

TITLE	Domestic Abuse Services
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on Thursday, 28 January 2021
WARD	None specific
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Communities, Insight and Change - Keeley Clements
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Environment and Leisure - Parry Batth

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

This report seeks agreement from the executive to procure a new domestic abuse support services contract and lays out the timetable to ensure a new contract is in place when the current contract expires at the end of June 2021.

Recommissioning will be based on meeting the projected increase in demand, adopting a whole systems approach, preventative demand management and local innovation.

The intention is to ensure effective support services are in place to protect the vulnerable in line with our aims to enabling safe, strong communities and changing the way we work for residents.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive agrees to:

- 1) procure a new domestic abuse support contract of an initial period of 5 years with an option to add a further two years to the contract period with a total contract value of £1,554,000;
- 2) delegate authority to the Director of Community Insight and Change, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure, authority to award the contract(s) to the successful bidder(s) following completion of the evaluation process.
- 3) note that following a review of the local demand levels and service performance, additional growth has been requested through the council's medium term financial plan (MTFP).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Domestic violence can happen against anyone, and anybody can be an abuser. Its effects are wide ranging and has a serious impact on adults, children, and their health and wellbeing. Ensuring effective access to information, specialist services and multi-agency support is a vital part of keeping our residents safe.

The council is responsible for commissioning domestic abuse support for individuals who are identified as being at high or medium risk of serious harm.

The current contract for the commissioned service provided by Berkshire Women's Aid (BWA) is due to expire at the end of June 2021 and this report is to seek agreement to recommission specialist abuse services.

Services to be commissioned will include:

1. a helpline;
2. access to specialist independent domestic abuse advocates (IDVA's).
3. outreach, children and young people support, group-based programmes
4. refuge support.

Demand on WBC specialist services for domestic abuse support has increased substantially since 2018 meaning that additional short-term funding of £35,000 for an additional independent domestic abuse advocate has had to be provided to ensure service quality and safe caseloads within the commissioned service.

We have undertaken a benchmarking exercise and needs analysis to see how domestic abuse support spending in Wokingham compares to assessed levels of need. Wokingham is currently spending less on this mandated service than data demonstrates is required.

Additional funding of £115,000 in 21/22 increasing by a further £35,000 in 22/23 for Domestic Abuse has been requested as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) process. This is based on the increased demand for services and additional statutory duties which are expected to be placed on Local Authorities from April 2021.

An increase in funding for these preventative services is being sought at an essential time. It is anticipated that further local increases in approaches from people in need of help will be seen. There are several complex reasons for the increase in victims accessing services including Covid19, therefore the council seeks to invest in more early intervention that helps to protect vulnerable victims, their families and those at risk from further physical or mental harm or abuse, which may put them at risk of requiring a more acute intervention.

Recommissioning will enable the borough to put the service in a position that is in line with future anticipated demand levels that allow an effective local response to domestic abuse. It will also ensure the borough has a sustainable commissioned service landscape that understands the needs of the local population. In addition it will re-align services to take a whole systems approach with an emphasis on prevention and allow for local innovation. An essential aspect of the tender process will be to create measurable outcomes and KPIs so that the impact and effectiveness of the service can be objectively assessed.

A competitive process will be run to ensure the most economically advantageous tender following a proportionate 60/40 split of quality and price evaluation is awarded the contract so that the contract has the greatest opportunity for delivering towards outcomes and performing effectively.

The procurement timescale:

- Commenced with a market interest group on 15th December 2020,
- tender specification to be signed off by project group in January 2021,
- bidding opens for tenders March 2021,

- decision made and successful organisation notified April 2021,
- TUPE transfer and new contract to commence 1st July 2021.

BACKGROUND

Domestic abuse is a crime, which can have a long-term and devastating impact on families and particularly children. It can take the form of psychological, physical, sexual, emotional, or economic abuse, and occur in a wide range of domestic settings. This can include physical violence, manipulation, isolation, control, and use of threats and humiliation which harm, frighten, or punish a victim.

New Statutory Responsibilities on Local Authorities

The Domestic Abuse Bill, 2020 introduces a statutory definition of domestic abuse which recognises that domestic abuse can extend beyond physical and sexual violence to other forms of abuse, including economic and coercive and controlling behaviour, and within the definition, children will be recognised as victims in their 'own right'.

Local Authorities will be required to put in place a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board by April 2021, whose functions will include the need to provide access to domestic abuse support for all victims (and their children) who reside in their area, including those who require cross-border support.

The council has recently created a dedicated domestic abuse coordinator role to increase co-ordination across the council. Consultation and engagement with our current Domestic Abuse Subgroup members and wider key stakeholders is underway to ensure we are ready to implement a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board in time for April 2021.

Need for domestic abuse support

Domestic abuse is prevalent across the country; however, its prevalence is likely to be significantly underestimated due to it being a 'hidden harm' taking place behind closed doors, hidden away from view.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates that in the year ending March 2020 5.5% of adults aged 16 to 74 years (2.3 million people*¹) experienced domestic abuse in the last year.

Locally it is estimated that 2,700 women (4% of the total population) and 1,500 men (2.2% of the total population), 4,200* in total Wokingham residents will have experienced domestic abuse in the past year. Research indicates that it takes between 35 and 50 incidents on average before a victim will have the confidence to contact statutory services, such as the police or social care, or a domestic abuse service meaning that it is vital that support options are available for victims.²

Support options can include advice and sign posting; outreach support, group work, access to legal remedies, long- term recovery support and criminal justice system sanctions and or emergency refuge or accommodation. Domestic abuse affects all

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesoverview/november2020>

*2 Victim estimates referenced in Wokingham Safelives Needs Assessment, population estimates Berkshire Observatory <https://wokingham.berkshireobservatory.co.uk/population/>

society regardless of gender, sexuality, and ethnicity therefore a truly inclusive response and service is required.

The contract for the current commissioned service provided Berkshire Women's Aid (BWA) commenced in July 2017 to provide confidential support, information, outreach services and refuge accommodation for women and their children who are affected by domestic abuse and violence and is due to expire in June 2021

BUSINESS CASE

Demand on the Council's domestic abuse services have increased by 60% 2019/20 compared with the previous year with referrals rising from 207 to 304 primarily driven by increased awareness among professionals and victims with a corresponding increase in professional referrals.

A further increase in demand this year has resulted in additional short-term funding having to be provided to ensure service quality and safe caseloads. Although due to the nature of these services' future demand is hard to accurately predict, available information and data analysis indicates that a 25% annual increase to an estimated 594 cases by 2022-23 which is comparable with similar community safety partnership areas.

There has also been an increase in the number of cases discussed at Multi-agency Risk assessment conferences (MARAC), which is a meeting to discuss cases and put in place a co-ordinated action plan to safeguard adult victims and children. These cases are considered to be at high or medium risk of serious harm. MARAC cases saw an 89% increase on the previous year following greater awareness amongst the police and other professionals together with clearer referral pathways. 36% are repeat cases with 50% of referrals coming from the police, 30% from Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA's) and 15% from Children's social care.

LINK TO SERVICE AND CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

This service aligns with our Community Vision and the Corporate Delivery Plan in several ways, supporting strategic values, principles, and plans:

- Safe, Strong Communities
- Changing the way we work for you

In addition, the service aligns with our Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy particularly 'reducing inequalities' as well as supporting the new ASC strategy and priorities of the West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Board Priority; to work collaboratively with Safeguarding Children's Partnership, Community Safety Partnerships and Health and Wellbeing Boards to provide the workforce with the frameworks and tools to work with Vulnerable Adults who are at risk of Domestic Abuse"

The service will also contribute to the following priorities within the developing Children & Young People's Plan:

- Priority 1 – Early Intervention and Prevention
- Priority 2 – Emotional Wellbeing
- Priority 3 – Contextual Safeguarding

There are synergies and joint working opportunities with the new substance misuse service and domestic abuse. The commissioning lead on both domestic abuse

procurement and substance misuse has stayed consistent to ensure continuity and direct input on the specification has been sought to ensure the services align.

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY OF DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES

It is estimated that by the time they start school, at least one child in every classroom will have lived with domestic abuse since they were born. These early experiences can have a huge impact on their later life. Research tells us that around 80% of victims never call the police. The effects and impact of domestic abuse are felt widely by all sections of society. Nationally it is estimated that domestic abuse costs the taxpayer an estimated £3.9bn per year and high-risk domestic abuse makes up nearly £2.4bn of this, with each fatality estimated to cost over £1m, this is before the emotional impact on the family and wider community is considered. It is estimated that every £1 spent on multi agency responses to domestic abuse victims at highest risk of harm, saves at least £6 of public money annually.³

Addressing ‘Hidden Harm’

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality, or background. Whilst both men and women may experience incidents of inter-personal violence and abuse, women are considerably more likely to experience repeated and severe forms of abuse, including sexual violence. Domestic abuse does not only occur between couples. It can also involve wider family members, including parental abuse by an adolescent or grown child. It can exist between older siblings, or the wider extended family in elder or honour-based abuse.

Whilst Wokingham has comparatively low police reported incidents compared to other areas, data indicates that the domestic abuse incidents are increasing. Furthermore, wider research consistently shows that domestic abuse can be more hidden in areas of affluence. Residents may be particularly impacted by financial / economic abuse.

Additionally, it appears that there may be local statistical underrepresentation of male, disabled, and LGBT victims of domestic abuse accessing services. A priority moving forward will be to seek to increase representation from these groups through increased awareness and inclusive messaging.

KEY RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

The most significant risk is the failure to procure the appropriate level and provision of domestic abuse services. This is vital for the safeguarding of victims and providing access to local, specialist advice and support to enable them to keep safe and reduce harm. Additional risks are:

- Failure to keep vulnerable victims and children safe.
- Adverse impact on physical and emotional health and wellbeing
- Extra pressure on other services including social care services, particularly for children, vulnerable adults, housing, mental health, police, and health.

PROCUREMENT TIMETABLE

Following a service development workshop held in October, with key internal and external stakeholders including the police, health, police, children’s services,

³ <https://safelives.org.uk/policy-evidence/about-domestic-abuse/how-widespread-domestic-abuse-and-what-impact>

commissioning, the police and crime commissioner's office and voluntary sector representatives a procurement project team has been formed.

A competitive process will be run according to the timetable below to ensure the most economically advantageous tender following a proportionate quality: price evaluation before awarding the contract so that the contract has the greatest opportunity for delivering towards outcomes and performing effectively.

It is proposed that a 60/40 split of quality and price allows for the right balance of focus for this procurement.

Procurement Timetable

Prior Information Notice (PIN) published	1 st December 2020
Market Engagement Event	15 th December 2020
Tender opening and evaluation	19 th March 2021
Communication outcomes	April 2021
Contract awarded & TUPE discussed	21 st May 2021
New Service in place	1 st July 2021

A market engagement event open to potential suppliers was held on 15th December 2020 and attended by over 20 organisations. Service user engagement was undertaken as part of a need's assessment; undertaken in 2020 due to the sensitive nature of the service, involvement of service users on the evaluation panel was assessed as not appropriate. Internal stakeholders including Children and Adult Services will be consulted with regarding the contract specification.

Term of the Contract:

The term of the contract will be 5 years with an option to extend for 1 year and then an additional final 1 year (based on satisfactory performance), bringing the total term to a maximum of 7 years. This is in line with standard industry recommended good practice to enable service provision to become well established within the community.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	TBC - following tender process. £150-£200K	No MTFP request made £70,000	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	TBC - following tender process £150-£200K	No MTFP request made £105,000	Revenue

Other Financial Information
Due to the nature of these services' future demand is hard to accurately predict. We have undertaken a benchmarking exercise and needs analysis to see how domestic abuse support spending in Wokingham compares to assessed levels of need. Wokingham is currently spending less on this mandated service than data demonstrates is required and therefore an additional £70,000 in year 1 and £105,000 in year 2 onwards per annum has been sought via the MFTP process.

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation
Internal stakeholders including Children and Adult Services will be consulted with regarding the contract specification.

Public Sector Equality Duty
An initial equalities impact assessment has been completed and attached as appendix 3. A further Equality Impact Assessment will be considered for the new service specification once it has been finalised to review that no further amendment should be made. The new service will seek to address inequalities and ensure equitable provision of services in the future. No detrimental impacts are anticipated.

Climate Emergency – <i>This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030</i>
We will refer to the council's climate change emergency strategy and action plan in the specification documents under the section of relevant policies for providers to be aware and outline how they may contribute.

List of Background Papers
Appendix 1: Project specific objectives Appendix 2: Procurement Business Case Appendix 3: Initial equalities impact assessment

Contact Narinder Brar	Service Customer and Localities
Telephone 07979255308	Email Narinder.Brar@wokingham.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

Project Specific Objectives

Commissioning of this service will meet the mandated and local needs by developing a specification:

- using the Care Act 2014 and statutory Care Act guidance to ensure commissioned services meet the mandate
- using the Wokingham domestic abuse needs assessment report produced by Safelives and the service development workshop held in October to tailor the specification
- developing services in line with the new Domestic Abuse Bill requirements

The integrated domestic abuse service aims to improve outcomes by:

- Ensuring that support planning and delivery is co-produced with the customers
- Delivers high quality care and support to achieve the aims of the service
- Is sensitive to the needs of an individual customer and non-discriminatory in the delivery of the service
- Accessible so that it can provide services when needed to all customers within its normal operating hours
- Promotes the safety of customers and that of their families, staff, and the wider public
- Well-co-ordinated between all staff, stakeholders, and partners, focused on safety and risk management
- Delivers short and medium term support to the point of physical and emotional wellbeing
- Empowers and supports staff
- Properly accountable to its customers and their carers

Service objectives:

- Maintain and improve the health and wellbeing of the residents that use the service
- Effectively safeguard victims and hold perpetrators to account in partnership with other agencies
- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour related to domestic abuse
- Support children who are impacted by domestic abuse
- Support people who perpetrate domestic abuse to access long term behavioural change programmes
- Enable victims and children to remain with their own homes, where it is safe to do so, or where it is not safe, to access short and long term suitable accommodation
- Increase the knowledge of professional workers to increase the early identification of domestic abuse, supporting residents to accessing specialist services

Appendix 2



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES PROCUREMENT BUSINESS CASE

In accordance with the Procurement and Contracts Rules and Procedures (PCRPs) (see section 3.1.1): a formal business case is required for any procurement with a total value above £50,000. The level of approval required for the Business Case depends on the type of procurement and total ascertainable value of the contract, as indicated in the table below:

1. Level of Approval

State "YES" in the applicable box at either Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3:

Type of Procurement	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3	
	Assistant Director & Director Approval		Executive Approval		Full Council Approval	
Goods and Services	£50k – £500k		> £500k	YES	Annual Value >£5m or TAV >£25m (if capital >£15m)	
Schedule 3 Services	£50k – £663k		> £663k			
Works	£50k – £4,733k		> £4,733k			

NOTE:

Executive meetings (Level 2) are held each month, but the submission of papers is strictly controlled, resulting in a cycle of at least 6-weeks – speak to Democratic Services for assistance.

Full Council meetings (Level 3) are held every second month and submission of papers is controlled as per Executive meetings – speak to Democratic Services for assistance.

2. Project Information

Project / Contract Title	Domestic Abuse Services
Project / Contract Description	Domestic Abuse Services
Expected Start Date & Duration (months)	Start: 1 st July 2021, Duration: 5 Years
Any Extension/s Allowed (months) (e.g.: 1 x 24m / 1 x 12m + 1 x 12m)	1 x 12m + 1 x 12m
Total Ascertainable Value	£1,554,000.
Procurement Advice <i>Provide a short summary of the advice or attach/append any written advice you have obtained, including the type of procedure, Brexit considerations and if the BC is for setting up of DPS or framework agreement.</i>	<p>The term of the contract will be 5 years with an option to extend for 1 year and then an additional final 1 year, bringing the total contract term to a maximum of 7 years. This is in line with standard industry recommended good practice to enable service provision to become well established within the community.</p> <p>The process will start with publishing a Prior Information Notice for early market engagement and awareness of the upcoming re-procurement.</p>

	<p>The procurement will be by way of open competitive tender. Advised to use OPEN Procedure (regulation 27)</p> <p>In 'open' procedures any supplier may submit a tender. The contract is advertised and the invitation to tender pack must be provided to any supplier who wishes to see it. All qualification is done at the tender stage. The procedure expects a minimum of 3 suppliers to submit a tender but until the documents are studied, it would not be possible to claim that all tenderers were qualified to deliver the contract.</p> <p>Commenced with a market engagement event on 15th December 2020.</p>
<p>Finance Advice <i>Confirm budget availability and add any comments relevant to the budget.</i></p>	<p>£1,554,000.</p> <p>Additional funding has been requested as part of the MTFP process. This is based on the increased demand for services and additional statutory duties which are expected to be placed on Local Authorities from April 2021.</p>
<p>Source of Funding <i>(revenue or capital or specified other)</i></p>	<p>Revenue</p>
<p>If procurement is for software, specify outcome of your consultation with IMT and/or Business Change</p>	<p>n/a</p>

3. Project Justification

Link to Service or Corporate Objectives:

- This service aligns with the Boroughs Corporate Delivery Plan and Community Vision in a number of ways, supporting strategic values, principles and plans:
- Safe, Strong Communities
- Changing the way, we work for you
- aligns with our Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy particularly 'reducing inequalities'
- supporting the ASC strategy aim to protect and safeguard adults
- Following priorities within the developing Children & Young People's Plan:
 - Priority 1 – Early Intervention and Prevention
 - Priority 2 – Emotional Wellbeing
 - Priority 3 – Contextual Safeguarding

Project Specific Objectives, Appraisal of Options and Project Timetable:

The council is responsible for commissioning domestic abuse support for individuals who are identified as being at high or medium risk of serious harm. This includes support for children living in homes where domestic abuse is a factor and to enable perpetrators to access interventions to change their behaviour.

The current contract for the commissioned service provided by Berkshire Women’s Aid (BWA) is due to expire at the end of June 2021 and this report is to seek agreement to re-commission specialist abuse services.

Ensuring effective and timely access to information, specialist services and multi-agency support is a vital part of keeping residents safe. Future commissioned service provision must consider the changing demand and local population together with the new statutory requirements. This will ensure sustained and more stable outcomes for residents. Re-procurement presents an opportunity to re-align our services and ensure a whole systems approach with our partners with emphasis on preventative demand management work and allowing for local innovation and flexibility.

PROCUREMENT TIMETABLE

Prior Information Notice (PIN) published	1 st December 2020
Market Engagement Event	15 th December 2020
Tender opening and evaluation	19 th March 2021
Communication outcomes	April 2021
Contract awarded & TUPE discussed	21 st May 2021
New Service in place	1 st July 2021

Cost Benefit Analysis:

We have undertaken a benchmarking exercise and needs analysis to see how domestic abuse support spending in Wokingham compares to assessed levels of need and anticipated demand. A competitive process will be run to ensure the most economically advantageous tender following a proportionate quality: price evaluation before awarding the contract so that the contract has the greatest opportunity for delivering towards outcomes and performing effectively.

Contract Management:

An essential aspect of the tender process will be to create measurable outcomes and KPIs so that the impact and requirement of the service can be objectively assessed in the future, and so that each service is aligned to the appropriate strategic aim.

The contract management of these contracts will sit with Natasha Jones - People Commissioning with close input from the community safety manager and the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. Performance data will be regularly collated, and quarterly monitoring meetings will be held with the provider. Feedback will be gathered from internal stakeholders for these meetings. It is anticipated that this will take half two days every quarter.

4. Approval

Please fill in the applicable fields according to the level of approval required.

Note: If Level-2 or 3 approval is required, the document should be signed by Assistant Director and Director at Level-1 first, and then presented to the Executive (and Full Council where appropriate) for final approval.

Level 1

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Department</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Assistant Director	Nicholas Austin	Communities Insight & Change	<i>Nicholas Austin</i>
Director	Keeley Clements	Communities Insight & Change	

Level 2

NOTE: Level 1 approval must be completed first.

Please state the date of the relevant Executive meeting or Individual Executive Member Decision at which the Business Case has been approved.

<i>Date of Executive meeting / approval</i>	<i>Item No</i>
Executive Approval	

Level 3

NOTE: Level 1 and 2 approval must be completed first.

Please state the date of the relevant Full Council meeting at which the Business Case has been approved.

<i>Date of Full Council meeting / approval</i>	<i>Item No</i>
Full Council Approval	

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form: Initial impact assessment

If an officer is undertaking a project, policy change or service change, then an initial impact assessment must be completed and attached alongside the Project initiation document.

EqIA Titular information:

Date:	17 December 2020
Service:	Communities Insight and Change
Project, policy, or service EQIA relates to:	Domestic Abuse Service Procurement
Completed by:	Narinder Brar – Community Safety Partnership Manager
Has the EQIA been discussed at services team meeting:	Discussed at Procurement Project Team Meeting
Signed off by:	Nicholas Austin – Interim Assistant Director C&L
Sign off date:	17 December 2020

1. Policy, Project, or service information:

This section should be used to identify the main purpose of the project, policy or service change, the method of delivery, including who key stakeholders are, main beneficiaries and any associated aims.

What is the purpose of the project, policy change or service change , its expected outcomes and how does it relate to your services corporate plan:

The purpose of the project; is to procure a local specialist domestic abuse service. A new service is required to be procured as the current contract is due to end in June 2021. It will be procured to meet a change in local demand levels for service and changing local demographics as well as current good practice. Ensuring effective access to information, specialist services and multi-agency support is a vital part of keeping our residents safe. The council is responsible for commissioning domestic abuse support for individuals who are identified as being at high or medium risk of serious harm.

The service will include helpline, specialist independent domestic abuse advice, and outreach and refuge provision.

This service aligns with our Community Vision and the Corporate Delivery Plan in several ways, supporting strategic values, principles, and plans:

- Safe, Strong Communities
- Changing the way we work for you

In addition, the service aligns with our Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy particularly ‘reducing inequalities’ as well as supporting the new ASC strategy and priorities of the West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Board Priority; to work collaboratively with Safeguarding Children’s Partnership, Community Safety Partnerships and Health and Wellbeing Boards to provide the workforce with the frameworks and tools to work with Vulnerable Adults who are at risk of Domestic Abuse”

The service will also contribute to the following priorities within the developing Children & Young People’s Plan:

Priority 1 – Early Intervention and Prevention

Priority 2 – Emotional Wellbeing

Priority 3 – Contextual Safeguarding

Outline how you are delivering your project, policy change or service change. What governance arrangements are in place, which internal stakeholders (Service managers, Assistant Directors, Members etc.) have/will be consulted and informed about the project or changes:

A service development workshop held in October, with key internal and external stakeholders including the police, health, police, children’s services, commissioning, the police and crime commissioner’s office and voluntary sector representatives a procurement project team has been formed.

A market engagement event open to potential suppliers was held on 15th December 2020. Service user engagement was undertaken as part of a need’s assessment; undertaken in 2020 due to the sensitive nature of the service, involvement of service users on the evaluation panel was assessed as not appropriate. Internal stakeholders including Children and Adult Services will be consulted with regarding the contract specification.

The new service will be delivered through a competitive commissioning procurement process which started with a market engagement event on the 15th of Dec involving the procurement project team. The project team includes representatives from; commissioning, procurement, community safety, adults and children’s social care and health.

A business case and report has been to the council’s corporate leadership team and then on to the Executive for formal agreement.

Outline who are the main beneficiaries of the Project, policy change or service change?

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality, or background. Whilst both men and women may experience incidents of inter-personal violence and abuse, women are considerably more likely to experience repeated and severe forms of abuse, including sexual violence. Domestic abuse does not only occur between couples. It can also involve wider family

members, including parental abuse by an adolescent or grown child. It can exist between older siblings, or the wider extended family in elder or honour-based abuse.

The main beneficiaries of the Project will be:

- Victims of domestic abuse and their families.
- Children and Young People affected by domestic abuse
- The service will be available to all Wokingham residents including a focus on increased accessibility for BME, male, and LGBT victims.
- Professionals – will benefit through improved training and awareness and clearly defined referral pathways.

Outline any associated aims attached to the project, policy change or service change:

Commissioning of this service will meet the mandated and local needs by developing a specification:

- using the Care Act 2014 and statutory Care Act guidance to ensure commissioned services meet the mandate
- using the Wokingham domestic abuse needs assessment report produced by Safelives and the service development workshop held in October to tailor the specification
- developing services in line with the new Domestic Abuse Bill requirements

The integrated domestic abuse service aims to improve outcomes by:

- Ensuring that support planning and delivery is co-produced with the customers
- Delivers high quality care and support to achieve the aims of the service
- Is sensitive to the needs of an individual customer and non-discriminatory in the delivery of the service
- Accessible so that it can provide services when needed to all customers within its normal operating hours
- Promotes the safety of customers and that of their families, staff, and the wider public
- Well-co-ordinated between all staff, stakeholders, and partners, focused on safety and risk management
- Delivers short- and medium-term support to the point of physical and emotional wellbeing
- Empowers and supports staff
- Properly accountable to its customers and their carers

Service objectives:

- Maintain and improve the health and wellbeing of the residents that use the service
- Effectively safeguard victims and hold perpetrators to account in partnership with other agencies
- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour related to domestic abuse
- Support children who are impacted by domestic abuse
- Support people who perpetrate domestic abuse to access long term behavioural change programmes
- Enable victims and children to remain with their own homes, where it is safe to do so, or where it is not safe, to access short and long term suitable accommodation
- Increase the knowledge of professional workers to increase the early identification of domestic abuse, supporting residents to accessing specialist services

2. Protected characteristics:

There are 9 protected characteristics as defined by the legislation:

- Race
- Gender
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Age
- Religious belief
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership:

To find out more about the protected groups, please consult the EQIA guidance.

3. Initial Impact review:

In the table below, please indicate whether your project, Policy change or service change will have a positive or negative impact on one of the protected characteristics. To assess the level of impact, please assign each group a Positive, No, Low or High impact score:

For information on how to define No, low, or high impact, please consult the EQIA guidance document.

If your project is to have a positive impact on one of the protected groups, please outline this in the table below.

Protected characteristics	Impact score	Please detail what impact will be felt by the protected group:
Race:	Positive	Increased information, help and guidance in a variety of languages will be made widely available locally.
Gender:	Positive	Research suggests 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men are affected by domestic abuse. Rape and sexual abuse can be features of domestic abuse. Clearer information for male victims about access to services and who and where to go for help and advice will be delivered.
Disabilities:	Positive	Research identifies that disabled people are more at risk of domestic abuse and staff need to be aware and recognise this increased vulnerability. The service will ensure that information and help is inclusive for the needs of victims and survivors with disabilities and reasonable adjustments are made when identified and required.
Age:	No Change	There is a significant body of research which identifies the impact of domestic abuse on all ages of individuals. The service will be available to all ages

Sexual orientation:	Positive	Research identifies increased vulnerability of LGBTQ individuals. The service will focus on increasing access and support for victims of domestic abuse who are LGBT. This will be through clear information and advice about where to access help and assistance.
Religion/belief:	No Change	Domestic abuse is about power and control over an individual, work has to be culturally sensitive. The service will be available to all religions and beliefs
Gender re-assignment:	Positive	The service will focus on increasing access and support for victims of domestic abuse who have had gender re-assignment. This will be through clear information and advice about where to access help and assistance.
Pregnancy and Maternity:	No Change	Research identifies that a significant proportion of domestic abuse starts/occurs in pregnancy. The service will be mindful of and fully available to anybody with this characteristic
Marriage and civil partnership:	No Change	Domestic abuse occurs within all forms of intimate partner relationships. The service will be fully available to anybody with this characteristic.

Based on your findings from your initial impact assessment, you must complete a full impact assessment for any groups you have identified as having a low of high negative impact. If No impact, or a positive impact has been identified, you do not need to complete a full assessment. However, you must report on this initial assessment and it must receive formal approval from the Assistant Director responsible for the project, policy, or service change.