

Establishment of One Additional Approved Mental Health Professional Post to Address Increase in Demand in Relation to the Emergency Duty Team

Date: 1 December 2021

Report of: Deputy Director of Social Work and Social Care Services Adults and Health

Report to: Director of Adults and Health

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- To establish one additional Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) post to enable the Local Authority to execute its statutory function with regards to the requisite provision of AMHPs.
- The additional capacity in the system will enable Adults and Health to be able to flex with regards to the unprecedented increase in demand for Mental Health Act assessments out of hours.
- The new post will be managed within the Mental Health Unit and will create additional career opportunities for staff wishing to specialise further within the technicalities of the Mental Health Act. This proposal further develops the opportunities for AMHPs specialising in the area of career development within a busy and demanding Emergency Duty Team.
- The cost of the post inclusive of on-costs is £65,599, the breakdown of costs are inclusive of the post-holder being at PO3 grade, plus the four increments for AMHP status and the 22% enhancement for Emergency Duty Team working. This proposal will be addressed from available funding in year and the long-term funding will be address as part of the budget setting process. This approach provides a safer and more robust service and will deter from the current over-reliance on day-time AMHPs undertaking over-time, this will also reduce levels of staff fatigue.

Recommendations

- a) For the Director of Adults and Health to note the technical content of this report.
- b) For the Director of Adults and Health to approve the proposed establishment of one additional AMHP post in order to meet the unprecedented surge in demand for Mental Health Act assessments specifically on an out of hours basis met by the Emergency Duty Team.
- c) For the Director of Adults and Health to approve establishing and recruiting to the EDT AMHP post.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- With the advent of Covid-19 there has been an unprecedented increase in mental health activity in general and specifically for assessments under the Mental Health Act. There has been an increase in demand constituting an additional 20% which is exceeding the available AMHP capacity. The increase in demand is across both the daytime service and the Emergency Duty Service who work evenings, through the night, weekends and bank holidays.
- There is a growing acuity in mental health services period which is across primary, secondary and tertiary services and individuals who would have previously been supported by Community Support are now being admitted into acute mental health wards with extremely complex presentations.
- There has been a significant increase in individuals admitted into inpatient services who have not previously had any contact with secondary mental health services.
- The extended lockdown / partial lockdowns have contributed to this as people experiencing mental ill-health have been more isolated, their support networks have also been eroded with regards to the longevity of the pandemic. Plus the anxiety with regards to the uncertain future has impacted upon individual's ability to cope and to keep themselves feeling well and optimistic.
- More concerningly, on the back of this profile presentation there is an increase in suicide rates and self-harm.
- The Mental Health Unit continue to see an increase in the number of Mental Health Act assessments being requested by Nearest Relatives which is a concern in itself as there is a clear carer strain prevalent.
- With regards to the Emergency Duty Team there is no spare capacity and there are significant areas of the EDT rota where people are working in a lone worker capacity, they are acting as the Duty AMHP Coordinator, sole AMHP and Duty Social Worker for the City. There is also an increased demand in EDT social work interventions and this additional post would provide double cover which would significantly enhance the service offer, timeliness of interventions and give greater reassurance in terms of staff safety.
- The demand for Mental Health Act assessments and complex mental health interventions has seen an unprecedented growth. This growth has been consistent for the last 16 months. The additional posts will give a greater level of assurance within the Local Authority's duties under the Mental Health Act but there is also a financial impact of not delivering timely assessments and interventions. Where need is not met in the most expedient manner people's mental health conditions become more complex and more entrenched which results in higher costs of care and the delivery of high-cost packages for longer than would have necessarily been the case. The additional capacity will also mean that the individual journey in relation to independence is enhanced resulting in greater value for money and less over-reliance upon commissioned services so there is also a significant element of timeliness of decision making, improved independence and a better use of public resources.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

In terms of the establishment of this post a paper has gone to Members Brief in October 2021 and the Trade Unions were briefed and engaged with in October 2021. The Trade Unions have raised

no issues or objections to the creation this post however they noted there may be reduced over-time opportunities for staff however it has been clarified with the Trade Unions that this approach is a safer and more responsive approach to providing an Emergency Service and that opportunities for additional work on the Emergency Duty Team would still be available. It was clarified with Trade Unions that the focus is on safe staffing levels, crisp decision making and the Council reducing it's reliance upon staff working in the daytime to also provide an out of hours service.

What are the resource implications?

- The Director of Adults and Health has been clearly sighted on the rise in demand and the impact on the workforce and the need to create additional capacity in the form of one post at PO3 level in order to meet the demand in relation to Mental Health Act assessments 24/7, 365 days per year.
- This additional resource will have a direct correlation in terms of the timeliness of undertaking Mental Health Act assessments, any delays in the system could result in emergency admissions to A&E, increase carer breakdown and potentially fatal consequences such as suicide.
- There will be added value for the entire system with reference to the above and greater partnerships with the AMHP service, the Crisis Assessment Service, in-patient wards within LYPFT predominantly and the Section 136 Suite.

What are the legal implications?

- This is a significant operational decision which is not subject to call-in as the annual cost of the service is less than £500k.
- This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information under the Access to Information Rules.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

It is essential that people with the most complex mental health presentations who necessitate an assessment under the Mental Health Act are responded to within a timely manner, which is done on a multi-disciplinary basis. This area of operation is technical and complex and recruiting individuals with the requisite professional qualifications and experience within the management of risk is critical in ensuring a good standard of service delivery and compliance with the law.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

There are no specific implications relating to the Best Council Plan, this is not a response to a change in the law, this proposal centres around the establishment of one additional AMHP post in order for the Council to lawfully execute its duties with regards to the Mental Health Act 1983. However there are a number of key areas within the plan which this approach enhances.

- Safe, Strong Communities
 - a. Keeping people safe from harm, protecting the most vulnerable
- Outcomes
 - a. Be safe and feel safe
 - b. Live with dignity and stay independent for as long as possible

Climate Emergency

There are no specific climate emergency issues to be considered as part of this pilot however there could be climate benefits obtained as the result of how the work is undertaken such as the reduction in the number of vehicles used in order to attend meetings and undertake visits in the city. The maximisation of technology will be optimised and these considerations will be taken into account.

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

None.

b) How will success be measured?

- Timely allocation of Mental Health Act assessments.
- Greater flexibility within the mental health system.
- A reduction in Mental Health Act assessments being transferred from the Emergency Duty time into the daytime AMHP Hub.
- Greater coverage of the EDT rota.
- A greater level of timely mental health interventions and the ability to undertake more creative and least restrictive options.

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

It is envisaged that the recruitment process will commence December 2021.

Appendices

- EIA screening tool.

Background papers

- None.