



Cabinet report

Date **13 OCTOBER 2022**

Title **DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE – SERVICE COMMISSIONING AND PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Report of **CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) set out new responsibilities for local authorities with respect to domestic abuse. To support councils in delivering these new responsibilities, grant funding has been allocated to each area by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).
2. The Isle of Wight Council currently commissions a Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Integrated Services contract which is jointly funded by Isle of Wight Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
3. This report outlines the background to the Isle of Wight Council's responsibilities for domestic abuse. To support the aim of ensuring high quality services for the Isle of Wight, the report sets out recommendations on:
 - i) approval to spend for the total contract value contributed by Isle of Wight Council
 - ii) the plans for the DLUHC grant allocation for 2022/23 and future allocations

RECOMMENDATION

- i) That Cabinet approves to spend up to £2,500,000 for the Isle of Wight Council's contribution to the new contract. This is based on up to £350,000 per annum for a contract up to five years plus two single year extension options, commencing 1 October 2023.
- ii) That Cabinet approves the plans for the 2022/23 DLUHC domestic abuse allocation. It is recommended that decisions on future spend of DLUHC allocations in relation to domestic abuse responsibilities are delegated to the Director of Public Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member and Director of Adult Social Care on an annual basis.

BACKGROUND

4. The Council's responsibilities around domestic abuse include:
 - Implementation of the statutory requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021
 - Management of the funding stream from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) provided on an annual basis for the delivery of duties set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
 - Commissioning domestic abuse services for the Isle of Wight, for the protection and safety of the Island population.
5. The Isle of Wight domestic abuse portfolio transferred from the portfolios of the Directors of Communities (Community Safety) and Adult Social Care to the Director of Public Health on 1 April 2022.
6. Due to the new requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the ending of the current domestic abuse and sexual violence contract and services, there is a need to review service provision and plan a new procurement.
7. The decisions for Cabinet set out in this paper relate to two main areas:
 - i. Commissioning of new services for domestic abuse
 - ii. Planned spend of DLUHC funds to support delivery of the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Commissioned services for domestic abuse and sexual violence

8. The Isle of Wight Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Integrated Services contract provides specialist domestic abuse, sexual violence and perpetrator programme services on the Island including safe accommodation, refuge provision, outreach support, training and counselling. It also includes provision for survivors of sexual violence, and programme options for perpetrators of violence.
9. The current contract is delivered by the You Trust at an annual cost of £315,112 per annum. It is collaboratively funded by Public Health, DLUHC grant, Children's Services and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). 46 per cent of the budget is contributed by the OPCC.
10. The co-funders of the contract propose that prior to the commencement of the new contract, the Council's newly appointed domestic abuse team will:
 - lead a comprehensive assessment of need to determine the detailed provision needed going forward by different populations on the Island. This will include consultation with service users and stakeholders including qualitative information from focus groups, questionnaires and interviews with service users as well as quantitative data analysis.
 - develop a new specification based on the findings of the needs assessment.

- Review best practice and ensure that the latest requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 are incorporated into the specification, as the details of some elements are still emerging.
11. The outcomes of the needs assessment will inform the development of the new service specification including whether the sexual violence element is included, or whether this is commissioned separately by the OPCC.
 12. The new contract will continue to be funded in partnership through Isle of Wight Council and the OPCC. As such, procurement processes will be jointly agreed to meet the requirements of both organisations, including contract length. It is proposed that the new contract is procured for up to five years, with the option to extend for two further years if the contract is progressing as set out. Cabinet is asked to approve the Isle of Wight Council's contribution to the total contract spend over seven years up to £2,500,000.

Planned spend of DLUHC funds

13. Alongside the decisions about the commissioned service set out above, Cabinet is asked to approve the plan for additional spend to support delivery of domestic abuse duties via the annual DLUHC funding allocation ringfenced for this purpose. For 2022/23, the Isle of Wight's allocation is £292,848.
14. It is expected that the new duty will continue to be funded in future years although the amount of funding from April 2023 will be a matter for the next Spending Review.
15. It is recommended that decisions on future spend of DLUHC allocations in relation to domestic abuse responsibilities are delegated to the Director of Public Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member and Director of Adult Social Care on an annual basis.
16. The planned spend for the Isle of Wight DLUHC allocation in 2022/23 is as follows. This will be reviewed when the amount for 2023/24 is confirmed, but the proportion allocated to the contract above is planned to continue.

IOW DLUHC Funding 2022/23	£292,848
Area	Cost
Safe accommodation contribution to domestic abuse contract	72,500
Southern Housing (for safe accommodation unit)	15,600
Paragon (support in safe accommodation unit)	84,000
Domestic abuse staffing	26,000
Development of a survivor voice forum	25,000
Service user and stakeholder consultation and service review	15,000
Training to support DA Act requirements	20,000
Priorities identified from needs assessment	34,748

CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Provision of affordable housing for Island Residents

17. The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) places duties on local authorities to provide safe accommodation to victims of domestic abuse and their children, and the work to implement this duty will be done in conjunction with wider strategic work around housing for Island residents.

Responding to climate change and enhancing the biosphere

18. Social value, climate change and environmental sustainability will be considered as part of the development of the new service specification.

Economic Recovery and Reducing Poverty

19. People experiencing domestic abuse or sexual violence and their families may also be particularly vulnerable to experiencing poverty because of the impact of the abuse on their lives. The procurement of new services for domestic abuse and sexual violence will include the need to ensure holistic support in line with the Council's ambitions to reduce poverty.

Impact on Young People and Future Generations

20. The provisions of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) strengthen and clarify the need to protect children in families which experience domestic abuse, for example through safe accommodation. The needs of families are being considered in the information being collated in the needs assessment.

Corporate Aims

21. The programme of work to develop services and other support for people affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence is clearly aligned with the Corporate Plan 2021-2025, specifically the core values:
 - (a) Being community focussed – understanding the needs of people living and accessing services on the Isle of Wight underpin the development of the new service specification.
 - (b) Working together – future work around domestic abuse will be shaped and informed by the newly formed partnership board, ensuring that all key partners work in collaboration.
 - (c) Being effective and efficient – procuring the next service will enable us to develop a new specification and key performance indicators based on the latest evidence of effectiveness.
 - (d) Being fair and transparent – the needs assessment will demonstrate how decisions have been made based on quantitative and qualitative data, including feedback from service users.

CONSULTATION

22. A comprehensive needs assessment is underway which includes seeking views via questionnaires, focus groups and interviews with service users and other stakeholders. This will inform how the future service is developed.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

23. Funding for domestic abuse is allocated to local authorities through new burden funding for delivery of domestic abuse support in safe accommodation duties in 2022/23. This is separate to the core Public Health grant.
24. Anticipated additional funding will be confirmed by DLUHC on an annual basis and therefore it is recommended that delegated authority for this spend can be approved by the Director of Public Health. Any funding added to contracts will be compliant with procurement regulations.
25. The funding of the new contract will come from multiple sources, some of which is national grant funding, therefore the contracting process will need to take account of potential future changes in the overall envelope available.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

26. The letting of this contract will be subject to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, therefore the procurement shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions contained within these Regulations. Specialist procurement and contract support is being provided by the Council's in house procurement team.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

27. The EIA for the needs assessment to inform service commissioning is attached as Appendix 1.

OPTIONS

28. Option 1 (recommended option)
 - That Cabinet approves to spend up to £2,500,000 for the Isle of Wight Council's contribution to the new contract. This is based on a contract up to five years plus two single year extension options.
 - That Cabinet approves the plans for the 2022/23 DLUHC domestic abuse allocation. It is recommended that decisions on future spend of DLUHC allocations in relation to domestic abuse responsibilities are delegated to the Director of Public Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member and Director of Adult Social Care on an annual basis.
29. Option 2
 - Cabinet does not approve the recommendations in this paper.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The risks associated with Option 1 are:

- Uncertainty about ongoing funding, as this is currently allocated on an annual basis from DLUHC. This will be mitigated by ensuring that the new contract incorporates flexibility and allows for variations to be made should the funding streams significantly change.

- Suitable providers are not identified through procurement for the new service. This will be mitigated by conducting appropriate market engagement with providers to identify if there are any key issues to understand and mitigate.

30. The risks associated with Option 2 are:

- Failure to deliver the Council's duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Financial risk if the DLUHC allocation is not spent against the requirements and potentially resulting in the funding being returned.
- It is believed that adopting Option 1 is likely to be the most successful mitigation to the risks of Option 2.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

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