

To whom it may concern,

We, the undersigned, are petitioning the council to employ and fund a dual diagnosis worker. This is in order to plug the gaps in the mental health provision of this town that many are falling through. We need to protect the vulnerable and make sure they have the support that they need.

As you know, at the moment if someone has both mental health issues and also an addiction problem, the mental health team say that they cant make an accurate diagnosis and so tell them to go away for 7 months, get clean and then come back. Unfortunately this is difficult to do and in my personal experience I see people who end up on the street because they fail to get the support they need. A dual diagnosis worker will help to bridge this gap and provide people with the support that they need.

Recent reports have highlighted the need for a dual diagnosis worker. The 2014 NHS England health report states that the best way to provide treatment is to treat the person holistically, the recent review of Essex and Southend Mental health stated that there was a severe lack of quality mental health workers in Essex and Southend and the recent review of Southend carried out by Shared Intelligence also highlighted the problem of complex needs/dual diagnosis as an issue here in Southend. Cllr Gilbert at the December Full Council meeting in 2015 stood up and said 'addiction is the biggest health problem in Southend'. Finally the complex needs panel have identified 66 different individuals who all would benefit so far and that is just from the rough sleeping community. I can not give any evidence outside of this community as that is where my experience lies in. All this evidence, I believe shows the need for a dual diagnosis worker.

I understand that there is a cost involved and that we are living in a time when budgets are shrinking and hard choices have to be made. Cllr Moyies also said at the same council meeting as mentioned above that it is all about where the biggest outcomes will be felt. I would argue that the lack of a dual diagnosis worker has an effect on a lot of other budgets as people fail to get the support that they need. Some of the people who signed the petition talked about how they had relatives commit suicide because of the lack of help. I strongly believe that it has a knock on effect in terms of further health issues and ambulances needing to be called out, issues around crime and also as I said above issues around housing and not being able to secure tenancies. Therefore as well as having an immediate impact on the individual I believe a dual diagnosis worker will have an impact on further health budgets, the emergency services and also the housing team.

I urge you to support the petition and employ a dual diagnosis worker.

DEL THOMAS