

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 19 October 2022

Recommissioning Domestic Abuse Services



Cllr Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture said,

“By pooling our resources with Stoke-on-Trent and the Staffordshire Commissioner’s Office, we have been able to ensure services for victims and families are consistently available across the whole of Staffordshire.

“We want these services to really make a difference to victims, perpetrators and families, and the fact that we have been recognised nationally shows that the current arrangements are having a positive effect. This is why we are recommending the currently arrangements are continued for at least the next three years to

ensure victims of domestic abuse are able to access the services they need, regardless of where they live in the county.”

Report Summary:

This Report highlights that the existing Domestic Abuse Victim and Perpetrator Services contract will terminate at the end of September 2023 and requests that the funding for the recommissioning of these services is secured. The Report recommends that the services are jointly recommissioned with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Commissioner Office replicating the current arrangements, and that the level of funding per annum remains at the existing core contract level, adjusted for inflation.

Recommendations

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Agree that the Domestic Abuse victim and perpetrator services be re-commissioned and funded for up to five years, with an initial three-year contract. With the delegated authority of the Cabinet Member for Culture & Communities the contract may be extended for a further two years, providing continuity and sustainability for this much needed and valuable service.”

- b. Agree that the commissioning may be carried out jointly with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Commissioners Office (SCO) to procure Domestic Abuse Services across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, and for the Staffordshire Commissioners Office to be the Lead Commissioner.
- c. Agree that the funding from Staffordshire County Council for the recommissioned service is maintained at the current level of £670,450 per annum, this will be increased in line with the County Council's MTFS inflation assumptions and will therefore mean that £683,860 will be available for the start of the recommissioned Contract



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Recommendations of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Agree that the Domestic Abuse victim and perpetrator services be re-commissioned and funded for up to five years, with an initial three-year contract with the potential to extend for a further two years, providing continuity and sustainability for this much-needed and valuable service.”
- b. Agree that the commissioning be carried out jointly with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Commissioners Office (SCO) to procure Domestic Abuse Services across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, and for the Staffordshire Commissioners office to be the Lead Commissioner.
- c. Agree that the funding Staffordshire County Council for the recommissioned service is maintained at the current level of £670,450 per annum; this will be increased in line with the County Council’s MTFS inflation assumptions and will therefore mean that £683,860 will be available for the start of the recommissioned Contract

Local Member Interest:

N/A

Report of the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

Reasons for Recommendations:

1. Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, and the Staffordshire Commissioner’s Office (SCO) currently jointly commission Domestic Abuse (DA) services across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, with the SCO acting as lead commissioner.
2. The current Service Contract commenced in October 2018 with the provision of Domestic Abuse Services for Victims awarded to Victim Support and the Service Contract for the provision of Domestic Abuse Services for Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse to the Reducing Reoffending Partnership. Both services are provided under the brand name of ‘New Era’ and include provision for victims, perpetrators, children, and young people.

3. The current contract ends on 30 September 2023 and activity to commence the recommissioning of the service is due to begin to allow sufficient time for the procurement process and allow for the mobilisation of the new contract.
4. Domestic Abuse is a key priority highlighted within every Community Safety Strategic Assessment across all Staffordshire Districts and Boroughs and the joint commissioning of the service has enabled a consistent approach for Domestic Abuse services across the whole of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.
5. Demand for Domestic Abuse services remains high, and it is noted that referrals to the victim service have increased by approximately 30% on pre-covid figures. Referrals made into the current contracted services to date are highlighted in the tables below for information.

1/10/18 to 31/03/2022

Past 12 months

	Pan-Staffordshire	Staffordshire	Pan-Staffordshire	Staffordshire
Victim service	21,884	13,678	7,669	4,771
Perpetrator service	1,200	650	286	140

6. Overarching governance for the contract is provided by the Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Delivery Board (DACDB) which is jointly chaired by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire County Council representatives. Domestic Abuse, including the commissioned service contract performance, is also considered at the Safer and Stronger Communities Strategy Group, chaired by the County Council's Cabinet Member for Communities & Culture. It is intended that these arrangements will continue with the new Contract.
7. Funding provided by the County Council is used for service provision exclusively within the County Council area, whilst Stoke City Council funding is spent within the City boundary. The Staffordshire Commissioners Office funding is used to meet demand wherever it is required across the whole of the County and City.
8. The collaborative approach to the commissioning of the existing Domestic Abuse Services has meant that support for the victims and their families has been consistently available across the whole county, regardless of where they live. The Services have encompassed support for victims, families, communities, and businesses through tiered provision including prevention and early intervention, targeted and acute support.

9. The current commissioned service comprises three elements:
- a. Prevention (Tier 1); This encompasses the provision of specialist input, advice, and guidance to relevant agencies/ bodies to support the development of successful domestic abuse related universal and targeted education programmes for schools and alternative educational establishments.
 - b. Early Intervention (Tier 2); The Early Intervention element of this service encompasses interventions that aim to equip people (victims and perpetrators) to identify the traits and manifestations of abusive behaviour, reduce risk and empower people to make positive choices and sustainable behaviour changes.
 - c. Targeted Support (Tier 3 and Tier 4). The Targeted Support element of the service will encompass interventions that aim to address the complex/acute problems associated with domestic abuse. The service links in with specialist providers of Drug, Alcohol and Mental Health Services, General Practitioners, Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, Housing Officers, Courts, Police etc. as appropriate, in order to address the most widely experienced issues.
10. A similar tiered approach to perpetrator rehabilitation, introduced as part of this commissioning, has created safer communities by giving offenders the opportunity to change and the skills to rebuild their lives through tailored individual support and collaborative partnerships. The success of this approach has resulted in the recommendation to recommission in this way.
11. Contract performance is reviewed quarterly against a set of outputs and outcomes including feedback from Victims. The responses are very positive with both Adults and Children and Young People reporting increases in a number of areas. An extract of the last Annual Report showing survey results received (year ended Oct 21) is included as Appendix 1 to this Report.
12. This joint commissioning approach has been recognised nationally as a best practice model and has resulted in a visit from the Domestic Abuse Commissioners office. SafeLives, the UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse, have also endorsed Staffordshire's approach.

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13. The Report was presented to the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 01 September 2022 and their comments have informed changes to the content of the report and recommendations.

14. The Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented upon the increased demand for this service and noted that funding levels have not increased since the commencement of the current contract. Maintaining the current value represents a reduction in funding in real terms. Recommendation C of the Report has been amended to reflect the inclusion of an inflationary increase and address concerns raised by members of the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Finance colleagues have confirmed that 2% inflation should be applied to the base figure and this will be added centrally to the base budget.

Legal Implications

15. It is proposed that Tri-Partite Agreements will be drawn up and signed by all Parties, that will detail the terms under which the Parties have agreed to fund the cost and will outline joint working arrangements to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of Domestic Abuse Services for Victims and Perpetrators. This mirrors the approach that is currently in place with financial arrangements for the current contract. Existing documents will be reviewed and updated by the County Council's Legal Services Team to ensure they reflect the new contract arrangements.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

16. The funding from Staffordshire County Council will provide services solely within the local authority footprint. Stoke on Trent City Council have agreed that they will continue to fund a jointly recommissioned service. The Staffordshire Commissioner Office's contribution will fund additional resources. The pooling of funding for the provision of these services together with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire Commissioners Office will enable services for victims and their families to be consistently available across the whole county, regardless of where they live.
17. The joint recommissioning of domestic abuse services across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, and all the other key areas of work outlined in this report, benefits those members of the community who are victims, or at risk of being victims, of domestic abuse. A community impact assessment has been produced and is attached as Appendix 2.

Climate Change Implications

18. There are no climate change implications arising as a result of the recommendations set out within this report.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Contract Performance – Outcomes

Appendix 2 – Community Impact Assessment

Contact Details

Assistant Director: Catherine Mann, Interim Assistant Director for Culture, Rural and Safer Communities

Report Author: Trish Caldwell
Job Title: County Commissioner Regulatory Services and Community Safety

Telephone No.: 01785 277804

E-Mail Address: trish.caldwell@staffordshire.gov.uk

