



ORIGINATOR: HEAD OF COMMISSIONING AND GOVERNANCE

DECISION NUMBER: 26 - 2025

REASON FOR SUBMISSION: FOR DECISION

SUBMITTED TO: POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

SUBJECT: INDEPENDENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVISOR (IDVA) SERVICE FOR SUFFOLK – CONTRACT VARIATION

SUMMARY:

1. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) set out in his Police and Crime Plan that he will commission services which support victims of crime and will prioritise services for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.
2. To support this intention the PCC awarded a contract to Leeway Domestic Violence and Abuse Services in July 2023 for the provision of the Suffolk Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service for the 3-year period from 1 October 2023 – 30 September 2026.
3. Leeway Domestic Violence and Abuse Services have requested additional financial support from the PCC to meet the unbudgeted increases in National Insurance Contributions and the National Living Wage from 1 April 2025.
4. Without additional financial support it is likely that the service would not be feasible for Leeway to deliver in its current format.
5. It is therefore recommended that the PCC provides additional funding to meet the increased costs using the Crime and Disorder Reduction reserve.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. It is recommended that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC):
 - a) enters a contract variation to contract 7F-2022-C031 to provide up to £22,768.37 of additional financial support to meet increased National Insurance Contributions and the National Living Wage within the Suffolk Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service for the 18-month period from 1 April 2025 until 30 September 2026.
 - b) utilises the Crime and Disorder Reduction Reserve to fund this contract variation.

APPROVAL BY PCC

The recommendation set out above is agreed.

Signature:



Date: 16 September 2025

DETAILS OF SUBMISSION

1 KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

- 1.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) set out in his Police and Crime Plan (Theme 2. Objective 1) that he will commission services which support victims of crime and will prioritise services for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- 1.2 One of the PCC's key principles for commissioning is that, where possible, longer-term funding to enable sustainability of services will be considered to support the voluntary and charitable sector in Suffolk. This principle is delivered through contracts and multi-year grants to providers of victim services in Suffolk.

The Suffolk Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service

- 1.3 In July 2023, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk awarded a contract to Leeway Domestic Violence and Abuse Services (Leeway/the Supplier) for the provision of the Suffolk Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service for a period of three years from 1 October 2023 until 30 September 2026, with an option to extend for 2 x 12-month periods ending 30 September 2028. De-restricted [PCC Decision Paper C18-2023](#) outlines the award of contract.
- 1.4 The contract is for a service to safeguard, through effective safety planning and early intervention, victims of domestic abuse who are assessed as high risk of harm and to ultimately reduce that risk. The service underpins the commitments made in the Police and Crime Plan, fulfilling the requirements of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime and the IDVA statutory guidance as well as the government pledge to halve violence against women and girls (VAWG).
- 1.5 Furthermore, the investment in high quality services is economically viable; an economic analysis commissioned by Women's Aid shows that for every pound invested in domestic abuse support services there is a saving to the public purse of at least £9¹.
- 1.6 The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner oversees the service and quarterly contract meetings are held to assess performance. To date (October 2023 – June 2025) the service has:
 - Received 1,779 new referrals plus 180 repeat victims
 - Held an average of 627 cases in service at any point
 - Delivered real impact, measured against Key Performance Indicators, whereby victims reported they:
 - Had increased their feelings of safety 79%;
 - Were able to cope and build resilience 81%;
 - Were satisfied with the support received from the IDVA service 96%.
- 1.7 The service is based on a fixed price contract reflecting a budget submitted by Leeway during the tender process. The cost for the three-year main contract period is £2,070,000 with the budget for each 12-month period as follows.

¹ https://www.womensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Respublica_web.pdf

	Year 1 Oct 23 - Sept 2024	Year 2 Oct 2024 – Sept 2025	Year 3 Oct 2025 – Sept 2026
Total Price	£689,970.02	£690,000.01	£690,029.97

Cost pressures

- 1.8 On 30 October 2024, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the intention to increase the rate of employer National Insurance Contributions (NIC) and increase the National Living Wage (NLW).
- 1.9 The increase in employer National Insurance Contributions affects 17 employees who directly deliver the IDVA service, and the National Living Wage increase also affects 1 of these employees. This increase in costs was not factored into the budget for the service by Leeway and the contract does not make any provision for it.
- 1.10 In early 2025, Leeway raised with the PCC's Head of Commissioning and Governance that they would not be able to meet the increased costs resulting from the change. They also set out the other unfunded cost pressures they are experiencing due to inflation and National Insurance Contributions on non-direct delivery staff (central services) supporting the contract. The overspend incurred in delivering the service against the contract value is currently being met from Leeway's charitable reserves, a position they say is unsustainable.
- 1.11 As a result of this position the Head of Commissioning and Governance, 7Force Procurement and Leeway have met to consider contractual requirements, the service budget, cost pressures and savings already made.
- 1.12 Without additional financial support Leeway suggest that delivery of the contracted service would not be feasible for them. In their latest filed accounts (y/e 31 March 2024) their operating deficit was (£127k) vs a £152k surplus in 2023. Free reserves also declined year on year from £478k in 2023 to £382k in 2024. The proposed £22,768 additional funding is nearly 6% of the total free reserves Leeway held in 2024 and Suffolk PCC IDVA service income made up around 18% of Leeway's total income. If the NIC and NLW increase is being felt across every income stream, then Leeway do not appear to have the financial means to mitigate the impact of NIC and NLW without seeking support from partners. Given this situation alternative options to meet the increased costs put forward by Leeway include changing the scope of, or terminating, the contract, neither of which is recommended given the nature of the service and timescales for re-procurement.
- 1.13 Therefore, it is recommended that the PCC meets the cost of the increased National Insurance Contributions and National Living Wage for the remainder of the contract period from 1 April 2025 – 1 October 2026 and enters into a contract variation to implement this.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- 2.1 Leeway Domestic Violence and Abuse Services have supplied figures to show that £22,768.37 is required to cover the unfunded increase in National Insurance Contributions and the increase in the National Living Wage from 1 April 2025 until 30 September 2026. This comprises £14,862.53 for this financial year and £7,905.84 for the period 1 April 2026 – 30 September 2026.

- 2.2 The grant to the PCC from the Ministry of Justice for provision of victims' services for 2025/26 reduced by 4.2% on previous years. This has been partially offset by removing the element of OPCC staff costs from the grant but makes no allowance for the increase in National Insurance Contributions or other cost pressures.
- 2.3 The PCC's commissioning budget for 2025/26, including that funding provided by the Ministry of Justice, has been fully allocated and therefore it is proposed that the PCC agrees to meet the proposed additional costs by using the Crime and Disorder Reduction Reserve. This proposal has been discussed with the PCC's Chief Finance Officer.
- 2.4 The current balance of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Reserve is £574k. This reserve is comprised of underspend from the PCC's commissioning budget in previous years.
- 2.5 The use of the Reserve could be mitigated should any underspend in the commissioning budget be realised. The proposed increase in funding will also be considered when budget setting for victim services for 2026/27.
- 2.6 IDVA service expenditure, areas for further savings and cost pressures will also be monitored monthly.
- 2.7 The terms of the contract sets out that any underspend against the contract value will not be claimed. Any overspend above the contract value remains the responsibility of the Supplier. It is proposed that the funding available through the contract variation would also reflect these terms.
- 2.8 Financial implications for the service beyond the term of the main 3-year period of the contract are yet to be considered.

3 OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS:

- 3.1 Ministry of Justice victim services funding for 2026/27 onwards is subject to decisions following the Comprehensive Spending Review. This uncertainty poses financial risks for the PCC for current and future contracts. Victim Services Funding has been added to the PCC's risk register.
- 3.2 As set out in [PCC Decision Paper 10-2025](#), all victim service providers funded by the PCC have been asked to keep the OPCC informed of cost pressures, organisational and service delivery risks.

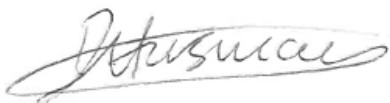
ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)	PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	No
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	Yes
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	Yes
Have 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

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: 9 September 2025