

Voluntary Sector Grant Aid Strategy 2011 - 2015

Additional Consultation Responses

In addition to the questionnaire and consultation events, other individual responses were received.

Hindu Cultural and Welfare Society

In addition to the questionnaire this group wished to make the following comments:

Hindi has been taught to Indian children in Derby temple for more than 20 years. Our children were given this opportunity to learn their mother tongue, Hindi, so that they can communicate to their elders who could not speak English. Another reason is that our all religious books are in Sanskrit and Hindi, the children born here can read their religious books and keep up with their religion and culture. As Hindi language is not taught in schools in UK, the supplementary Language was introduced. The language is taught by our community volunteers free of charge - no charge to the state. We are given a grant of £25.00 per child for one year. This comes to about £2.00 per month per child. The cost of running the Hindi classes is three times more than this grant. The parents and community has been footing the extra cost. In the schools at the moment German, French and other Languages are taught. Why minority children are ignored if they wish to learn their own Language at a very little cost to the budget of the state. We had English children coming to learn Hindi. Can you let me know, has our children got a right to learn their choice of language.

When your cabinet make a decision and think of stopping this grant then they will be taking a right of a child to study their choice of language.

Mental Health Action Group Members

MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY PROVISION IN DERBY CITY

We are writing to you to express our concern that the Advocacy Services provided by Derbyshire Mind are under threat from the budget cuts that have recently been agreed by Derby City Council.

We believe that effective advocacy provision needs to be available for anyone using or trying to access Mental Health Services. That support is currently provided in Derby City by Derbyshire Mind.

People suffering from mental health issues can find it difficult to express their views and wishes - especially in times of emotional distress and crisis. Those views and wishes need to be articulated however. Allowing effective expression means a person retains some feelings of control over what is happening to them. To deny

effective expression risks creating feelings of powerlessness and despair that can cause a worsening of medical condition. At times, family or friends may help in expressing wishes. At other times, that support network may be unavailable or it may not be appropriate to rely on it. At these moments effective advocacy support is, we believe, vital.

Whilst accepting that the Council feels compelled to make cost savings, we believe that users of Mental Health Advocacy Services occupy a fairly unique position - it may actually make an 'ill' person 'more ill' if the service provided is withdrawn or standards of service worsen.

We believe that the advocacy support provided by Derbyshire Mind at present is of a high standard, professional and consistent. It allows the best prospect of a service user being able to express themselves clearly in times of difficulty. We believe that the service offers good value for money - particularly if the extra costs that would need to be borne by the NHS if people become 'more ill' are factored in.

We are concerned that any reduction in the funding available to Derbyshire Mind to provide this service will inevitably lead to a reduction in the availability of advocacy support or will lead to a drop in its quality. For these reasons we are asking you to protect the budget available for Mental Health Advocacy Services.

This letter has been prepared by the Mental Health Action Group, a campaigning group operating in Derby City and Southern Derbyshire. We are led by people who are current or past users of Mental Health Services in the southern half of Derbyshire. We are dedicated to improving the lives of people who have mental health problems and those who care for them. The signatories however, are not exclusively members of our organisation.

Derbyshire MIND

The views represented here are from people who chose to respond to the consultation directly to Derbyshire Mind rather than completing the online survey.

Here are some of the comments we have received:

Comment 1

I am writing in support of the invaluable service Mind provides to the most vulnerable in society. My partner has recently developed a serious mental health problem and, as her carer, I find it almost impossible to balance working life with providing the care and support required.

Unlike most areas of health care, mental health issues tend to be complex and require extended periods of treatment. In my limited experience of the mental health care system, there appears to be a revolving door policy where patients are "treated", discharged from hospital periodically only to be readmitted several months later to begin the process again. The effect this has on the patient can be devastating.

Mind provides help and more importantly hope to those afflicted by mental health problems and their families. I for one would feel if this service was lost it would be a tragedy.

Comment 2

I am writing to support the continuance of the Advocacy Service for people who are not subject to restrictions or orders under the Mental Health Act.

This is, in our view, a very valuable service, particularly as effective advocacy can help to prevent future problems and therefore achieve cost savings, by avoiding duplication of effort, wasted meetings, and placement breakdowns.

We would support this service, and would like to see it continue.

Comment 3

I find that Derbyshire Mind's Mental Health Advocacy Service has been very helpful to me and many others and I would like to see it continue. It got me out the house and made me more active and therefore feel better, it would be a real shame if it could not be continued.

I value it, don't cut it!

Comment 4

I was shocked to hear that the service as delivered by Derbyshire Mind is under threat of being cut as a result of Derby City Council's Voluntary Sector Grant Aid Strategy Review. I have used this service and people like myself who need the service to continue will have no one to get in touch with when they are in need of help, Mind and mental health are our only lifeline.

What can the Derby city grant aid be for, if not for the people of Derby? Surely the powers that be are not considering the mental health needs. We can't afford to lose this lifeline. Without the local voluntary sector who have we got? We are supposedly a community and as such our groups are essential if people's needs are to be met.

Comment 5

The key questions for current and future users of the Advocacy Service must surely centre on how the service is to be shaped in the future. Is it appropriate for service users who are not detained under the MHA to receive advocacy support? If so, can an appropriate level of support be provided by generalist volunteers or is the service provided so specialized as to be only be provided by professional staff?

In my opinion, it is entirely appropriate for all users of mental health services to have access to advocacy support if needed. I know from my own experience how frustrating it is to feel unable to communicate effectively when decisions are being taken about you and how distressing it is to feel that you are not being listened to. However, given the nature of mental illness, at times it takes a 3rd party facilitate that communication. Furthermore, putting people into a situation where they feel that they

are powerless and that their views are so unimportant as to be listened to runs the risk of worsening mental health. In my own case, experiencing feelings of powerlessness, helplessness and futility was, in the past, an extremely dangerous place for me to be.

Furthermore, the advocacy support available needs to be of a high standard. Low standard advocacy would, I suspect, engender the same feelings of powerlessness as no advocacy at all. I am unsure whether this could be achieved and maintained using volunteer staff. Instinctively I take the position that advocates should be professional rather than volunteers. However, if it could be demonstrated that the same level of service could be achieved with volunteer staff then I would not have an issue with it.

Comment 6

I have frequently used Derbyshire Mind's Mental Health Advocacy Service I am horrified to hear that it is under threat of being cut as a result of Derby City Council's Voluntary Sector Grant Aid Strategy Review.

The Advocacy Service has been a god send; I wouldn't have coped without it. Please reassure me and others that something can be done to keep the service there for us. It is valued immensely by me and others.

Comment 7

There should be more money for Mental Health Advocacy Services.

Comment 8

I am contacting you to offer my support for the continuation of Derbyshire Mind's Mental Health Advocacy Service.

Comment 9

This service has been very useful to me and I definitely wish the service to continue if possible.

Comment 10

I would like to see Derbyshire Mind's Mental Health Advocacy Service saved if possible. I have found it to be useful.

Comment 11

I am writing with concern about the future of Derbyshire Mind's Mental Health Advocacy Service and the threat of funding cuts as a result of Derby City Council's Voluntary Sector Grant Aid Strategy Review.

I have been a user of the service twice in recent times and the assistance of the Derbyshire Mind Advocacy staff has been absolutely invaluable to me and I would

say critical intervention and support got me through a situation with mental health services that was potentially disastrous when no other help whatsoever was available to me.

The staff I dealt with were extremely professional and vital to me at this time. In my opinion funding cuts to this service should most definitely not be considered; the loss of this service would be disastrous for mental health service users and those trying to access those services.

Comment 12

With reference to Derby City Council's Voluntary Sector Grant Aid Strategy Review. I find Derbyshire Mind invaluable and I would like to see Derbyshire Mind's services continue.

Derbyshire Mind is the only organisation I have come across with non-prejudiced professionally behaved workers.

Derbyshire Mind protects my civil and human rights and they are outstandingly pro-disabled. I am acknowledged as a human. Derbyshire Mind has helped where others failed to bother.

Surtal Arts

In addition to the questionnaire the group wanted to make the following additional comments.

Our organisation, Surtal Arts, is a small Asian arts organisation providing diverse range of arts and cultural events through out the calendar months in Derby. At the moment we are the only BME organisation which receives modest amount funding from the Derby City Council on a regular basis. We are not a venue based organisation like the Quad, Deda and Derby Live. We work in close partnership with all of them.

We feel small infrastructure organisation like Surtal would benefit from 3 years long term funding to help plan and manage artistic programme effectively and sustain ourselves as an organisation. It gives us that stability and continuity. It also helps us to leverage long term funding from external sources. In the recent years Surtal has leveraged extra funding to develop two festivals in Derby i.e South Asian Arts Festival and Festival of Light. Therefore in our opinion one round of funding will have negative impact on our organisation, a 3years long term fund will be more effective.

I also would like to point out that during various consultation presentations DCP highlighted the need to meet outcome outlined in the Derby Plan. The questionnaire does not seem to link with the priorities outlined in the Derby Plan. It seem to link with the Big Society....at the moment 50% of our work does not seem relate to the Big Society agenda? Which one people going to follow if they are going to apply for funding? Are we not in danger of confusing people?