



Report to Policy Committee

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Report of: *Strategic Director Adult Care and Wellbeing*

Report to: *Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee*

Date of Decision: *14th June 2023*

Subject: *Recommissioning of Domestic Abuse Community Based Support Contract*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 2092				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Purpose of Report:

To seek agreement to recommission the Domestic Abuse Community Based Support Contract.

Using data from the Crime Survey of England and Wales it is likely that around 23,860 adult victims in Sheffield have experienced Domestic Abuse in the last year. It is widely recognised that Domestic Abuse has long term harmful impacts.

The Domestic Abuse Community Based Support Contract offering one to one, helpline and group support is currently delivered by IDAS. The contract started in April 2019 and is due to end in March 2024. Due to this, recommissioning therefore needs to start in 2023 to enable a service to continue to be delivered.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Adult Health and Social Care Committee:

1. Approve the recommission, via a contract with an external provider, of domestic abuse community-based support as outlined in this report.
2. Request that a report on outcomes and impact of the recommissioning exercise is brought to Committee.

Background Papers:

Needs assessment [Sheffield-Safe-Accommodation-Needs-Assessment-2021-FINAL.pdf \(sheffielddact.org.uk\)](https://sheffielddact.org.uk)

Lead Officer to complete:-	
1	<p>I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.</p> <p>Finance: Adam Elwis (Commercial Services), Anna Beeby (Finance Business Partner) Legal: Patrick Chisholm Equalities & Consultation: Ed Sexton Climate: Jessica Rick</p>
	<p><i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i></p>
2	<p>SLB member who approved submission: Alexis Chappell</p>
3	<p>Committee Chair consulted: Councillor Angela Argenzio</p>
4	<p>I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.</p>
	<p>Lead Officer Name: Alison Higgins Job Title: <i>Strategic Commissioning Manager Domestic and Sexual Abuse</i></p>
	<p>Date: 01.06.2023</p>

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The proposal is to recommission the Domestic Abuse Community Based Support Contract currently held by IDAS (Independent Domestic Abuse Service) during 2023 to have a new contract in place by 1st April 2024.
- 1.2 The contract will include: a domestic abuse helpline, one to one support, structured group recovery programmes, a Sanctuary Scheme (target hardening to support people remaining in their own homes), administration of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference process, informal support options (coffee mornings etc.), buddying scheme, guided self help resources and training for the Sheffield workforce.
- 1.3 The support offered will complement other services commissioned with regard to domestic abuse e.g., the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Contract (providing refuges and safe dispersed accommodation), the Support for Children Affected by Domestic Abuse Contract, the Support for Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse to Change Their Behaviour Contract alongside smaller contracts regarding counselling and financial and debt support etc.
- 1.4 The contract amount will not exceed £1,468,608 per annum however if further central government funds are not secured after March 2025 then contract amount will revert to the core amount funded by the Council, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Integrated Care Board and a grant from the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities of £1,118,608. The contract will be awarded for 7 years with a break clause after years 3 and 5.
- 1.5 The successful provider will also compliment and be expected to work in partnership with Childrens and Adults Social Work Teams, Neighbourhood Services Teams in particular Safeguarding Teams to reduce risk of harm to children and adults and contribute to the [Adult Safeguarding Delivery Plan](#), approved by the Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee on September 2022. The aim is that supports an ongoing collaborative approach across Sheffield to prevent abuse and ensure citizen's safety.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

- 2.1 Using data from the Crime Survey of England and Wales it is estimated that **86,670** adults in Sheffield have experienced Domestic Abuse at some point in their lives since the age of 16 with around **15%** experiencing both partner and family abuse.
- 2.2 **23,860** adult victims are estimated to have experienced Domestic Abuse in the last year with around **8%** of those experiencing both partner and family abuse.
- 2.3 It is estimated that there were **13,334 children living in a household with partner abuse** in the past year with up to 28,334 children affected by

domestic abuse in Sheffield in total in the last year.

2.4 Responding effectively and compassionately to the problem of domestic abuse in our communities contributes to 5 out of 6 of the corporate goals:

- Fair, inclusive, and empowered communities
- Strong and connected neighbourhoods which people are happy to call home.
- Tackling inequalities and supporting people through the cost-of-living crisis
- Healthy lives and wellbeing for all
- Happy young people who have the start they need for the future they want.

2.5 The Council is accredited as a White Ribbon organisation which means it has pledged to work towards ending violence against women and girls. The accreditation process requires the council to have adequate services to respond to all types of violence against women and girls including domestic abuse.

2.6 The economic impact of domestic abuse was estimated by the government in 2017 to be at a unit cost of £34,015 per victim¹. Without inflation this means that the cost in terms of lost economic output and costs to services in Sheffield and the wider economy of over 23,000 victims in the city a year is staggering.

2.7 In 2022/23, the current provider IDAS has:

- Received 5021 helpline calls (against a target of 3000) with 2698 of callers receiving 'short term' support and advice. 62% of helpline calls were from members of the public, the remainder from professionals.
- Provided sanctuary scheme measures to 501 victims / survivors to enable them to stay safe in their own homes.
- Provided structured one to one support to 1261 victims /survivors.
- Provided structured group work programmes for 97 victims/survivors, 78 of whom completed the programmes.
- Provided informal groups and coffee mornings for 22 victims / survivors.
- Supported 31 victims/ survivors at the domestic abuse first hearing court.
- Supported 69% of victims / survivors to exit the service in a planned way (target 60%)
- Supported 85% of victims / survivors to have their risk level reduced or maintained at exit (if assessed as standard risk at entry the risk cannot reduce further)
- 1314 individuals from the Sheffield workforce received training on responding to domestic abuse (target 1200)

¹ [The economic and social costs of domestic abuse \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

- 98% of attendees rated the training as 'good' or higher.

2.8 These numbers are concerning however many adults and children affected by domestic abuse do not come to the attention of agencies. They may be able to take steps to improve their safety and that of their children themselves. They may get support from friends and family to do so. All children identified as experiencing domestic abuse by the Police are considered by the Safeguarding Hub and this service will be a key part of the multi agency response to ensure that children are supported and kept safe but and that the right agencies are working with the children at the right level.

2.9 The current contract forms a significant part of the city's response to domestic abuse. A Public Health Systems Review of responses to domestic abuse in Sheffield by specialist charity SafeLives in 2022 (funded by the Home Office) found that:

- **Sheffield has some real strengths in the area.** The culture within services is positive, multi-agency working is effective. The service offer and a forward-thinking training and strategic response, coupled with a strong survivor network and evidence of experts by experience being consulted throughout work, gives victims in Sheffield a real opportunity to be safe and move on from Domestic Abuse.
- **Overall Sheffield should be proud of how it responds to Domestic Abuse.** The strategic leaders give great insight and work with operational leads, and this filters into a culture of support and challenge within local services.

2.10 Recommissioning the domestic abuse service will help the city achieve its strategic goals, primarily Healthy Lives and Wellbeing for all, and a key outcome in Living the Life You Want to Live, the Adult Social Care Strategy 2020-2030: Everyone has the right to feel safe in a place they can call home (at home or in a homely setting) and protected from harm.

2.11 The Domestic abuse service will also contribute to delivery upon the Safeguarding Delivery Plan, approved at Committee in September 2023 and CQC Theme: Ensuring Safety.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

3.1 Consultation started at the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Provider Consultation Group in March 2023. A survey for the public and stakeholders was circulated using the Have Your Say platform in May.

3.2 A co-production model has then been used to design and conduct in person and online consultations in partnership with the Changing Futures co-production associates (the participants are all women who are

survivors of domestic abuse). In April sessions were held with Sheffield Women's Aid refuges residents, SCC Equality network chairs, and with staff at the current provider. In May sessions were held with users of the Young Women's Housing Project, males being supported by IDAS, women being supported by IDAS, users of Ashiana, voluntary sector providers, supported housing providers, women attending the You and Me Mum programme (SCC delivered) women attending the Power of Change programme (IDAS delivered), women attending IDAS coffee mornings.

3.3 Findings are that:

- Partners value the existing service, think it is generally responsive and of good quality however there have been issues around staff retention (related to cost-of-living crisis and expansion of funding across sector in relation to safe accommodation primarily)
- There are issues around digital inclusion for some users.
- A face-to-face offer is important, including at safe community venues. More drop in opportunities are needed
- More joint working would be beneficial e.g., co-location where possible (request from health: ED)
- A tenacious support offer is important, that is trauma informed and person centred. Engagement can take a long time to achieve.
- Demand exceeds capacity and this situation is likely to get worse, one solution would be to develop more guided self-help options
- Stakeholders think the helpline should be open longer (currently minimum of 68 hours a week)
- There is a need to ensure that non-English speakers are able to access service (interpreting service in place but is it easy to use?)
- Some potential users don't understand the helpline offer and need more information about services available in communities.
- Survivors want to build trust with a support worker who understands their situation, understands the dynamics of domestic abuse, and who believes and respects them.
- Survivors want support workers who can speak their own language and who understand the culture of the person they are supporting.

3.4 All of these issues will be addressed in the service specification. Consultation will also be undertaken with commercial services to ensure that the views of survivors also inform the recommissioning process.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

4.1.1 Domestic Abuse is a gendered issue, affecting more women than men however the recommissioned service will be promoted to and accessible to male and non-binary victims. It is also a health issue - in some cases resulting in long term impact on mental and physical health. The recommissioned service will be expected to work closely with health agencies to ensure early identification of victims / survivors particularly

those who are pregnant or who have pre-school children.

- 4.1.2 The recommissioned service will be expected to work as part of a coordinated community response with other public sector partners such as the Police, Probation, Housing, Children and Adults Social Care and Education providers as well as voluntary, community and faith sector organisations in the city.
- 4.1.3 Domestic abuse victims / survivors may also be disabled, LGB+, transgender, black or from a minoritised ethnicity, they may act as a carer to their abuser and they may have a religious faith or they may not. They may be of any age from 16 years up. They may therefore experience racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, ageism or transphobia. Discrimination, unconscious bias or a lack of awareness and understanding may result in victims / survivors feeling unable to seek support or finding that services are inaccessible to them. The commissioned service will be required to ensure staff are appropriately trained and supported and have the knowledge and skills to work in an anti-discriminatory and culturally competent way, with support offered that is person centred and tailored to the needs of the individual. The service will also be commissioned to provide training to the Sheffield workforce to enable improved understanding of the risks faced by victims / survivors with protected characteristics and more effective and sensitive support to be offered in a multi-agency way.
- 4.1.4 Economic abuse is a factor in a high proportion of domestic abuse cases and covers financial abuse plus abuse that restricts access to resources, or access to employment or training. This means that victims / survivors are more likely to experience poverty. Recommissioning a community-based support service will mitigate against this risk.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 Opportunities have been explored for delivering efficiencies through this commissioning exercise including through potential economies of scale in providing a county wide domestic abuse helpline. Unfortunately, there was little appetite for such a development from commissioners in South Yorkshire due to commissioning timescales not being aligned and a desire for a more localised response.
- 4.2.2 Funding for the contract will be made up from Sheffield City Council funds plus contributions from partners – the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Integrated Care Board. The contract will also include funding from central government which is time limited.
- 4.2.3 An element of the grant the city receives from the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities to enable the support of victims of domestic abuse in safe accommodation (this service will support victims living in their own homes with Sanctuary Scheme measures - target hardening,

and in dispersed temporary accommodation provided through the Council's homelessness duties.)

4.2.4 Further grant funding (confirmed only for 2024/25 at present) is from the Ministry of Justice, currently held by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. It will pay for specific posts in the new service to work in family courts, with male victims, with disabled victims, gypsy, Roma or traveller victims, older victims, and victims with complex needs.

4.2.5 The contract amount will not exceed £1,468,608 per annum. The available funds are as follows:

Sheffield City Council cash limit	£677,557
Dept for Levelling Up Housing and Communities	£220,320
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner	171,937
Integrated Commissioning Board	48,794
Ministry of Justice (confirmed for 2024/25 only)	£279,864
Other External Grants (This covers any grants we may get after 2024/25)	£70,136
	£1,468,608

4.2.6 If further central government funding is not secured (e.g. from the Ministry of Justice or the Home Office) then the contract amount will revert to the core funding elements from the Council, the Integrated Commissioning Board, the grant funding via the Dept for Levelling Up Housing and Communities and the contribution from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner e.g. £1,118,608

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 There is a statutory duty on local authorities to ensure the needs of victims of domestic abuse in safe accommodation are met in a consistent way. A local authority is required to meet the needs of all domestic abuse victims including those who present from outside of the locality and to provide such support as therapy, advocacy and counselling in safe accommodation, including refuges, to victims of domestic abuse and their children. Safe Accommodation includes properties with Sanctuary Scheme adaptations and dispersed safe accommodation with specialist support. This contract will therefore contribute to meeting the statutory duty under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. There is a requirement to report back to the government on the use of this funding on an annual basis. Any underspend cannot be part of the core contract and carried forward.

4.3.2 There is a requirement to report back to the Ministry of Justice on a quarterly basis with performance data and spending information and any underspend on these funds must be to be declared and any re-profile will need to be submitted by the OPCC to the MoJ. The underspend cannot be part of the core contract and carried forward. This funding is only for the first year of the contract. It is not known whether the MoJ or another government department will make further funding opportunities available for domestic abuse support services at present.

4.4 Climate Implications

- 4.4.1 The service is currently based in existing buildings and there are limited office-based impacts in the provision of the service. A full CIA will be completed to support the procurement and contract management process.

Providers will be encouraged to consider how they can support Climate Action targets, including:

- How staff travel around the city.
- How they can be as energy efficient as possible.
- How the use of products can be minimised, and lowest impacts products used where possible.
- How waste can be minimised.
- How awareness of climate impacts and what they can do to help can be raised amongst staff.

4.5 Other Implications

- 4.5.1 Domestic abuse is considered one of the wider determinants of health. This proposal is to ensure appropriate support for the recovery from the impacts of domestic abuse (including in relation to mental and physical health) for both victims and their children.

5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

The Council could decide to not recommission the service however this would mean that support available for those affected by domestic abuse would be very limited and may not meet the standard required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. There is also a statutory duty on the Safer Sheffield Partnership to conduct Domestic Homicide Reviews and report these to the Home Office. If there were no commissioned community-based services, the number of domestic homicides would be likely to rise over time.

- 5.1 Reducing the funds available for recommissioning would also be inadvisable as demand exceeds the needs in the city already. The capacity of the existing service has also reduced due to cost-of-living issues affecting all employers.
- 5.2 The current contract is working well: promoting safety, addressing trauma and enabling recovery. Partners value the service and feedback is generally good.

6. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 Domestic Abuse affects thousands of people in Sheffield each year. It is a cause of physical and emotional harm, and trauma that is long lasting both to adults and their children. It is also a huge cost to services in the city. Providing support at an early stage will contribute to the overall goal of prevention of harm and promotion of wellbeing in the city.
- 6.2 Sheffield's response to domestic abuse has been recognised as something to be proud of. Recommissioning the community-based support contract, through a process of co-production will enable the offer to improve and ensure tailored support for victims / survivors and their families that enable them to be safer, recover and move on with their lives and contribute fully to their communities and the city.
- 6.3 It is intended that the outcomes will be:
- Easily accessible support that enables engagement at an earlier stage for victims/survivors
 - Online resources for those that can access them promoting guided self-help.
 - Tailored support that reduces risk and increases the safety of victims and their children.
 - Support for victims to stay safe in their homes and prevent them from moving due to the abuse or becoming homeless.
 - Effective support groups that enable recovery from the impact of domestic abuse
 - A wider workforce that are trained to enable them to respond to disclosures of domestic abuse in a safe and trauma informed way.
 - Higher levels of awareness, and empathy for victims / survivors, and lack of tolerance for abusive behaviour supported by community champions e.g., in services that go into people's homes