

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Personnel Committee

15th October 2018

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All wards

Establishment of a Senior Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA)

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval to establish a Senior Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) post evaluated at grade 8, based in the community safety team in the Chief Executive's Directorate.

Executive Summary

This report seeks approval for the establishment of a Senior IDVA post in the Domestic Abuse IDVA team, at grade 8. The role of this post will be to manage the IDVA team based in the Community Safety Team.

Background

The role of the IDVA is to provide a high-quality frontline service to victims of domestic abuse; delivering the service to those at highest risk, identifying and assessing the risks and needs of domestic abuse victims, and to provide a pro-active, short to medium-term crisis

intervention through individual safety planning and personal support to keep them and their children safe.

Over the ten year period that the service has been operating, demand has increased year on year and last year reached crisis point. A high risk review was undertaken to look at the demand on the service which identified the following:

- The caseloads for the IDVA workers exceed the National Charity for victims of Domestic Abuse Safe Lives benchmark by a significant margin
- There was no qualified manager in place to provide leadership of the service
- There was no case management or clinical supervision in place to help debrief staff and provide for their welfare
- There was limited service resilience/cover over bank holiday and other periods; the service was predominantly working in office hours
- There was inconsistency in relationships with specialist Domestic Abuse providers operating across the area which meant that the ability to step down cases was inconsistent and ongoing support for victims inequitable

Following the review, the capacity in the team was increased from two full-time IDVAs to three and a part-time Business Support Officer appointed. This review also identified the need for a senior IDVA as proposed below.

Proposal

A post of Senior IDVA is created at grade 8 to enable the IDVA team to be restructured. The post will cover, amongst others, the following areas:

- To support and line manage the team of IDVAs to provide a high quality frontline service to victims of domestic abuse that delivers a service to those highest risk.
- To be the lead in crisis situations and provide advice and guidance on child protection issues and information sharing concerns.

- To implement and support the development of the strategic direction of the service and take a role in the local domestic violence strategy partnerships.
- To provide case management support to the IDVAs

As the IDVA team are required by Welsh Government to work regionally with Swansea, consideration was given to the Swansea Senior IDVA managing the Neath Port Talbot Team. This option was dismissed for a number of reasons, including, the different working practices of the teams, the difficulty in effectively managing a team across two locations and the risk of the Neath Port Talbot Team losing the premium service for local people.

Following approval from the unions, authorisation from the Head of Service and consultation with the team, an agreement was reached that the most experienced Officer in the team took on the role of Senior IDVA. This report formalises this arrangement.

Financial Impact

All posts in the IDVA team are currently grant funded. The post of Senior IDVA will be funded by Welsh Government Regional Domestic Abuse funding. Neath Port Talbot works regionally with Swansea and Swansea is the banker for this funding stream.

All costs associated with this post, including any future pay awards, will be met from funding from the Police & Crime Commissioner's funding stream. There will be no additional expenditure incurred to the Council. Please see financial appraisal in Appendix 1.

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment screening form was completed to assist the authority in complying with its Public Sector Equality Duty. The screening indicated that there was no requirement to carry out a full equality impact assessment. Please see Appendix 2.

Workforce Impacts

This proposal will provide greater resilience within the Domestic Abuse IDVA team and provide staff with a management structure and

case management to ensure realistic case loads and ongoing support.

Legal Impacts

There are no legal impacts associated with this report

Risk Management

This proposal will help reduce the risk of an unmanageable caseload, unsafe case management practices and ensure correct policies and procedures are in place to support the team.

Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members approve the establishment of a Senior IDVA post (Grade 8) based in Community Safety Team of the Chief Executive's Directorate.

FOR DECISION

Reasons for Proposed Decision

To provide a robust management structure in the Domestic Abuse IDVA team to enable them to work appropriately and effectively with all high risk victims and their families.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is for immediate implementation.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Financial Appraisal

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form

Appendix 3a – Community Safety team structure before change

Appendix 3b – Community Safety team structure after change

List of Background Papers

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