**People affected by substance use and homelessness**

**Tests of change – Scoping Exercise**

**Project Title**

Safe Zone

**Situation**

TCA currently provides a range of services across the Tayside area. These are summarised in our business plan, as per the extract below

*Our current service provision can be grouped under 4 themes:*

* *Children Affected by Parental Substance Use (CAPSM): this includes the flagship Kith’n’Kin Project which supports children and their carers living in Kinship Care arrangements due to parental substance misuse. In developing our services TCA is fully committed to a ‘Whole Family Approach’. This necessitates an awareness of the impact not just on the person with the presenting problem, but on children and other members of the family network too. We are embedding this approach across all service areas.*
* *Youthwork, Prevention and Early Intervention: TCA has been delivering services to children and young people since 1996. We have established an excellent reputation for developing creative ways to engage with vulnerable, disaffected, marginalised or challenging groups. Programmes such as The Witches Project, LinkUP/Plusone mentoring and our on-going groups (Klub, Boost and Crew) support children/young people to overcome barriers to successful transition into adulthood such as disengagement from education or training; risk taking, challenging, anti-social or offending behaviour; family or parenting problems such as substance misuse, domestic violence, mental well-being; or their own use of alcohol or other substances.*

*Prevention and early intervention activity should be seen as traversing the lifespan. TCA is a lead provider of this across Tayside and has championed the drive to see this as not simply located within the children/young person domain. TCA is the lead partner behind the Safezone Bus, which supports individuals requiring assistance as they enjoy the night-time economy in central Dundee. We regularly participate and indeed lead prevention and awareness raising campaigns aimed at the general adult population and have been at the forefront of activity aimed at the older population. Of course, we are also a leading provider of prevention/ early intervention provision for young people, leading successful projects such as Highland Perthshire Peer Education and the Friday Nite Projects in Angus.*

* *Counselling and Creative Therapies: this incorporates our Adult Alcohol Counselling Service but extends to include the other forms of therapeutic interventions offered by TCA – Art Therapy, Play Therapy and Family Group Work. This is an area ripe for development over the next few years with plans in place to develop counselling services for children and young people as well as further develop our specialism in alcohol/substance use counselling interventions and work with whole families.*
* *Mentoring, Befriending and Support Services: with a mix of paid and volunteer mentors this stream supports 3 distinct target groups – vulnerable, disadvantaged or disengaged children aged 8-18 years; young men aged 16+ involved with the Criminal Justice System and women aged 16 and over, also involved with the Criminal Justice System.*

The range of service provision varies across the different local authority areas. Within Dundee we deliver:

* Counselling and Creative therapies for adults affected in any way primarily by alcohol use but not excluding other substance and addictive behaviours e.g. gambling
* Counselling for children and young people affected by substance use
* Group programmes for adults, children and young people: these include peer support and mutual aid models as well as thematic/ activity based groups
* Delivery of the Pause programme for vulnerable women
* Delivery of a mentoring for men and women only mentoring for adults involved in the justice system
* Family group sessions for families/significant others affected by alcohol/substance use
* Support for kinship families affected by substance use
* Peer mentoring SVQ
* Safe Zone Outreach
* Mentoring for vulnerable children and young people
* Advice, information and educational sessions as requested
* COSCA counselling skills training (note this is fee paying)
* Employer referral scheme and provision of supplementary report to the Scottish Courts Services (both are chargeable services)

**Background**

This test of change aims to address some of the issues faced by individuals and families in terms of access to services. Accessibility issues were highlighted during the recent period of national lockdown. The barriers that have been cited are practical issues such as opening hours, travel, waiting lists or simply being unaware of what help is available and psychological such as feeling judged, unwelcome, lacking confidence to make contact/ask for help or being fearful of the consequences of acknowledging problems/ issues (e.g. fear of initiating child protection processes). These issues are widely accepted and have been drawn from feedback from services and service users.

The work of Safe Zone is overseen by a project steering group constituted of partner organisations including Transform, DHSC Community Nursing Team and ISMS.

Safe Zone has been delivering an outreach service on a Saturday evening in Lochee since April 2020. A second evening in the Stobswell/Hilltown area was introduced in August. This was initially as a response to the lockdown and the associated temporary closure/reduction in accessibility of many essential community based services. However, continued uptake of this provision indicates there is a demand for a service which reaches out to different geographical communities.

**Proposal**

**Proposal 1:**

We believe that there remains a need for a flexible, agile outreach into the geographical communities across Dundee to support early engagement with health and social care services for those who find it difficult to engage with current referral or access processes. This is a group who are often labelled ‘hard to engage’. We propose to continue with the Friday/Saturday evening Safe Zone outreach, developing this as a link to signpost, support and, where needed, ‘buddy’ individuals into the right service.

**Proposal 2:**

The Safe Zone Bus will be deployed to Charleston and Menzieshill on a Sunday afternoon. The aim of this is to broaden the scope to target families and young people still with the aim of offering a bridge into appropriate helping services.

Both proposals would test a staffing model based on trained volunteers including peer mentors, supported by a Team Leader. It is anticipated that the partner organisations would continue to contribute staff time on a more limited basis to retain a level of expertise/specialism.

Both proposals are fundamentally about engaging with individuals and families who, historically, do not engage with services until they reach crisis point. A key element of the volunteer/peer mentor role is to build a trusting relationship enabling positive engagement at an early intervention or preventative level, thus preventing the need for crisis response.