



**ORIGINATOR: DEPUTY CHIEF
EXECUTIVE**

DECISION NO. C13 - 2014

REASON FOR SUBMISSION: FOR DECISION

SUBMITTED TO: POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

SUBJECT: INDEPENDENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE FOR SUFFOLK

SUMMARY:

Tackling domestic violence and abuse is one of Suffolk PCC's priority themes and is included in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017. It is recognised that victims of domestic violence who are assessed as high risk should be provided with specialist support dedicated to their specific needs. This support is provided in the form of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs).

In order to address the current lack of service provision in the county, in July 2014, applications were invited for grant funding for a period of up to three years to deliver an improved IDVA service across the county of Suffolk.

This report updates the PCC on the outcome of the selection process and makes recommendations as to how to progress the award of the grant.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Chief Executive be authorised to develop comprehensive and robust conditions of award for the IDVA service in consultation with representatives of the PCC and Lighthouse Women's Aid.

That a dedicated monitoring body, the membership comprising the PCC, representatives of the PCC and others as deemed necessary, be established to monitor the IDVA service.

OUTCOME/APPROVAL BY POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Signature

Tina Pannone

Date *17/10/2014*

DETAIL OF THE SUBMISSION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Tackling domestic violence and abuse is one of Suffolk PCC's priority themes and is included in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017. The Police and Crime Plan sets out a clear commitment to tackling domestic violence and abuse:

“Domestic violence and abuse is a serious issue. It is regularly linked to substance misuse and mental health problems. It is predominantly an issue of power and control between those who are, or have been, intimate partners and family members, and can, in some cases be linked to other crimes such as ASB and substance misuse. Domestic violence and abuse includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse as well as ‘honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. Many victims are subjected to controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, which impacts on every aspect of their lives. As a result of domestic abuse victims can suffer long term physical and mental health problems. Domestic abuse occurs in all sections of society regardless of factors such as social class, gender, ethnicity, age or income. These are complex issues. With the combined efforts of all our partners (such as local authorities, the Safer Suffolk Partnership Board, CSPs [community safety partnerships], Suffolk Domestic Violence Forum) and the VCSE (voluntary, community and social enterprise) sector, we will continue to tackle domestic violence and abuse to achieve long term and sustainable reductions in violence and effective provision of protective services, support, advice and training for front-line staff”.

- 1.2 In October 2014 the PCC will assume responsibility for commissioning of victims' services. The PCC's key objective is “to help victims of crime cope and recover by providing effective victims' services according to their individual needs and regardless of their geographic location”.
- 1.3 In 2013 there was increasing recognition that the services for high risk victims of domestic violence were under-resourced. This was subsequently confirmed by independent scrutiny in the form of a thematic inspection conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and CAADA ('Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse') which is a recognised national body representing victims of domestic violence, both of which highlighted that Suffolk had insufficient IDVA capacity to effectively support the levels of high risk victims in Suffolk.

2. INDEPENDENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVISORS

- 2.1 It is recommended good practice in the area of domestic violence that victims of domestic violence who are assessed to be at high risk should have timely access to specialist support which is dedicated to their individual needs. The needs of victims of domestic violence are often complex and accordingly this level of support is provided in the form of specialise Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs).
- 2.2 The full definition of an IDVA, as published by CAADA is as follows:

“An IDVA is a named professional case worker for domestic abuse victims whose primary purpose is to address the safety of ‘high risk’ victims and their children. Serving as a victim's main point of contact, IDVAs normally work with their clients from the point of crisis to assess the level of risk, discuss the range of suitable options and develop coordinated safety plans.

IDVAs are pro-active in implementing safety plans, which include practical steps to protect victims and their children, as well as longer-term solutions. These plans will include actions from the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) as well as sanctions and remedies available through the criminal and civil courts, housing options and services available through other organisations. IDVAs offer independent support and work over the short- to medium-term to put victims on the path to long-term safety.

Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) believes that IDVAs are most effective as part of an IDVA service and within a multi-agency framework. The IDVA's role in all multi-agency settings is to keep the client's perspective and safety at the centre of proceedings.

High risk domestic abuse victims identified by frontline agency professionals (such as police, health or refuge workers) are referred to IDVA services in their locality. Victims may also self-refer to an IDVA service. Occasionally MARACs may refer victims to an IDVA service if contact with the victim has not already been established".

3. CURRENT SERVICE PROVISION

- 3.1 Since recognising that the current service was under provided for, the Office of the PCC has undertaken a comprehensive evaluation of the service levels in Suffolk. This has included extensive consultation with specialist service providers, statutory partners, and professionals in the field, including CAADA. As a consequence of this work it was concluded that the position should be rectified without delay and it was agreed to invite applications for a grant of up to three years for a service to cover the county.
- 3.2 The current total IDVA capacity in Suffolk comprises 4.4 full-time equivalent members of staff. Until October 2014 these posts were provided for via funding from the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office.
- 3.3 1.4¹ full-time equivalent (FTE) members of staff are currently employed by Suffolk Constabulary. There are also three 'Court Based IDVAs' (known as CIDVAs) one of which is a full time member of staff and the remaining two are contracted to work 30 hours per week. The CIDVAs were employed by a VCSE organisation via the grant funding from the MoJ.
- 3.4 Furthermore a recent assessment against CAADA's self-assessment framework estimates that, based on the current caseload of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), it would be expected that there would be at least 6 full time equivalent, and possibly as many as twelve IDVAs, to cover a county such as Suffolk. However, it is impossible to accurately calculate the resources necessary to meet demand at this stage.
- 3.5 Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are able to utilise their resources to commission services from anyone who can provide the community safety related services that the PCC believes will contribute to their police and crime objectives. There is no maximum or minimum amount that PCCs must spend on community safety activity.
- 3.6 Additionally as stated the PCC has assumed responsibility for commissioning victims' services with effect from 1 October 2014. The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime provides that victims are entitled to receive services if they have made an allegation that they have directly experienced criminal conduct to the police in England and

¹ As at 20 June 2014

Wales, or had an allegation made on their behalf. Victims are entitled to access services under the Code of Practice regardless of whether anyone has been charged or convicted of an offence relating to the criminal conduct and regardless of whether they decide that they do not wish to co-operate with the investigation.

3.7 Certain victims are also entitled to enhanced entitlements because they are more likely to require enhanced support and services through the criminal justice process. Those victims are:

- victims of the most serious crime;
- persistently targeted victims; and
- vulnerable or intimidated victims.

3.8 Victims of domestic violence are likely to fall within the categories of vulnerable or intimidated, persistently targeted and it is also likely that they will fall within the category of victims of the most serious crime. Accordingly the PCC has determined that the provision of an effective IDVA service be afforded the highest possible priority.

4 NEW IDVA SERVICE

4.1 In July 2014 applicants were invited to submit applications for grant funding for the purpose of establishing a countywide IDVA service in Suffolk. The grant funding will apply for up to three years. The invitation to submit applications appeared on the PCC's website between 4 July 2014 and 4 August 2014. The commissioning process was managed by the PCC's Procurement Advisor who ensured that all the necessary commissioning steps were fulfilled. The grant specification is set out at Annex A to this Decision Paper.

4.2 Applications were considered by an evaluation panel including the Deputy Chief Executive and Policy Officer (OPCC); the Head of Vulnerable People Directorate – Suffolk Constabulary; and the PCC's Procurement Advisor. The Panel considered the submissions and assessed them against the 19 principles of service as set out at section 3 of the grant specification. The assessment was made against a scoring criteria recommended by the Procurement Advisor.

4.3 Shortlisted applicants were notified on 8 August 2014 and were required to deliver a presentation on their proposals and to provide any additional information, as required by the Panel, on 27 August 2014.

4.4 The final stage of the commissioning process comprised a Selection Panel comprising the PCC, the Deputy Chief Executive & Policy Officer (OPCC); the Head of the Vulnerable People Directorate, Suffolk Constabulary; the PCC's Procurement Advisor and the Chair of the County Domestic Abuse Forum. The Panel conducted a full interview and reviewed the business case and supplementary information as supplied by the bidder at interview.

4.5 The business case set out various information relating to the proposed service, along with some financial detail. As a consequence of the shortlisting additional information was requested by the Panel in order to further assess whether the application fully satisfied those principles. This information was complemented at interview by further detail, including financial detail. All application papers and background papers have been retained by the PCC's Procurement Adviser who will retain the papers in accordance with audit requirements.

4.6 The Panel unanimously agreed that Lighthouse Women's Aid (LWA) should be awarded the grant 'in principle' subject to the agreement of comprehensive and robust conditions of award to include the required financial and operational performance.

- 4.7 The PCC's policy for awarding grants is that there must be a robust business case and conditions of award which clearly set out the success criteria (e.g. intended outcomes, milestones, risks, etc.) and how the initiative for which funding is sought will deliver clear and measurable outcomes against the PCC's Police and Crime Plan objectives. In order to reach agreement on the conditions of award it will be necessary for representatives of the OPCC to work with LWA to develop the proposed outcomes, etc. Accordingly the PCC is recommended to authorise the Chief Executive to develop comprehensive conditions of award in consultation with representatives of the PCC (ie. OPCC's Procurement Advisor and the Chief Finance Officer and LWA).

5. SERVICE AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The current funding arrangements for IDVAs (and CIDVAs) are as follows:
- 5.2 1.4² full-time equivalent (FTE) members of staff are provided for within the Constabulary's budget. These were originally funded via a grant from the Home Office. The Home Office grant has gradually reduced in recent years and in 2014/15 the grant is equivalent to 0.77 of one FTE plus a further £20k. The Home Office grant will cease on 31 March 2015. One FTE role is now vacant and the remaining 0.77 FTE is occupied by a member of staff equivalent to 0.41 FTE. With effect from 2015/16, recognising that the Home Office grant will cease, the amount available to the Constabulary for IDVA provision will be 0.77 FTE plus £8.5K³ equating to 1.1 FTE. The Constabulary has made a case to continue to hold the 1.1 FTE funding but has agreed the current FTE incumbent will be seconded to the countywide service. The position will be kept under review in the light of our experience with the new service.
- 5.3 The three CIDVAs' comprise 1 full-time member of staff and the remaining two are contracted to work 30 hours per week. CIDVAs were employed by a VCSE organisation via grant funding from the MoJ which concluded on 30 September 2014.
- 5.4 The PCC's Medium Term Financial Plan 2014-15 to 2017-18, approved in February 2014, included provision of £65k for two new IDVA posts (@ scale 6). In view of the intention to introduce a new IDVA service no appointments were made and the funding was held pending developments on this new IDVA service. Accordingly a sum of £65k is available for use.

² As at 20 June 2014

³ The total salary (not including on-costs) for an IDVA equates to £28.5k. Following the cessation of the Home Office grant the resultant amount available from Constabulary funds is £8.5k.

- 5.5 The maximum costs for the IDVA service over the three years' grant period are shown below:

	Period 1 Jan 2015 – Mar 2015 £	Period 2 Apr 2015 – Mar 2016 £	Period 3 Apr 2016 – Mar 2017 £	Period 4 Apr 2017 – Dec 2018 £	Total revenue costs of the IDVA service
Revenue Costs	125,131	407,577	417,043	252,305	1,202,056
It is proposed that the revenue costs are sourced (except as provided for below) via the following budgets (to be determined by the Chief Executive):					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medium Term Financial Plan - Crime and Disorder Reduction Fund - Victim Services Budget - Corporate Budget 					

- 5.6 In addition to the above revenue costs there will also be start-up costs for the service to enable training of the new IDVAs (e.g. CAADA, Harassment and Stalking Training, ICT equipment, etc.). The start-up costs of £62,594 will be funded via the Victims Commissioning Preparatory Grant provided by the Home Office.
- 5.7 The conditions of award document to be agreed with LWA will fully articulate the grant agreement and a detailed service level agreement. This will include proposed costs across all cost headings including but not limited to staffing, management costs, administrative costs, out of hours service costs, ICT, training costs, accommodation, etc. Following agreement and approval of the conditions of award work can commence by LWA to introduce the service. It is intended that service delivery will commence in February 2015 following the initial period of intensive training of staff.
- 5.8 Regular monitoring of all aspects of the service will be vital and it is intended to establish a dedicated monitoring body which will comprise the PCC, representatives of the OPCC (Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Executive, etc). The role of the monitoring body will be to scrutinise all aspects of the service, including financial performance.

6. RISKS

- 6.1 There are a number of risks associated with a grant of this nature, all of which will have to be carefully managed. These included but are not limited to:

Uncertainty regarding Ministry of Justice Victims' Services Funds

- 6.2 The cost of this much needed service will be funded by utilising a number of the funds currently held by the PCC and the Ministry of Justice Victims Services' grant, as awarded to PCCs from 1 October 2014. However, at this stage the MoJ have announced the indicative grant award for 2015/16 only. There has been no indicative grant details for 2016/17 and beyond. There is a risk associated with the uncertainty regarding grant awards from 2015/16 onwards. The grant for the service has been designed to be flexible so it can be easily modified in the event of funding difficulties. The grant agreement also allows for cessation of the grant with a suitable notice period should it be deemed necessary. Alternatively, the service could be supported by a larger contribution from the PCC's Crime and Disorder Reduction Fund.

Reduced levels of service

- 6.3 The award of this grant mitigates the risk of reduced services to high risk victims of domestic violence and addresses the inadequate levels of services currently provided.

Ensuring that the service meets victims' needs

- 6.4 Of vital importance is that the needs of high risk victims are satisfied and that the service helps them to cope and recover. LWA will be required to collect a broad range of data relating to victim satisfaction which will be scrutinised at the monitoring meeting.

Ensuring that costs are maintained within the affordability envelope.

- 6.5 LWA provided detailed costing associated with the delivering a service. These will form part of the conditions of award. Regular and robust monitoring of costs will take place at the dedicated monitoring meetings.

Ensuring that the service delivers the agreed outcomes

- 6.6 As this is a new service to the county there is limited information upon which to assess the required service levels and outcomes. The assessment of service has therefore been performed on the basis of the known demand data, as supplied by the Constabulary. However this does not take into account unmet/unknown demand. It will therefore be necessary to rigorously monitor caseloads, demand and service levels to ensure demand is being met and victims' needs are being satisfied. Again this can be performed through the dedicated monitoring meetings.

Ensuring appropriate coverage across the county

- 6.7 The service levels have been designed to deliver against the demand levels across the county, and accordingly broad agreement has been reached regarding the numbers of IDVAs and the geographical areas in which they will be based across the county. However, given that there are likely to be high levels of unmet demands it is not yet known if the numbers and locations of IDVAs will be adequate. Assurances have been given by LWA that the service will be flexible and staffing locations can be altered to meet demand. In practice this will mean that IDVAs will be required to work from other bases in the County as demands dictate. Again it will be necessary to rigorously monitor demand by the monitoring meetings and service levels to ensure demand is being met and to satisfy the PCC that LWA is making effective use of the grant.

Employer duty of care.

- 6.8 The role of IDVA is one that is exposed to very challenging situations. It is also a role that is often performed alone and is therefore, by necessity, somewhat isolated. Given the specialist nature of the IDVA role it is also vital that staff are fully accredited to undertake the responsibilities of the role. Accordingly the PCC must be satisfied that LWA fulfils all appropriate employers' responsibilities. These will also be considered by the monitoring group.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that:

7.1.1 The Chief Executive be authorised to develop comprehensive and robust conditions of award for the IDVA service in consultation with representatives of the PCC and LWA.

7.1.2 That a dedicated monitoring body, the membership comprising the PCC, representatives of the OPCC and others as deemed necessary, be established to monitor the IDVA service.

ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)	PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	YES
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
In relation to the above, have all relevant issues been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks' section of the submission?	YES

APPROVAL TO SUBMIT TO THE DECISION-MAKER

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 Police and Crime Commissioner.

Signature: 

Date *16 October 2014*