

**REPORT TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE 11 JUNE 2012**

**REPORT ON: WOMENS INFORMATION ON SECURITY AND HOUSING PROJECT (WISH) - BIG LOTTERY FUND**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING**

**REPORT NO: 224-2012**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1. This report aims to inform the Council of a successful application to the Big Lottery Fund's "Being a Survivor" programme. The successful application is for a "Women's Information on Security and Housing" project (WISH).

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. The Council should note that the Council in partnership with Dundee Women's Aid, Action For Children Scotland and Barnardo's Scotland have been awarded £272,873 over five years.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. The project will be financed by the £272, 873 grant. The Housing Department will provide flexible office accommodation at the East District Housing Office as a contribution in kind. Voluntary sector organisations will provide flexible office accommodation and management support as a contribution in kind. The Dundee Violence Against Women Partnership will provide overall support for the management and delivery of the project as an in-kind contribution.

**4. MAIN TEXT**

- 4.1. The Big Lottery Fund's "Becoming a Survivor" programme aims to provide funding to support people affected by domestic abuse and survivors of domestic abuse. The expected outcomes are that:
- More people who have experienced domestic abuse are in a home of their choice and are more emotionally supported.
  - Survivors of domestic abuse have a greater sense of self worth and emotional wellbeing.
- 4.2. The WISH (Women's Information on Security and Housing) project is a partnership between Dundee City Council, Dundee Women's Aid, Barnardo's Scotland and Action For Children Scotland.

The project will comprise of a Housing options and advice project delivered by a part time development worker and two part time advice workers. The main elements of the project will be:

- Housing advice and information provided by someone with specific expertise in domestic abuse, homelessness and housing
- specialist workers able to refer for free legal advice and with resources to fund civil orders that are needed to progress housing options
- specialist workers able to access home safety/security provision
- specific referral routes to existing support services to ensure that wider support needs are met
- training of existing workers who are already involved in giving housing information and advice to ensure an enhanced level of knowledge about specific legislation and options for women experiencing domestic abuse and
- review of public information about domestic abuse and housing options.

4.3. Year one (2012/13) of the project will focus on setting up, years 2, 3 and 4 will concentrate on delivery and training, year 5 will concentrate on mainstreaming the service (i.e. ensuring that Housing and voluntary sector staff have the expertise, knowledge and resources to continue).

4.4. Consultation with service users and partner agencies in Autumn 2011 showed that there are clear links that can be made to a range of local services already operating in order to develop comprehensive provision for the target group:

- That the potential for the project to enhance responses to domestic abuse amongst existing staff is significant and much needed. Whilst staff in mainstream services have significant knowledge and skills their confidence in applying these to domestic abuse cases could be enhanced with supportive staff development approaches.
- That there are significant gaps in relation to providing information about and access to housing options other than those in the social sector. There needs to be enhanced engagement with private landlords and the systems to support owner occupiers.
- That the focus of the project should be on early intervention and seeking to divert crisis referrals (self or agency). To make a real difference the project needs to work with women at the earliest possible stage and for this reason needs to link up with frontline service providers most likely to identify women (for example, A&E, police etc).

4.5. The WISH Project will also make a significant contribution to the achievement of the Dundee Violence Against Women Partnership Strategic Plan 2011-14 service delivery outcomes:

- Women, children and young people in Dundee experiencing violence against women feel safer.
- Women, children and young people in Dundee experiencing violence against women are healthier (physically and mentally).

- 4.6. Overall, those who were consulted felt the project represented a much needed and strong development within the local area. The potential to support prevention work with the high number of victims resident in the local area was thought to be significant and the proposed project design was seen to be focused on partnership working, therefore ensuring shared and lasting benefits across all stakeholders.

5. **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.
- 5.2. There are no major issues.

6. **CONSULTATIONS**

- 6.1. The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services and all other Chief Officers have been consulted on the preparation of this report. No concerns were expressed.

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1. None.

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**30 MAY, 2012**