## Termination of the contract with Gay Advice Darlington and Durham to provide counselling and support to people diagnosed with HIV and their families: Impact Assessment

A meeting was held with chief executive of GADD and a current service user on 29th February 2016. They both have had some discussion with users of the service and were relaying expressed views.

The impacts raised were mainly in relation to the risk of losing the current provider and the loss of that relationship. The impacts that were brought up included;

* An increase in suicide
* An increase in self- harm
* Increased anxiety and worry regarding possible changes
* Loss of complex relationships / time it takes to build new ones
* Impact on general well being
* An increase in the death rate attributed to HIV
* Increased social isolation
* Deteriorating mental health
* Increased hospital admission linked to mental health
* Increased hospital admission linked to deteriorating physical health
* A lack of information/support locally
* A loss of control over life
* Job loss, without the support with employers

The other main impacts highlighted the lack of any alternative regional support following a diagnosis of HIV. The current local system would signpost people to GADD and given that the most likely people being referred are young gay men under the age of 25 years old they are more likely to engage with GADD rather than with their own GP or any statutory agencies. This is linked to the stigma still attached to HIV and the real issue of confidentiality. A number of individuals maintain that they do not share their HIV status with their own GP or with social care due to a fear of their status being found out.

Analysis/Mitigation

* For many people diagnosed with HIV, GADD offers the support they need both through peer support and an organisation that understands the impacts physically, emotionally and socially. There is the option for the Local Authority to offer this support through its social work teams and a level of support is available through the NHS, however many individuals don’t feel comfortable being supported by statutory agencies and feel the benefit of peer support. A number of local authorities have this model. There may be some training/funding implications for the local authority should it mitigate with this model.
* Those affected by the HIV virus includes family partners are also affected by the cuts. Many of these suffer as much as the HIV+ person and are affected by the loss of service. The impact is direct in that the Diagnosed person is alone and as no support so familial structures are damaged. GADD provides the wrap around service that holistically makes the transition from diagnosis to living with HIV easier and reduces the stress and the broader mental health impacts like suicide depression and isolation.