

Leader Decision

Commissioning of Domestic Abuse Support

23 April 2020

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Leader of the Council authorises the Strategic Director for People to enter into relevant contracts for the provision of adult domestic abuse related support services.
- 1.2 That the Leader of the Council authorises the Strategic Director for People to proceed with entering into a procurement process for the provision of adult domestic related support services which will come into effect from 1 April 2021 on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Warwickshire County Council currently commissions Domestic Abuse services to support people aged over 16 affected by domestic violence and abuse. These services are currently delivered by Refuge.
- 2.2 The contract for these services is due to expire on 31 March 2021 and therefore approval is required to commence a tender process for new provision to start 1 April 2021.
- 2.3 Support services for domestic abuse victims have been commissioned in Warwickshire since the late 1990s. Over the years, this provision has grown and developed as a greater understanding has evolved about how domestic abuse affects individuals and families, and in response to national policy and legislative changes which better support local action to end this form of violence.
- 2.4 In April 2019, AVA (Against Violence and Abuse) was commissioned by Warwickshire County Council to undertake a strategic review into domestic abuse services across the county. The recommendations from the review form the foundations on which the new service provision will be based from April 2021.
- 2.5 The initial contract term will be 5 years. However, the Council will reserve the right to extend the contract up to a further 24 months based on successful contract performance. The contract will allow the Council to vary the service should there be a significant change in resource availability.

2.6 We anticipate that the services are likely to include the following elements (subject to analysis of the needs assessment and available budget):

- Specialist domestic abuse helpline
- Outreach support
- Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs)
- Specialist support for male, BME and LGBT victims
- Hospital and GP liaison
- Sanctuary scheme
- Coordination of Warwickshire's Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)
- Perpetrator programme
- Domestic Abuse Refuge (accommodation) provision

3. Supporting Information¹

3.1 Nationally, domestic abuse is vastly under reported, however research shows that it accounts for 16% of all violent crime and 1 in 4 women will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime. Domestic abuse also has more repeat victims than any other crime and on average, two women in England and Wales are killed every week by a current or former male partner.

3.2 In the year ending March 2018, an estimated 2.0 million adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year. Women were around twice as likely to have experienced domestic abuse than men (1.3 million women, 695,000 men). With one in five women has experienced some form of sexual violence since the age of 16

3.3 For Warwickshire there were 1,895 domestic abuse offences & crimed incidents recorded in March 2019 across Warwickshire.

3.4 The percentage of violence with injury that has a Domestic Abuse 'marker' has risen from 27.9% in April 2014 to 35.5% in March 2019

3.5 Across the four Warwickshire refuges, 342 referrals were received in the 2018/19 financial year

3.6 During the period April 2018 to March 2019, there were a total of 2,407 referrals for Independent Domestic Violence Advisor support, in comparison to the 1,235 during the period April 2012 to March 2015

3.7 Between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019, there were 5,243 referrals to children's social care, the main reason for 23% (541) of these being Domestic Abuse and during the same period there were 2802 children who had an Early Help Single Assessment, 25% (698) of which identified Domestic Abuse as a factor.

¹ Data from Independent Strategic Review – Domestic Abuse Services 2019

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The current annual expenditure for the main contracted services is £655,000. Included in this an annual investment from the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner (WPCC) of £125,000; this investment has been in place since 2015 and has been agreed for 2020/21. At this stage no certainty regarding future funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner exists, as there are elections to this position in May 2021. Whilst efforts to seek a commitment will take place, it needs to be acknowledged that this may affect future commissioning activity and the level of service delivery.
- 4.2 The total annual budget for 2020/21 is £1.114 million, which includes the WPCC contribution. It reflects an additional £0.500m allocation in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy that will contribute towards the development of a new Domestic Abuse Strategy and enhanced services (examples of which are included in item 2.6 above). The total value of the contracts over the potential seven years is therefore £7,000,000. It needs to be recognised that the budget may increase should funding contributions be committed by other partners such as the Home Office and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

5. Environmental Implications

- 5.1 There are no environmental implications

6 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 6.1 The timescales for the procurement exercise is as follows:
- July 2020 – tender process commences
 - October 2020 – contracts awarded
 - April 2021 – contracts start

Appendices

None included

Background Papers

None included

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The report was not circulated to members prior to publication