

**ORIGINATOR: HEAD OF
COMMISSIONING**

DECISION NUMBER: 25 - 2021

REASON FOR SUBMISSION: FOR DECISION

SUBMITTED TO: POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

**SUBJECT: NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK VICTIM CARE – CONTRACT VARIATION
(STAFFING AND PROPERTY)**

SUMMARY:

1. Following a rigorous procurement process, compliant with European Union (EU) procurement regulations, Victim Support were awarded the contract to provide the Norfolk and Suffolk Victim Care (NSVC) service for three years from April 2020 with the option to extend the contract for a further two year period. The service is jointly commissioned by Norfolk and Suffolk PCCs.
2. At the end of the first year of the contract there was an underspend of £69,000. Victim Support proposed that the underspend should be used for two new staff positions on fixed term contracts namely an Engagement Officer and a new Case Manager.
3. Victim Support have also proposed to decommission their Lowestoft Office and look for alternative premises in Ipswich.
4. The proposed contract variation sets out these changes in writing on the advice of 7F Procurement.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. It is recommended that the PCC authorises the Chief Executive to enter into a contract variation agreeing an increase in staffing levels and changes in the property portfolio within the Norfolk and Suffolk Victim Care service contract, for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2023.

APPROVAL BY: PCC

The recommendation set out is agreed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Parry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T'.

Signature

Date 25.08.2021

DETAIL OF THE SUBMISSION

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Since 2015, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) have been responsible for commissioning victim assessment referral services for their force areas, utilising grant funding from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The availability of an assessment and referral service is an entitlement set in the Victims Code of Practice and EU directive relating to services for victims of crime.
- 1.2 Following a competitive tender process in 2019 the PCC for Suffolk and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk entered into contractual arrangements with Victim Support to deliver the Norfolk and Suffolk Victim Care (NSVC) service (PCC Decision C38-2019) from 1 April 2020.
- 1.3 NSVC is a victim assessment, support and referral service for victims of crime in both counties. The delivery model is designed to improve outcomes for service users through:
 - Enhanced case management and independent victim advocacy
 - A single point of contact approach
 - Digital resources and online self-referral channels
 - Dedicated support for domestic abuse victims.
- 1.4 This decision paper recommends that the PCC agrees to a contract variation agreeing an increase in staffing levels and changes in the property portfolio for remaining contract period.

2 PROPOSAL FOR A CONTRACT VARIATION

Staffing

- 2.1 At the end of the first year of the contract (2020/21) there was an underspend of £69,000. The underspend was mainly due to staff payroll costs but there were savings on travel expenditure during the year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and as a result of the overall underspends there was a proportionate reduction in National Support costs.
- 2.2 As per the contract, any use of underspend must be agreed jointly with the Commissioners. A proposal was received from Victim Support to create two new roles on fixed terms contracts using the 2020/21 underspend.

Engagement Officer.

This role is based on 30 hours a week for 12 months and will focus on engagement with the Constabularies as the largest referral source to the service in order to change referral behaviour and deliver training. The aim is to further move to the model being based on considered consent by the victim to be contacted by NSVC. Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have said that they are supportive of this post.

Case Manager

A new Case Manager will be a part time post (22.5 hours per week) for a 2-year period. This additional generic Case Manager is required to backfill for an existing Case Manager whose job role will develop to incorporate a 'complex needs' specialism, focussing support on cases with mental distress and wellbeing needs. This complex needs specialism will work across both counties, build experience within the team and develop partnership and pathways so that referrals can be made to specialists for those with more complex mental health needs. Victim Support report that of 769 vulnerabilities logged (in Q3 2020/21), 142 related to mental health (18%). These cases require longer and more intensive support and onward referrals are often subject to lengthy delays.

The changes mean that the subject matter expert will take on this case load and support other team members. Victim Support have said that this type of role has been trialled in North Wales with positive impact.

2.3 The proposed staffing structure can be found in Appendix A.

Property

2.4 The Victim Support tender for the service noted that “It is crucial that there are multiple ways a victim can access Norfolk and Suffolk Victim care (NSVC) services. They must be easily accessible and geographically available”. Office locations were proposed for Norwich, Thetford, Ipswich and Lowestoft, based on demand analysis and to ensure that the average travel distance from the offices to victims across both counties was under ten miles. At that point in time, remote-working capabilities meant the average travel distance to victims was under six miles.

2.5 The office in Thetford was not pursued due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic also meant that office based staff moved completely to home working. In Q1 2021/22 most staff continue to work from home but some are starting to return to the offices.

2.6 With the Covid-19 pandemic changing the way employees work and current premises assessed as not fit for purpose (see Appendix B for further detail), Victim Support have proposed to decommission their Lowestoft office and look for alternative premises in Ipswich.

2.7 The Lowestoft office is not public facing and has limited facilities. One member of staff was previously based at the office but occupancy is estimated at 50% given the nature of the role. The member of staff will become a home based worker and giving notice on this property will result in a saving of approx. £1,500 per annum.

2.8 The current NSVC base in Ipswich is a small office in a shared office building with the Suffolk Sexual Abuse Referral Centre (SARC). This is a secure building which makes public access for clients and partner meetings difficult. Victim Support have agreed to secure a more fit for purpose property before surrendering the current office space.

2.9 The OPCCs have stressed to Victim Support that an appropriate level of physical presence in communities is important, particularly in areas where highest levels of referrals are received. Beyond a commitment to maintaining physical premises in Ipswich and Norwich the OPCCs have agreed with Victim Support that they will seek opportunities to utilise third sector partner and public sector premises for client and other meetings to minimise costs of room hire.

2.10 7F Procurement have advised that the proposed changes to staffing and property should be formally documented in the form of a contract variation.

2.11 Monitoring of the changes will be undertaken as part of the scheduled quarterly performance meetings with Victim Support and both Norfolk OPCC and Suffolk OPCC.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial implications for the PCC’s commissioning budget as the proposed changes will be met within the existing contract budget. Victim Support have provided a revised budget forecast for the period.

4 OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

4.1 There are no adverse implications as a result proposed contract variation.


5 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 It is recommended that the PCC authorises the Chief Executive to enter into a contract variation agreeing an increase in staffing levels and changes in the property portfolio within the Norfolk and Suffolk Victim Care service contract, for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2023.

ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)	PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	The Chief Executive is aware of the content of the decision.
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?	NO
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.

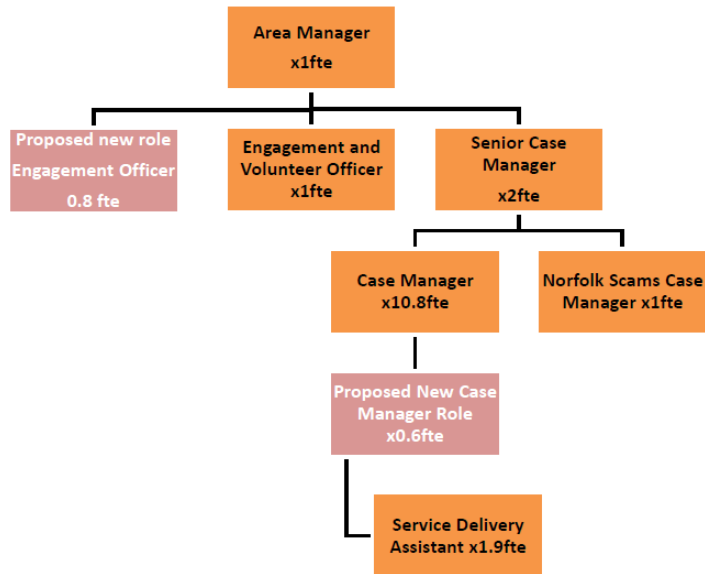
APPROVAL TO SUBMIT TO THE DECISION-MAKER.

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: 24.08.2021

Appendix A



2021 Proposed Structure



Appendix B



NSVC Property
Proposal.pdf