

Service to continue thanks to £170,000 funding

A VITAL service to support victims of domestic abuse in Copeland will continue thanks to a £170,000 funding pledge.

Sellafield Ltd and Copeland Community Fund have awarded Copeland Council £60,000 and £58,683 respectively to fund Copeland Borough Council's Prevention and Crisis Support Officer for a further three years. The remaining funding is being provided by other funders and in-kind support from Copeland Council.

The specialist officer has been in place at Copeland Council since January 2018, ensuring vulnerable people get the housing and support they need, and has been credited with saving lives.

Since the Council introduced the specialist role to support victims of domestic abuse and sexual exploitation, the officer has provided vital help to 74 women and men, and 85 children who were all homeless or at risk of homelessness.

In addition to the officer, the council also provides emergency accommodation to those in need to ensure they have a safe place to stay. Three of these properties have been expertly designed specifically for people with children.

This new funding means that the vital specialist officer role will remain in place until December 2022. The role was initially funded through central government funding which is no longer available.

In a letter sent by one service user, the specialist officer was credited for her support: "I just wanted to say a huge, huge thanks for your kindness.

"I've been through so much, every avenue I went down was saying nobody could help.

"You will never know the difference you made yesterday.

"I'm going to rebuild my life. I've actually, for the first time in 40 years been able to say - this happened to me."

Another service user said: "I found myself in unfamiliar waters, with nowhere to turn.

"A friend of mine took me into the council offices and I met two ladies.

"What on earth could the council do?

"Well they saved my life, helped me get a place to live where I reside now.

"Without this organisation I wouldn't be writing this letter. Thank you."

Mike Starkie, Mayor of Copeland, said: "We're delighted to announce this funding support.

"This is not an issue that is unique to Copeland but is something that we're using every resource available to help tackle.

"We'd like to thank the funders for their pledge which will undoubtedly save local lives over the next three years."

Gary McKeating, head of community and development for Sellafield Ltd, said: "Domestic abuse is a blight on society and something none of us should tolerate.

"All too often, people suffer in silence because they don't know where to turn.

“Copeland’s work in this area is providing life-saving support.

“That’s why we’re delighted to help fund this vital role via our social impact budget.

“Our social impact strategy is all about using targeted investment to address needs in our community in a way that encourages long-term, sustainable solutions.”

Keith Hitchen, Chair of Copeland Community Fund, said: “In allocating our grant in July 2019 the CCF Board recognised the ongoing demand for support services for victims of domestic abuse in Copeland.

“This issue significantly affects the wellbeing of women, men and children within our communities and the specialist support provided will be a lifeline for many at their most vulnerable.”

Cumbria Constabulary reported 549 incidents of domestic abuse in Copeland over a six-month period, between November 2018 and April 2019 (inclusive).

Each year nearly 2 million people in the UK suffer from some form of domestic abuse.

Seven women a month are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales.

130,000 children live in homes where there is high-risk domestic abuse.

Source: Safe Lives (2019) www.safelives.org.uk [1]



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Source URL: <https://www.copeland.gov.uk/node/43349>

Links

[1] <http://www.safelives.org.uk/>