



## Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Rape Crisis Centre – Extension of Funding
Date:	12 November 2008
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### Relevant Background Information

Belfast City Council fund generalist advice through 5 area based consortiums with all members of these consortiums being affiliated to Advice NI or Citizens Advice.

The Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre (RC&SAC) applied for Advice funding in Feb 06 and were turned down on the following points:

- They provide specialist Advice and are therefore not a generalist provider
- They are not affiliated to Advice NI or Citizens Advice

The following appeal was also rejected; the Community and Recreation Committee of 17<sup>th</sup> October supported the decision not to offer the RC&SAC Advice grant aid. However due to extenuating circumstances, notably the withdrawal of central government funding, Council agreed to offer the RC&SAC support in terms of:

- Financial assistance £14,600 for 2 years 06/07 and 07/08
- Advice to help them overcome their administrative difficulties

This support was given in order to allow the RC&SAC to address the concerns raised by the Department of Health and to give them time to prepare for them to re apply for Department of Health funding.

### Key Issues

Community Services Officers have met with the RC&SAC to offer support and guidance however the group have made little progress in addressing their administrative and financial difficulties.

In spite of BCC funding, the group are now insolvent. The last audited accounts covering the period 2006/07 note that:

“The company incurred a net loss of £30,619.00 with the company’s current liabilities exceeding its total assets by £58,662.00”

No accounts are available for subsequent years due to a lack of funds to pay the auditor.

Due to the Development Department Grant Review, Community Services Advice grants are not open for application. Furthermore, the reasons why the RC&SAC were initially rejected still apply: that they offer specialist advice and that they are not a member of either Advice NI or Citizens Advice.

### **Resource Implications**

#### **Financial Implications**

Funding for 06/07 and 07/08 was given at a level of £14,600 per annum.

RC&SAC are seeking that this level of funding be continued for 08/09 to supplement their basic annual running costs of £24,500 (see Appendix 1).

### **Recommendations**

The BCC funding that was provided for the 2 year period (£14,600/year), did enable RC&SAC to provide a service, however they have not made any progress in addressing their initial administrative difficulties.

A considerable amount of debt, in the region of £58,662 as at April 2007, has also been accrued with the group now considered insolvent.

The group are still judged to be ineligible for BCC Advice Funding for the same reasons as in 2006:

- They provide specialist Advice and are therefore not a generalist provider
- They are not affiliated to Advice NI or Citizens Advice

It is therefore recommended that the RC&SAC do not receive any further BCC funding.

### **Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 - Officer Report into the RC&SAC carried out in October 2008

Appendix 2 - RC&SAC response to Department of Health’s original report into the funding for the RC&SAC.

Appendix 3 - DHSS Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) press statement

Appendix 4 - DHSS Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) action plan

### **Abbreviations**

RC&SAC – Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre