



Review of counselling services provided by the
Voluntary and Community Sector in Portsmouth,
funded by Portsmouth City Council

Report completed by the Voluntary Sector Team,
Customer, Community and Democratic Services
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Completed with thanks to:

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 A review of counselling services funded by the council and delivered by the Voluntary and Community Sector in Portsmouth was requested by the leader of the Council during the budget setting exercise for 2011/12.

2 Aim of Review

- 2.1 The aim of this review is to ascertain the level of counselling provision in the city, provided by the voluntary sector which is currently being funded by the council. Information is being collated and analysed to inform procurement exercises commencing autumn 2011.
- 2.2 The Counselling review is undertaken as part of pre-budget planning, and aims to reduce the monitoring burden for organisations and ensure that services provide value for money with no duplication.
- 2.3 The Counselling Review and future procurement of these services will aim to ensure the continued provision of high quality services for all Portsmouth residents who access these services. A full EIA will be carried out on completion of this report.

3 Background

- 3.1 The provision of accessible counselling services directly impacts on the well being of the people of Portsmouth. The government is continuing with plans to make psychological therapies more widely available on the NHS as they “have become internationally recognised as effective treatments for common mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety”¹.
- 3.2 Research has found that around 300 people out of 1,000 in Britain will experience mental health problems each year. 230 of these 300 will visit their General Practitioner². In 2011, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates that 207,600 people are resident in Portsmouth³. Using this information it can be estimated that there are over 60,000 people in Portsmouth experiencing mental health problems each year. Of these 46,200 will visit their GP, leaving 13,800 people to access alternative mental health services – including counselling and psychotherapy.
- 3.3 This review does not consider NHS counselling provision. Stephen Corrigan is currently working on improving the primary care psychological interventions pathway for the Integrated Commissioning Unit. He notes the presence of Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations (VCSOs) and concludes that it is *important to acknowledge the interdependent nature of these services in promoting the mental health of the local population*⁴.

4 Methodology

¹ <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Counselling/Pages/Policyguidelines.aspx>.

² <http://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/treatmentstats.html>

Goldberg, D., and Huxley, P. (1992) Common Mental Disorders - A Bio-Social Model.

³ Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Briefing Note Population May 2011: 2008-based sub-national population projections, ONS

⁴ Solent Healthcare Counselling review – Stephen Corrigan 2011

- 4.1 Research identified Voluntary and Community Sector organisations (VCSOs) providing counselling services in Portsmouth, and those who receive funding from Portsmouth City Council (PCC). These services were informed that members had requested a review of PCC funded counselling services and have been involved in the review throughout the process.
- 4.2 The four services completed a survey on their respective service provision. These survey responses have been collated into one report which forms the main body of this review, which can be found at the end of this summary report.

5 Summary of findings

5.1 Service areas receiving funding

- 5.1.1 The table below demonstrates that the four organisations funded by PCC provide services to different client bases, with distinct areas of specialism which are reflected in respective funding streams.

5.1.2 Portsmouth Area Rape Crisis Service (PARCS) provides free specialist counselling and psychotherapy to women and men, aged 13+ who are resident in Portsmouth and South East Hampshire and who have experienced any form of sexual violation at any time in their lives. They provide telephone helpline support, specialist face to face counselling, group therapy, information and signposting to other organisations. PARCS also deliver awareness, education and prevention programmes and have a fundraising arm - Purple Ribbon. PARCS have 30 years experience of working with a highly vulnerable client base.

5.1.3 Portsmouth Counselling Service (PCS) provides affordable and professional counselling to all communities and individuals in Portsmouth, especially vulnerable groups – those suffering poverty and exclusion. PCS provide specialised counselling sessions to anyone who is concerned about their drinking or drug use and run a Drug and Alcohol Therapy Group.

5.1.4 Portsmouth and District Relate (Relate) Relate is the UK's largest provider of relationship counselling and sex therapy. They aim to promote health, respect and justice in couple and family relationships. Clients contribute to the cost of counselling on a means tested basis. Portsmouth and District Relate also provide counselling services to carers adversely affected by their role and families with children under 5 based at the Children's Centres.

5.1.5 Off the Record (South East Hampshire) provide free information, support and counselling for young people aged 11-25. Off The Record is a registered charity and has been supporting young people from Havant, Portsmouth and the surrounding areas since 1977. They have recently been awarded The Queen's Award for Voluntary Services 2011.

- 5.1.6 It is clear that rather than funding four organisations to provide a counselling service, PCC is in fact funding several different service areas of counselling provision. These different areas of service provision have different client bases with different needs and this is reflected in the highly experienced and specialised providers. A single service provider would not be able to offer such specialised skills and experience. A single service premises would not meet the competing demands of the client base – for example some services require single sex provision.

- 5.1.7 Although the organisations deliver services in specific areas, due to the confidential nature of service data, we cannot rule out the possibility that the same person may be accessing more than one service. This may highlight a potential overlap in provision, for example PARCS support people aged thirteen and over and Off the Record support those aged 11-25, or it may be that the individual is accessing services for their different specialisms (for example PARCS in relation to sexual abuse and Off the Record for a different issue).

Current funding arrangements

Provider	Service Area	Funding Source	Amount	Additional funding	How is PCC income spent?
PARCS	Rape/ sexual abuse	Resources Portfolio Voluntary Sector Team	£89,065	See ¹ below £88,105	Salaries for qualified centre director/ psychotherapist admin, counsellors & volunteer coordinator & to support core costs (utilities, insurance, recruiting/ supporting volunteers)
		Community Safety	£2,600		Salaries of Senior counsellor, Young person's counsellor and YP's outreach worker.
		Social Care Integrated Commissioning	£57,890		
		Total	£149,555 = 64% of organisations total income		
PCS	General Counselling	Resources Portfolio Voluntary Sector Team	£33,148	£35,000 (client fees)	Contributes to infrastructure – assessment, training, clinical supervision and rent, admin etc Assists in charging means tested fees
		Transition Fund	£4,000 one off		
	Drug & Alcohol Group work	Social Care Integrated Commissioning	£75,600	See ² below £71,790	Counselling and assessment fees for service delivery, contribution to infrastructure
			£5,200		
		Total	£117,948 = 51% of organisations total income		
Relate	Relationship core service	Resources Portfolio Voluntary Sector Team	£44,659	See ³ below £212,128 Total additional income – used to fund all activities including outside the city	Bursaries for people living in PO1-PO6: sliding scale
		Transition fund	£10,000		Implement new technology re booking system/telephones. Pilot remote delivery methods.
		Housing Management	£9,000		Gift in Kind: Rent of premises, building service charge and utilities
	Carers' Centre	Social Care	£9,479	Counsellor salaries, supervision, training, travel, multiagency meetings, monitoring & marketing.	
	Children's Centre	Children's Services	£2,100	Counsellor salaries, supervision, training, travel, multiagency meetings, monitoring & marketing.	
		Total	£75,238 = 21.5% of organisations total income		
Off the Record	Young People	Resources Portfolio Voluntary Sector Team	£3,000 = free rent (£4,000 PA)	See ⁴ below £72,000	Small contribution to overall running costs of £75,000 for the Fratton Road Service.
		Total	£7,000 = 2% of organisations total income		

¹ PARCS has grants from Children in Need, The Hampshire Police Authority, Hampshire County Council and funding from Ministry of Justice (all funding supports services for Portsmouth and South East Hants. Hampshire funding due to end 2012, Children in Need due to end 2012.

² PCS note that other sources of income e.g. lottery make a contribution towards the provision of infrastructure on the principle of cost recovery but the majority of other income relates directly to expenditure on the funded service eg BAME client counselling. Lottery funding finishes in 2012

³ Income from centre activities, including client contributions, agreements with referring organisations, donations, fees from training and Gift Aid. Also includes funding from charitable trusts, to provide project based activities, delivered wider

than Portsmouth city, such as work in schools (Havant, Fareham and Gosport) and from other local authority areas, to enable operation of outpost counselling services in their boroughs and for clients to access services at the Portsmouth centre. It is imperative to note that this funding supports other local authority residents to access a bursary, subject to the LA area in which they live and if these income sources ceased to be provided, Relate's ability to support clients to access professional services would be diminished.

⁴ Off the Record note that Hampshire and Havant Councils contribute just over £40,000 towards their Havant Service, compared to Portsmouth's £3,000.

5.2 Funding Analysis

5.2.1 PCC currently spends £349,741 via grants, contracts, Service Level Agreements and Gifts in Kind in funding the four organisations. The table above evidences that each of the organisations has additional funding streams, amounting to over £470,000 in total. (This additional funding is used in part to supplement funding for services provided to the council, and also for alternative provisions, for example services outside the city/education schemes.)

5.2.2 This review calculates that the total commercial cost of a company providing these counselling services would be £674,095. It could be argued that PCC therefore makes a total saving of £324,354 (or 48%) in procuring these services from the VCSOs at the current rate of £349,741.

5.2.3 The majority of counselling services funded by PCC are provided to clients for free as bursaries. Two services operate a means tested contribution system (the respective average client contributions are £10 and £24 per session⁵). The average client contribution across the services is therefore £4.86. The average cost to PCC for each session delivered is £27.15⁶. The combined cost to PCC and the client is therefore an average of £32.01 per session. The average commercial cost of a counselling session is £52.86, so a saving of £20.85 per session or 39.4% is made by procuring the services through VCSOs compared to commercial companies.

5.2.4 This saving can be put into further context against PCC spending on counselling for staff. The average cost per session, either face to face or calls to the helpline, based on projected usage is £137.91. Excluding the management fee in this contract the average cost is £75.92 per session. This cost is twice as much as the average cost (to both PCC and the client) of a session provided by the four VCSOs funded by PCC.

5.2.5 The commercial value of the investment made by PCC into the four organisations has been clearly evidenced. The services provided are of a commercial value almost double the cost of funding from PCC. The organisations clearly demonstrate their value for money in service delivery, which needs to be considered in future commissioning exercises.

5.3 Strategic analysis

5.3.1 The provision of counselling services supports the Council's Corporate Priority to *protect and support our most vulnerable residents*⁷. Notably the action under this priority to *provide support services for vulnerable children and vulnerable adults*⁷. The current range of services funded include work targeting drug and alcohol users, victims of sexual abuse, children and young people and ensuring access to services for those who are vulnerable because of social disadvantage (i.e. poverty). The council commission of counselling services also compliments *work with partners to address health issues in the city*⁷ as access to these services are broadened beyond NHS pathways.

⁵ PCS's general counselling service costs each client £10 per session on average and Relate's relationship counselling costs an average of £24 per session.

⁶ See section 9 (page 21) in the Counselling Review Survey Responses report attached

⁷ <http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/yourcouncil/18074.html>

5.3.2 Stephen Corrigan notes in his report the presence of counselling services in addition to those funded via primary care. "Individual patient pathways vary greatly dependent on need and there is frequent cross referral between services"⁸ It was noted that GPs refer clients to VCSOs to avoid waits or access long-term/specialised care. It is clear that there is a need for services that are not being commissioned by Health Services. These services are required to provide for vulnerable residents, and the strong need for such services is evident as each VSCO funded by PCC is currently delivering at or above contractual obligations⁹. Early intervention (for example via counselling) is widely recognised as saving money long term, for example the cost of counselling a couple through relationship difficulties is significantly cheaper than re-housing costs which may otherwise be incurred. In addition to this, the counselling services provided by VCSOs attract benefits in enabling people to be an effective part of the community, including the volunteers they recruit, train, support and develop.

6 Future funding arrangements

- 6.1 This review has identified that the four organisations named within this report receive more than one source of funding from PCC and from across more than one service. This highlights the opportunities for streamlining the managing of these funding agreements and provide improved assurance that value for money is being achieved through reduced contract management, reduced handling of invoices and reduced administrative burden on the providers.
- 6.2 The review further identifies that each organisation delivers services at a different sessional rate, based on funding received and activity levels, which demonstrates that there are likely to be efficiencies through reviewing the procurement and commissioning of these services.
- 6.3 This review recommends that, as part of category management, the Integrated Commissioning Unit review the City Councils use of counselling services whilst ensuring the City Councils commissioning arrangements take account of Health and GP demand and reliance on such services as well as our own.

⁸ Solent Healthcare Counselling review – Stephen Corrigan 2011

⁹ See section 7 (i) (page 14) in the Counselling Review Survey Responses report attached