction in support to address domestic violence and abuse issues in the Borough. This is known to have a direct negative impact on mental and physical health and on general wellbeing.
<b>Other:</b>	None

In accordance with the authority delegated to Chief Officers to act on matters within the authority delegated to them under Part 3 of the Council's Constitution, I intend to take the action(s) recommended above.

I do/do not have an interest to declare in this matter



**Neil Cox**  
**Director for Prevention and Protection**

**Date 12 November 2020**

If the Constitution requires the decision to be taken in consultation with another chief officer, the following signature box should also be included

I confirm that I have been consulted on the above proposals and have no objection to their proceeding.



**Rebecca Maher**  
**Acting Director of Finance/S151 Officer**

**Date:** 9 June 2021

**8. Appendices**

None

**9. Source Documents**

None