

**CABINET MEETING – 14 MARCH 2024**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I**

**Title of Report:**

Grant Funding to Third Sector organisations providing social care related services

**Author(s):**

Report of the Director of Adult Services

**Purpose of Report:**

To seek approval to award funding to Third Sector organisations providing social care related services.

**Description of Decision:**

Cabinet is requested to:

1. approve the award of:
  - a) grant funding for 2024/2025 of £107,441 to Sunderland People First, who are a self-advocacy group for people with learning disabilities and autism; and
  - b) grant funding for 2024/2025 of £132,205 to Washington Mind, who are the lead partner in a consortium with Sunderland Mind and Sunderland Headlight, providing a My Life Support project to people with mental health needs.and
2. authorise the Director of Adult Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Healthy City and the Director of Finance to determine and award grant funding to the above organisations for 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 subject to funding being available within the approved budget.

**Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework?      Yes**

**If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework**

**Suggested reason(s) for Decision:**

The Council continues to support the important work of Sunderland People First (SPF). A lack of continued funding would be detrimental to not only the organisation and those

it employs, but to people with learning disabilities and autism, who require a locally based, independent self-advocacy group.

The grant funding requested will also sustain the My Life Support Project, which is provided by a consortium of local mental health organisations, led by Washington Mind. Without the funding, the project would either need to reduce capacity, meaning less people would benefit from the support or the project would cease, which would impact on the health and well-being of the people it supports.

**Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected**

**Do not provide funding to SPF** - this option is rejected. Funding from the Council ensures the continued delivery of the organisation's objectives and contributes to the overall sustainability of the organisation.

**Do not provide funding to Washington Mind, who are the lead consortium partner in the My Life Support Project** – this option is rejected. Without continued funding, the My Life Support project would either need to reduce capacity, meaning less people would benefit from the support or the project may cease, which would impact on the health and well-being of the people it supports.

**Impacts analysed;**

Equality  Privacy  Sustainability  Crime and Disorder

**Is the Decision consistent with the Council's Co-Operative Values? Yes**

**Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes**

**Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions? Yes**

## **CABINET – 14 MARCH 2024**

### **GRANT FUNDING TO THIRD SECTOR ORGANISATIONS PROVIDING SOCIAL CARE RELATED SERVICES**

#### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SERVICES**

##### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek approval to award funding in the form of a grant to third sector organisations providing social care related services.

##### **2. DESCRIPTION OF DECISION (RECOMMENDATIONS)**

- 2.1 Cabinet is requested to:

1. approve the award of:

a) grant funding for 2024/2025 of £107,441 to Sunderland People First, who are a self-advocacy group for people with learning disabilities and autism; and

b) grant funding for 2024/2025 of £132,205 to Washington Mind, who are the lead partner in a consortium with Sunderland Mind and Sunderland Headlight, providing a My Life Support project to people with mental health needs.

and

2. authorise the Director of Adult Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Healthy City and the Director of Finance to determine and award grant funding to the above organisations for 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 subject to funding being available within the approved budget.

##### **3. SUNDERLAND PEOPLE FIRST (SPF)**

###### **3.1 Introduction/Background**

- 3.1.1 Sunderland People First (SPF), who are a self-advocacy group for people with learning disabilities and autism, are a community interest company (CIC) that independently represents and campaigns on behalf people with learning disabilities. They originated and are still based in Sunderland.
- 3.1.2 SPF was originally established in 1994 and until 2014 the group was an in-house Council ran day service for people with learning disabilities. In 2013/2014, as part of the Council's then strategic drive to establish alternative models of service delivery the decision was made to set up SPF as an independent company and the Council took the lead on this, working with external advisors.
- 3.1.3 As a result, SPF was set up and registered with Companies House as a social enterprise, in the form of a Co-operative Community Interest Company and staff

from the Council TUPE transferred to the new Company, taking on the legal responsibility for the running of the company and the delivery of its business.

- 3.1.4 By the nature of SPF being a Cooperative CIC, this means that its Board of Directors are employees of the organisation, which includes people with a learning disability and autism. The Company offers opportunities, for paid and unpaid roles, for people with learning disabilities and autism to become Advocates who take forward the work of SPF. It is people with learning disabilities and autism who have real lived experiences, working on behalf of people with learning disabilities and autism to make positive and important changes.
- 3.1.5 As part of the agreements for externalising SPF from the Council, grant funding was given to SPF to ensure the sustainability of the organisation and to provide it with the financial stability to enable it to build capacity and grow so it could continue deliver on its important aims and objectives.
- 3.1.6 The Council has continued to provide funding to SPF to enable the organisation to continue to carry out its important and valuable work representing; championing and campaigning for the rights of people with a learning disability and autism to make sure that they are seen as equal citizens in society; that they have their voices heard so that they can have the best life; access to and experience of services that they can and that their rights are promoted and upheld.
- 3.1.7 SPF are involved in work locally, regionally and nationally and a brief example of vast amount of the work that SPF does and is involved in includes:
- **Training:** SPF design and deliver disability awareness training to a range of audiences such as health and social care staff; people with learning disabilities and autism; universities, schools the NHS and health and social care providers. The training delivered aims to raise the profile of the needs of people with disabilities and autism, improve their lives and improve the services they access. Learning Disability Awareness Training has been provided to Cumbria, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear NHS Trust. SPF have worked with Sunderland and South Tyneside Foundation Trust to create training for Junior Doctors and have created with partners Be Cancer Aware and to inform people of the signs of cancer and where to go to for support and advise. To help people with a learning disability and the people who support them understand about the screen process and to know where to go to for support and advice.
  - **Easy Read Information:** The production of Easy Read information which makes written information accessible in an easy read version for people with learning disabilities, including documents for Sunderland Safeguarding Adults Board (Whorlton Hall).
  - **Research programmes** with several universities for Sheffield, Manchester, Warwick, Bristol
  - **Wellbeing –** Diego's drop in sessions held monthly this is an opportunity for people with a learning disability and autistic people to come to a safe space to meet other people in a supportive environment.

## 3.2 Current Position

- 3.2.1 SPF are funded via a grant until 31 March 2024. The Council continues to support the important work that SPF does. A lack of continued funding would be detrimental to not only the organisation and those it employs, but to people with learning disabilities and autism, who would require a locally based, independent self-advocacy group.
- 3.2.2 Cabinet approval is sought to award a grant of £107,441 to support the organisation in the delivery of this work.
- 3.2.3 SPF provide quarterly monitoring returns to the Council on how the funding has been spent, along with an annual update report detailing the work that they have carried out. These monitoring arrangements will continue throughout the period of funding.

## 4. MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES – MY LIFE SUPPORT PROJECT

### 4.1 Introduction/Background

- 4.1.1 In 2017 funding was made available through Strengthening Families to develop and sustain capacity within local organisations to provide support and services to people with mental health needs.
- 4.1.2 Washington Mind, Sunderland Mind and Sunderland Headlight, who are all locally based voluntary sector specialist mental health charities, came together as a partnership to offer the My Life Support Project, with Washington Mind as the lead delivery partner.
- 4.1.3 Bringing together each organisation's own specialist expertise and core service offers, the project promotes practical help with day to day living that people with mental health problems often need in order to stay well and live a full life. This includes the additional social support that they are likely to need in connection with their mental health problem; support that can be crucial in keeping people in the community and out of costly secondary care. The project provides people with information, advice, support and guidance which are essential factors in service users developing capacity to problem solve and reduce risk of relapse.
- 4.1.4 The types of activities and support the project offers includes:
- **Listening Ear Project** which offers a range of support.
  - **Emotional Support** - listening and emotional support to those service users who are feeling unwell and in crisis and signposts them to appropriate support.
  - **Brief Interventions** - structured conversations around specific topics or experiences to motivate positive change and encourage recovery e.g. Self Esteem.
  - **Regular Wellbeing Calls** - Biweekly or monthly calls to check in and see how the service user is doing.

- **Social support** - support with building confidence to engage with groups through a graded exposure approach.
- **One-to-one support sessions** for people struggling with problems that are having an effect on their mental health. Including issues such as marriage breakdown, losing independence due to ill health, managing finance, dealing with family's medical.
- **Connecting with and providing support to service users in a range of ways**, including social sessions, check in calls, chat calls, listening sessions, advice sessions.
- **Physical activity sessions** including, Megs Move, Trimmed Toned Toddlers and Flow to Sow Yoga. The programme is fully inclusive from mums with toddlers, over 50's and those with disabilities.
- **Drama Groups** - gives adults the opportunity to raise their confidence and self-esteem through an activity that they would not have previously accessed.
- **Signposting** individuals to other organisations and services in the local area to help their mental health and wellbeing.

4.1.5 The funding provided by the Council contributes to the sustainability of this important project which supports people to stay well, healthy and independent. Without the funding, the projects would either need to reduce capacity, meaning less people would benefit from the support or the projects may cease, which would impact on the health and well-being of the people it supports.

## 4.2 Current Position

4.2.1 My Life Support is funded via a grant to Washington Mind as the consortium lead partner until 31 March 2024. The Council continues to support the important work of the project and recognises that without continued funding the project would either need to reduce capacity, meaning less people would benefit from the support or the project may cease, which would impact on the health and well-being of the people it supports.

4.2.2 Cabinet approval is being sought to award £132,205 to support the delivery of the project.

4.2.3 Washington Mind, as project lead, provide quarterly monitoring returns to the Council on how the funding has been spent, along with an annual update report detailing the work that they have carried out. These monitoring arrangements will continue throughout the period of funding.

## 5. Reasons for the Decision

- 5.1 The Council continues to support the important work that Sunderland People First (SPF) does. A lack of continued funding would be detrimental to not only the organisation and those it employs, but to people with learning disabilities and autism, who require a locally based, independent self-advocacy group.
- 5.2 The funding provided by the Council contributes to the sustainability of the My Life Support Project, which is provided by a consortium of local mental health organisations, led by Washington Mind. Without the funding, the project would either need to reduce capacity, meaning less people would benefit from the support or the project would cease, which would impact on the health and well-being of the people it supports.

## 6. Alternative Options

- 6.1 **Do not provide funding to SPF** - this option is rejected. Funding from the Council ensures the continued delivery of the organisation's objectives and contributes to the overall sustainability of the organisation.
- 6.2 **Do not provide funding to Washington Mind, who are the lead consortium partner in the My Life Support Project** – this option is rejected. Without continued funding, the My Life Support project would either need to reduce capacity, meaning less people would benefit from the support or the project would cease, which would impact on the health and well-being of the people it supports.

## 7. Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations

- 7.1 **Co-operative Values:** Sunderland City Council is a co-operative Council and will act ethically in all its actions whilst adhering to and actively promoting its co-operative values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. These values will underpin our decision making and actions.
- 7.2 **Financial Implications:** The financial implications are outlined in the main body of the report with the proposed grants for 2024/2025 being met from the Adult Social Care revenue budget. Subsequent grant awards for 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 will be agreed in consultation with the Director of Finance and subject to funding being available within the approved budget.
- 7.3 **Legal Implications:**
- 7.3.1 In accordance with Part 4, Section 7 of the Council's Financial Procedure Rules (FPR16 Payment of Grants and Benefits) approval of Cabinet must be sought before Chief Officers provide assistance to any third party by way of loan, grant or guarantee of over £50,000 to any one body in any one financial year.

### 7.3.2 Subsidy Consideration:

- The financial assistance by way of grants to the two has been considered with reference to the Subsidy Control Act 2022. It is considered, the financial assistance offered to each organisation does not meet the definition of a subsidy under the Act on the basis they are not an enterprise as they carry out primarily non-economic activities with only some small, ancillary economic activity.
- In respect to the persons accessing the services via Washington Mind's My Life Support Project, all support services are provided free of charge on entry and the services are not offered within a specified market.
- SPF do not offer services within a market but instead their work involves representing; championing and campaigning for the rights of people with a learning disability and autism to make sure that they are seen as equal citizens in society.
- The terms of the financial assistance being offered to both organisations will be ring-fenced for use within its non-economic activities only.