

PE1596/U

Wellbeing Scotland submission of 21 June 2019

Please include the previous submission by Wellbeing Scotland on 17th April 2018.

Unfortunately, many of the concerns reported in that submission have not improved and in fact continue to be problematic.

Rather than repeat our previous submission we will provide an update on the issues expressed to us by the survivors we represent, and we will highlight professional concerns that we feel must be addressed.

Summary

We will set out in this submission the experience of our organisation and our service, In Care Survivors Scotland Service (ICSSS), explaining our interaction with Future Pathways. This is to give the Committee a window into wider issues that they may consider exist in respect of the policies driving the day to day management and delivery of what is a flag ship service provided by the Scottish Government to support survivors of abuse in care.

It is well recognised that Future Pathway's waiting list is far too long. It is dangerously long. Despite this, there seems to be a lack of willingness to utilise the expert trauma specialist service providers such as Wellbeing Scotland. There seems to be an overuse of Future Pathway's own co-ordinators; who are potentially providing support for which they are not qualified. On one level this seems to be because Future Pathways take a very bureaucratic approach to their relationships with service providers. At the same time they seem to have favoured service providers who receive a disproportionately large number of referrals.

All of this, in our opinion, indicates that the significant public funds being invested in the services currently coordinated by Future Pathways could be more efficiently utilised by them adopting a more open approach to working with service providers such as Wellbeing Scotland. In particular in respect that the unit cost for services by some service providers are significantly less than others and significantly less than Future Pathways itself.

Referrals

Future Pathways have made less than ten referrals to Wellbeing Scotland since they started in September 2016. The majority of referrals have been directed to a private counselling network established by Health in Mind, Resolve. This is a profit-making social enterprise. Wellbeing Scotland provide evidence-based specialist trauma support to people abused in care with ten years' experience. It has been repeatedly highlighted by survivors that they do not want to repeat their experiences. Building trust is vital and the model of ICSSS is highly regarded due to offering many aspects of support together (counselling, advocacy, informal support, EMDR, groups). Other services offer CBT which has been found by research not to be effective in working with complex trauma. Wellbeing Scotland have a lower unit cost and they are funded by the Scottish Government to provide services to survivors of abuse so this

would appear not to be an appropriate allocation of public funds. It does not make sense that referrals would not be directed to an organisation with so much experience, valued by survivors.

One of the main issues reported to us by survivors is that they have been provided with a number of organisations to connect with. They find this approach very confusing and stressful.

Our workers have been informed by clients and have in fact witnessed in meetings that support co-ordinators have encouraged clients to access private counselling or attend the Anchor when they are already receiving counselling by Wellbeing Scotland. Clients have felt pressured and afraid to say no in case it would then affect their opportunity to access practical support from the fund.

Future Pathways have stated that clients must have the opportunity to choose what support they access. However, Wellbeing Scotland ICSSS service are not being presented as a choice and potential support is being directed by support co-ordinators.

It should be noted that we have been receiving referrals for access to records as part of the redress process, but Future Pathways have insisted that support should be restricted to access to records when referrals are submitted. For many survivors the process may be challenging, and it is essential when accessing records to have the opportunity of trauma specialist support. By referrals going through Future Pathways rather than straight to Wellbeing Scotland there is an additional layer for survivors to go through and potential delay to them receiving the advance payment.

Future Pathways had a long waiting list of over a year which has led to them recruiting a large number of new staff rather than deal with the systemic issues causing the backlog (costs highlighted below). If Future Pathways enabled the specialist abuse organisations across Scotland to work with new referrals, particularly to ensure stabilisation and risk reduction, the waiting list would be eradicated. The Child Abuse Inquiry have a policy to refer to Future Pathways as do the police despite other specialist agencies having an improved response rate and long-standing experience. This promotion of Future Pathways also means that specialist abuse agencies will rely on them for referrals and as stated above these referrals are being blocked. The potential longer term impact would be to lose those organisations due to them not having survivors to work with. That would lead to the outcome the petitioner is campaigning against.

Model

Some clients value the support from Future Pathways and the opportunity to access funding for a wide range of needs is valued. There have been some significant outcomes and positive mutual decisions on how the support fund should be utilised. We believe that a support fund is of value to survivors. However, the model of distribution of the support fund is disempowering and humiliating for many. The process of a personal outcomes conversation is very demeaning for many clients who feel very able to make their own decisions. The model emerged from the field of disability and self-directed support. As professionals in the field have highlighted,

survivors are victims of crime, they are not ill. Models of mental health are also not relevant to many survivors. Survivors have highlighted to their workers that they find the IROC evaluation tool also to be demeaning. It is similar to the wellbeing web used for children.

Bringing in a brokerage and commissioning service is not relevant to access of therapeutic services as the Survivor Policy team fund a range of Scotland wide services who survivors can access directly. Survivors could have been seen while waiting for the support fund, reducing risk and providing support but instead Future Pathways choose not to refer on. The specialist support agencies would be better placed to provide assessment and stabilisation support due to their long standing experience while Future Pathways are only three years old as a service. To enable a new service to control this process has been a significant error, borne out by clients who have been stable returning to suicidal ideation.

Data Sharing/ GDPR

Confidentiality has been vital for our service to enable survivors to trust us. Future Pathways required a great deal of information on clients on an individualised basis. We continually raised concerns re data protection and confidentiality. We wrote to all of our clients and the majority did not give permission for information to be shared with Future Pathways even if they were receiving a service from both services. Therefore, we could not comply with the Future Pathways provider contract and we are surprised that any organisation felt they could. Under GDPR informed consent is vital. To alleviate any concerns as we received an email suggesting clients may not be 'real people' we suggested a full audit of claims by the Scottish Government where we also invited audit of our systems and processes. This has now taken place twice.

Relationships

The above is an example where there has been a lack of respect towards our organisation and a power dynamic where Future Pathways make it clear they control the process. This is not conducive to positive partnership working. Our CEO has been to meet the Future Pathways team and the two teams met together. This did not lead to any improvements.

Practice Issues

We have raised a number of serious concerns about Future Pathways and the risk to survivors with the Scottish Government due to our requirement to ensure safeguarding. Future Pathways responded to these very serious concerns by saying the block of referrals was due to practice issues with Wellbeing Scotland. This was a deflection of what should have been addressed. When pushed to say what the alleged practice issues were they were the response was unclear and unevicenced. Essentially it was heresay. It raised further concerns that rather than Future Pathways learn from the concerns raised they chose to further block improvement in relationships.

Finance

To broker and commission services that can be accessed directly has become a very high cost model. The number of staff have been increased to 20 support co-ordinators as highlighted in a recent recruitment for two practice learning managers. These practice learning managers are on a higher salary level than the average Scottish CEO salary. All of Future Pathways salaries are significantly higher than voluntary sector equivalents. Salary costs for this increased structure to reduce waiting lists will now cost approx. £1,420,236. Wellbeing Scotland have £300,000 funding from the Scottish Government and for that we are able to provide a wide range of responsive services with highly qualified staff. With the additional high administration costs the total cost of having this additional layer is approx. £1,663,739. The Anchor centre costs have been £121,416 (up to December 2018) Previous statistics from Future Pathways reports indicated a unit cost of £292 per hour. ICSSS unit cost is £43 per hour. Resolve is £50 per session.

In summary the cost of putting an additional layer and potentially barrier in place for survivors is around £1,800,000. Funding for five years is £13.5 m, equating to £2.7m per annum. Therefore £900,000 will be available for survivors. With previous service commissioning costs being £489,869 the amount remaining for the support fund would be just over £400,000 without an increase in budget.

(Future Pathways Quarterly reports and recruitment advertisements)

Conclusion

Wellbeing Scotland raised both safety and financial concerns when the decision was taken to develop this new model. Survivors were anxious they would lose their valued support through Wellbeing Scotland ICSSS service and others. Unfortunately, those concerns have been realistic. The most appropriate way forward would be through appropriate funding for the survivor support organisations. This should be long term, realistic and sustainable. All therapeutic support should be provided directly by those organisations with survivors choosing which to access, being given full information. Future Pathways should be restricted to allocation of the support fund with survivors making the decision on their needs unless there are circumstances where they would value help. One of the arguments for the personal outcomes conversations was to support survivors to access funds that would lead to the most sustainable outcomes. In reality the support provided has been for mostly practical, easily identified needs.

Possible Actions

All appropriate partners (Child Abuse Inquiry, Police, Confidential Forum) should highlight the wide range of support organisations to allow survivors to choose.

Funding should not be dependent on registration with Future Pathways.

Future Pathways should run alongside the specialist support organisations to administer the support fund (only the financial aspects) with reduced infrastructure costs and increased distribution of funds directly to survivors. This will remove the hierarchical relationship and potential of GDPR breaches. Support organisations could assist survivors in claiming.

We hope that the petitions committee will continue the petition until the above issues are resolved. All of the above is backed up by evidence from our clients, reports and correspondence.

Questions for Future Pathways

- 1) How many referrals for counselling, advocacy, informal support, groups and access to records (excluding the redress scheme) have been made to Wellbeing Scotland since 2016.
- 2) How many Future Pathways clients are/ were also clients of Wellbeing Scotland with Wellbeing Scotland making the referrals to Future Pathways?
- 3) Why do Future Pathways exclude Wellbeing Scotland when recommending counselling service to clients despite the evidence of success of the service? Why do they instead promote a private counselling new service without an evidence base?
- 4) Wellbeing Scotland repeatedly offered to support clients on the waiting list? Why did this not happen?
- 5) Future Pathways explained that everyone was required to have a personal outcomes conversation and yet some survivors have phoned and been allocated money from the fund. Some survivors have been offered large sums and repeated answers to requests while others have been refused. Why is there this inconsistency?
- 6) How much will the support fund be going forward? How will this be funded considering the higher staff costs?