

Subject: Tricky Period Project Update

Report to: Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee – 17 October 2019

Report by: Michelle de Oude, Neighbourhoods That Work Project Co-ordinator

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. To approve DIAL taking over the lead partner role enabling the project to develop and attract external funding**
- 2. To transfer the remainder of the project budget to DIAL**

1. BACKGROUND

Earlier this year the council agreed funding of £5,000 to tackle period poverty in the borough. Following agreement of a proposed partnership approach, the Tricky Period Project was launched in April. Its aim was to tackle the issue of 'period poverty' through provision of free sanitary products via a number of distribution points across Great Yarmouth and Gorleston. Promotional materials and vouchers were produced, and several distribution points were agreed and supplied with stocks of free products for distribution on presentation of a voucher. The project is now being developed into its next stage.

2. PROJECT UPDATE

2.1. The project launched in April this year with the following list of partners acting as distribution points:

- DIAL
- Salvation Army
- Great Yarmouth Library
- MESH Neighbourhood Office
- Comeunity Neighbourhood Office
- GYBC Reception Greyfriars House
- Minster and Minster Mission
- CAB/Revolutionary Roots
- MAP (Great Yarmouth)

2.2. To date the project has used £406 (made up of £108 for publicity materials and £298 for purchase of stock). Although Tesco's were able to donate a small amount of products, this was not enough to ensure that each distribution point was able to supply the same type of provision. Using In-Kind direct was also explored (this is a national charity that can provide free products) but again not enough could be secured and there was additional administrative burden on each voluntary sector

partner who would use this service. Therefore products have been purchased direct from a wholesaler.

- 2.3 There was also an issue raised by one partner that the quality of the purchased products was questionable. After working with the partner, it was agreed that this is a pilot project, and that when the next batch of products is purchased a more expensive product will be explored but this has to be balanced with the need to try and ensure that the project overall helps as many people as possible, so spend needs to be carefully considered. This issue will be taken into account when the next batch purchase is made. The partner also recognized that any donated products (e.g. to the Salvation Army or the Library) are donated, and thus the brand cannot be chosen by the recipient organisation.

- 2.4. Take up of free products has been increasing since the project began with current distribution figures as follows:

- DIAL = 30 packs
- Salvation Army = 10 packs (approximate figures as they use their own stock)
- Library = 20 packs (approximate figures as they use their own stock)
- CAB / Revolutionary Roots = numbers not available
- Greyfriars House = 30 packs
- Comeunity and MESH = 0 packs
- MAP = 2 packs

Total distribution to date is approximately 92 packs. The project has received very positive engagement via social media channels.

- 2.5. There have been some key lessons learnt as a result of launching Tricky Period:

- Demand was higher than the project partnership thought it might be initially and that demand was not coming from the expected venues (the Library and the Salvation Army) but from DIAL and the Minster.
- Other needs were identified for example, a lack of access to continence management products
- Feedback from some users of the service on the quality of products
- There needs to be outreach 'give out' services to other groups that will reach more women e.g. from different nationalities and disabled women as well as continuing to use fixed collection points
- Project promotion via social media was more effective than posters but posters are still necessary in some locations (and not just at the distribution points themselves).
- The voucher scheme clearly results in higher take-up but it means we capture less information about the beneficiaries, this needs to be considered in the next phase of project development otherwise it would be difficult to demonstrate reach.
- There is a lack of join-up in the borough between projects supporting vulnerable / marginalised women and girls especially related to health and well-being issues.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1. In order to have a stronger impact, it is proposed that DIAL take over as the lead delivery partner for the project. DIAL, as a registered charity, can access external

funding that the council cannot. DIAL has proven reach to many vulnerable women and girls through its advice services and partnership projects (including Neighbourhoods that Work). They are also well embedded with local networks and with partner organisations, meaning that the project can continue with much better opportunities for continuation and development.

- 3.2. Another round of promotional materials and sanitary product stock will be purchased to enable sufficient stock to last a number of months allowing time for external funding to be explored. DIAL have already submitted a bid to the Tampon Tax fund for £10,000, which if successful, and coupled with the remainder of the project funds from the council, DIAL and keen to explore the establishment of a women and girls health and well-being project co-ordinator post, hosted at DIAL for a day a week initially. This person's role will be to continue to run Tricky Period, develop new projects e.g. a menopause support group and promoting access to better gynecological health for women and girls including work to boost the chlamydia screening rate which is lower than the county average in Great Yarmouth, engaging more with schools and young people's services, and developing skill development and capacity-building opportunities for women and girls as part of these projects that can then lead them into volunteering, paid employment and improved life chances.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Another batch of promotional materials and vouchers will be produced and another quantity of stock will be purchased, at an approximate cost of £500. The remaining project budget will be transferred to DIAL (approximately £4k) to develop and continue the project.

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

The main risk would be DIAL not being able to obtain any additional development funding beyond the initial £4,000 from the council. This risk will be mitigated by DIAL receiving continued support in terms of project management and staff time from the Neighbourhoods and Communities team, who have expertise in project management and development and securing funding for voluntary sector-based projects.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. To approve DIAL taking over the lead partner role enabling the project to develop and attract external funding**
- 2. To transfer the remainder of the project budget to DIAL**

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Yes
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Yes
Existing Council Policies:	No
Financial Implications (including VAT and tax):	Yes

Legal Implications (including human rights):	No
Risk Implications:	Yes
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	Yes
Crime & Disorder:	No
Every Child Matters:	Yes