



ORIGINATOR: HEAD OF COMMISSIONING AND GOVERNANCE

DECISION NUMBER: 9 - 2025

REASON FOR SUBMISSION: FOR DECISION

SUBMITTED TO: POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

SUBJECT: MAPPING SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICE PROVISION IN SUFFOLK

SUMMARY:

1. The PCC has, since 2013, commissioned services to provide support to victims of crime. Over £0.5m a year is specifically invested in specialist support services for victims of sexual violence. In 2023/24 this funding supported 978 victims of sexual abuse and 219 victims of childhood sexual abuse.
2. Public sector partners and victim service providers in Suffolk have identified a gap in knowledge and understanding around the area of sexual violence service provision in Suffolk. It is felt that this gap hinders effective commissioning and delivery of support services for victims of sexual violence.
3. The partners have come together to commission the University of Suffolk (Institute for Social Justice & Crime and Institute for Health & Wellbeing) to lead a piece of research into sexual violence service provision in Suffolk.
4. Funding for the work is being provided by local commissioning bodies including the Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board, NHS England Health & Justice and the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership.
5. It is recommended that the PCC also supports this work in order to inform the future commissioning of sexual violence support services.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The PCC is recommended to contribute £15,000 from the Crime and Disorder Reduction reserve towards the research 'Mapping Sexual Violence Service Provision in Suffolk'.

APPROVAL BY PCC

The recommendation set out above is agreed.

Signature:**Date:** 10 March 2025

DETAILS OF SUBMISSION

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The PCC has, since 2013, commissioned services to provide support for victims of crime. The PCC has set out in consecutive Police and Crime Plans that supporting victims of sexual abuse is a key priority within his commissioning. As well as using his local crime and disorder reduction budget to support these aims, the PCC receives a grant from the Ministry of Justice to delivery victim services and specifically to support victims of sexual violence.
- 1.2 Current funding from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to specialist services in Suffolk was decided upon in 2022 on the basis of a needs assessment and application process. Multi-year grant funding was awarded to the following local charities: Survivors in Transitions, Suffolk Rape Crisis, Restitute and Brave Futures. National charity, Victim Support, also supports sexual violence victims in Suffolk through the PCC's Norfolk and Suffolk Victim Care service contract and the PCC has successfully secured additional Ministry of Justice Independent Sexual Violence Advisor funding for the local ISVA service. All PCC funding of sexual violence services is published on the [website](#).
- 1.3 Over £0.5m a year is specifically invested in specialist support services for victims of sexual violence by the PCC. In 2023/24 this funding supported 978 victims of sexual abuse and 219 of child sexual abuse (CSA) victims.
- 1.4 This decision paper recommends that, in order to effectively commission services to support victims of sexual violence and CSA in future, research is undertaken to provide an evidence base and map service provision in Suffolk. It is proposed that the PCC contributes £15,000 in support of this partnership work.

2. MAPPING SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICE PROVISION IN SUFFOLK – PROPOSAL

- 2.1 In 2024, public sector partners and victim service providers in Suffolk identified a gap in knowledge and understanding around the area of sexual violence service provision in Suffolk. It is felt that this gap hinders effective commissioning and delivery of support services for victims of sexual violence.
- 2.2 Research carried out by the Institute for Social Justice and Crime at the University of Suffolk (Hermolle, 2023) found systemic issues with constraints to services in Suffolk offering support to victims, including capacity issues and budgetary constraints. The closure of Suffolk Rape Crisis in 2024 has placed an additional burden on other providers and reduced the range of provision available for victims in Suffolk.
- 2.3 The OPCC's assessment (based on PCC funded services) supports these conclusions and indicates capacity does not currently meet demand for services; ongoing waiting lists for services; no comprehensive overview of available services; unclear pathways to support and a lack of joined up commissioning for victims of sexual violence in Suffolk.

- 2.4 In response, the OPCC Head of Commissioning and Governance worked with partners to specify a joint piece of work that would enable local commissioners and providers to assess provision and inform future commissioning of services.
- 2.5 Key partners (Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (SNEE ICB), NHS England Health & Justice (East), the OPCC and the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership) decided an independent piece of work was required to take the lead and dedicate resource to fulfil the project need. The research was to be completed in a condensed time frame in order to inform commissioning decisions in 2025/26.
- 2.6 Three organisations were approached to express an interest in delivering the work. The University of Suffolk (UoS) submitted a proposal for consideration. The two other organisations (both registered Community Interest Companies with experience in health, social care and sexual violence consultation and research) both stated they would be unable to undertake this piece of work in the specified timescales and proposed budget envelope.
- 2.7 It was felt that the UoS proposal brought local knowledge and subject matter expertise from a highly-skilled research team (Institute for Social Justice & Crime and Institute for Health & Wellbeing). Partners therefore proposed to commission UoS to carry out an independent mapping exercise within Suffolk about provision and commissioning of specialist sexual violence (SV) services.
- 2.8 The UoS developed a proposal for the work which was further refined by the partners. The overall objective is to map current SV service provision in Suffolk, identifying gaps and duplications, highlighting good practices, and offering recommendations to inform future strategic and commissioning direction. The scope of this review covers all ages, all victims and all types of SV (including non-recent and child sexual abuse) across Suffolk. The exercise will gather insights from victims, survivors, providers, and commissioners.
- 2.9 This review will contribute to shaping a more effective, equitable, and responsive SV service landscape in Suffolk, ensuring services are better aligned with survivor needs and more effectively commissioned.
- 2.10 The research will:
- Inform the countywide VAWG strategy refresh in 2025;
 - Deliver elements of the system wide Serious Violence Duty;
 - Inform the commissioning intentions of multiple partners including the OPCC;
 - Enable service providers to better understand and respond to demand;
 - Inform any specialist funding provision work through various grants and foundations.
- 2.11 The research will result in a short comprehensive report structured around six workstreams outlining findings, good practice and make recommendations for service improvement and future commissioning.
- 2.12 The research is dependent on input from the partnership and support from the sector in Suffolk. In addition to the funding partners, key stakeholders involved include:

- Suffolk County Council
- The Sexual Assault Referral Centre [SARC] and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors [ISVA])
- Voluntary, Community, Faith & Social Enterprise (VCFSE) Providers: Survivors in Transition [SiT], Norfolk and Suffolk Victim Care [NSVC] Brave Futures, Restitute, Iris (GP Federation)
- Suffolk Constabulary

2.13 The OPCC Head of Commissioning and Governance recommends that the PCC participates and funds the research in order to inform and deliver on the intentions in the Police and Crime Plan 2025-2029. In particular the findings will underpin work under Theme 2, Objective 1: Commissioning services which support victims of crime. This objectives sets out the intentions to:

- Provide services which support victims of crime whether or not they have reported to the police so that a victim's rights to self-access, or be referred to, a support service via the Victims' Code can be met.
- Prioritise services for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- Review the PCC's commissioning strategy to ensure it continues to meet the needs of victims of crime.
- Listen to views of victims of crime and service providers to consider enhancement to services where funding allows, and evidence justifies need.
- Use needs assessments to build evidence, enable collaboration¹ and increase accessibility for victims.
- Explore commissioning specialist services (through the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy with local partners) to deliver what victims need, working together to balance quality, value for money and appropriate generic and specialist services.
- Continue to co-commission with OPCC or other partners where that benefits the offer to victims.
- Progress multi-year funding arrangements wherever possible and practical.

2.14 It is proposed that the Head of Commissioning and Governance will oversee the project for the PCC to ensure appropriate outputs are delivered and to embed the learning in the OPCC for future commissioning and service delivery.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

3.1 The proposal from UoS costed the work in the region of £69,000. Funding of £45,000 has been committed to by local commissioning bodies including the Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (SNEE ICB), NHS England Health & Justice (East) and the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership.

3.2 It is recommended that the PCC contributes £15,000 to the work in order to inform his future commissioning of sexual violence support services. It is recommended that the funding is taken from the Crime and Disorder Reduction reserve as is a one-off piece of work that will underpin future commissioning to reduce sexual violence and support victims.

¹ Including the potential to inform the Duty to Collaborate as set out in the Victim and Prisoner Act 2024.

3.3 UoS have stated that due to the strong rationale for the project and their commitment as a civic university to knowledge exchange they will not charge the full economic cost of the project. Support for the project and funding in-kind has been secured from the voluntary community and social enterprise sector.

3.4 SNEE ICB is the lead for the project and will manage the funding on behalf of the partners. All funders will be acknowledged.

4 OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

4.1 Without PCC funding and participation in the project there is a risk that this research would not be undertaken. Without an agreed evidence base, future PCC commissioning of sexual violence services could be ill-informed and out of line with victim wishes. The opportunity provided by this work will also build the partnership with other local commissioners providers in preparation for the Duty to Collaborate.

4.2 The University of Suffolk have considered and mitigated risks to the delivery of the project and this will be monitored.

ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)	PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	No
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	Yes
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	Yes
Have human resource implications been considered?	Yes
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	Yes
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	Yes
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	Yes
Have all relevant ethical factors been taken into consideration in developing this submission?	Yes

In relation to the above, please ensure that all relevant issues have been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks' section of the submission.

APPROVAL TO SUBMIT TO THE DECISION-MAKER

Acting Chief Executive

I am satisfied that relevant advice has been taken into account in the preparation of the report and that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the PCC.



Signature:

Date: 27 February 2025