

DMPC Decision – PCD 1378

Title: Victims (VAWG) Cost of Living Fund

Executive Summary:

MOPAC commissions a large number of victim-survivor support services in London, including specialist and/or grassroots services supporting Black and minoritized groups in the capital. Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic continues, with the level of demand for support services increasing and the need to support victims-survivors more intensely and over longer periods growing.

Simultaneously, the cost of living has been increasing across the UK since early 2021. Our services are reporting an increased need for financial support for basic items such as food and travel, as well as rising costs of household bills and accommodation. There are also increasing reports of victims-survivors advising of financial-related barriers preventing them from being able to leave abusive relationships and/or households, resulting in them continuing to be at risk of harm.

This decision requests approval to establish a Cost of Living Grant Fund (the Fund) with a value of up to £1m, to ensure victims-survivors can gain access to the financial assistance they and their families need to seek safety.

This decision also requests approval to issue a contract variation to the London Community Foundation (LCF) via the Grant Administration Services contract (awarded under PCD 1196), for which the maximum fee payable is £62,500.

Recommendation:

The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime is recommended to:

1. approve establishing a Cost of Living Fund with a value of up to £1m;
2. approve issuing a contract variation to LCF via the Grant Administration Services contract (awarded under PCD 1196) and to transfer both the full fund value (up to £1m) and the Fund Manager grant administration fee (up to £62,500), totalling up to £1,062,500, to LCF;
3. delegate the approval of detailed arrangements for the disbursement of the Fund to the Director of Commissioning and Partnerships in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer; and
4. delegate authority to the MOPAC Chief Finance Officer to sign the variation to the Grant Administration Services contract with LCF.

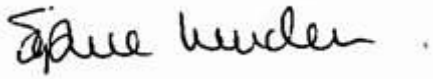
Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

I confirm I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct. Any such interests are recorded below.

The above request has my approval.

Signature

Date 17/02/2023

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PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE DMPC

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. MOPAC commissions a large number of victim-survivor support services in London, including specialist and/or grassroots services supporting Black and minoritized groups in the capital. Those services supporting victims-survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), and their families, are all reporting concerns about the impact of the cost of living crisis on victims-survivors.
- 1.2. Services are seeing an increased need for financial support for basic items such as food and travel, as well as rising costs of household bills and accommodation, yet access to hardship grants is becoming less accessible. Victims-survivors are reporting that they are unable to pay for necessities, pay bills and access childcare. These reports correlate with findings from the 2022 Women's Aid [survey and report](#).
- 1.3. The cost of living crisis is also impacting a victim-survivor's ability to access supportive and potentially lifesaving services. They report that they are less able to afford travel to attend supportive appointments, or access and/or maintain affordable technology such as smartphones or a computer, that would otherwise enable this.
- 1.4. There are increasing reports of victims telling their support workers that they cannot afford to leave an abusive relationship or household as they do not have the means to be able to do so. Furthermore, perpetrators are also using financial hardship as a tool of coercive control, including to justify further restricting a victim's access to money.
- 1.5. Services are also reporting that some victims who are experiencing the impacts of the cost of living crisis are finding themselves in a position where they feel they have little option but to turn to prostitution, in person and/or online. This in turn could expose victims to further or new harm and exploitation.
- 1.6. Fewer victims are also able to seek the support of legal services due to lack of disposable money, and the means test for legal aid does not take into account the rising cost of living.

2. Issues for consideration

- 2.1. To coincide with the UK Government's 2022 Autumn Budget, the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and Directors of the End Violence Against Women Coalition, Imkaan, Rape Crisis England & Wales, Respect, Women's Resource Centre, Welsh Women's Aid and Women's Aid Federation of England, made a [joint statement](#) on the impact of the cost of living on women and children facing abuse which creates a conducive context for VAWG. It was recommended that an emergency fund be set up that will prevent the risk of death or destitution for victims.
- 2.2. The cost of living crisis follows 2 years of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on services, where VAWG organisations have seen an unprecedented increase in demand and complexity with no sign of this abating. The joint statement from the VAWG Sector

highlights that the majority of women being referred to services are struggling with the rising cost of living.

- 2.3. This statement, along with the Women's Aid report referred to above (paragraph 1.2) and information provided from MOPAC's commissioned services in London, indicate that there is a critical need for access to a crisis fund for victims of VAWG in the capital, in order to avoid the risk of destitution, serious harm, and/or homicide.
- 2.4. This decision therefore seeks approval to establish a Cost of Living Grant Fund (the Fund) with a value of up to £1m to ensure victims-survivors can gain access to the financial assistance they and their families need to seek safety.
- 2.5. It also seeks approval for the grant administration of the Fund to be managed by the London Community Foundation (LCF) as part of the existing fund manager call-off arrangements in place via the Grant Administration Services contract, awarded under PCD 1196.
- 2.6. MOPAC will work with LCF to agree the timescale, priorities and parameters for the Fund, with a view to launching the Fund in March 2023.

3. Financial Comments

- 3.1. This decision seeks approval to put in place a cost of living fund to be administered by the London Community Foundation (LCF). The total cost is £1,062,500 of which £1,000,000 is for the fund and £62,500 is for the Fund Manager grant administration fee. The cost of the fund will be met by the 2022/23 underspend.
- 3.2. The funding will be transferred to LCF in advance in order to enable them to disburse the funding to its recipients, in line with the terms of the Grant Administration Services contract. Expenditure will be managed as part of MOPAC's standard contract management processes, and LCF have their own robust financial management processes in place for grantees.

4. Legal Comments

- 4.1. MOPAC's general powers are set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). Section 3(6) of the 2011 Act provides that MOPAC must "secure the maintenance of the metropolitan police service and secure that the metropolitan police service is efficient and effective." Under Schedule 3, paragraph 7 (1) MOPAC has wide incidental powers to "do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of the functions of the Office." Paragraph 7(2) (a) provides that this includes entering into contracts and other agreements.
- 4.2. Section 143 (1) (b) of the Anti-Social, Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 provides for MOPAC to provide or commission services "intended by the local policing body to victims or witnesses of or other persons affected by, offences and anti-social behaviour." Section

143 (3) specifically allows MOPAC to make grants in connection with such arrangements and any grant may be made subject to any conditions that MOPAC thinks appropriate.

- 4.3. There are further relevant powers set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 at sections 17(1) (a) to (c) which place MOPAC under a duty to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all it can to prevent, crime and disorder (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment), reoffending in its area, and the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area. The proposed arrangements are consistent with MOPAC's duties in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- 4.4. Paragraph 4.8 of the MOPAC Scheme of Delegation and Consent provides that the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime (DMPC) has delegated authority to approve all business cases for revenue expenditure of £500,000 and above.
- 4.5. Paragraph 4.6 of the MOPAC Scheme of Delegation and Consent provides the DMPC authority to delegate those functions which are reserved for the DMPC.
- 4.6. These recommendations are in line with the MOPAC Scheme of Delegation and Consent.

5. Commercial Issues

- 5.1. The contract variation is allowed within the terms of the Grant Administration Services contract with LCF, approved through PCD 1196.

6. Public Health Approach

- 6.1. The VRU will be consulted on services commissioned using this funding to ensure alignment with VRU activity and wider public health approach to tackling violence in London.

7. GDPR and Data Privacy

- 7.1. MOPAC will adhere to the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and ensure that any organisations who are commissioned to do work with or on behalf of MOPAC are fully compliant with the policy and understand their GDPR responsibilities.

8. Equality Comments

- 8.1. MOPAC is required to comply with the public sector equality duty set out in section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. This requires MOPAC to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations by reference to people with protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

9. Background/supporting papers

PCD 1196 Procurement of Grant Administration Services

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and will be made available on the MOPAC website following approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.

Part 1 Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

If yes, for what reason:

Until what date:

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered as likely to be exempt from disclosure under the FOIA should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a **Part 2** form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION	<i>Tick to confirm statement (✓)</i>
Financial Advice: The Strategic Finance and Resource Management Team has been consulted on this proposal.	✓
Legal Advice: Legal advice is not required.	✓
Equalities Advice: Equality and diversity issues are covered in the body of the report.	✓
Public Health Approach Due diligence has been given to determine whether the programme sits within the Violence Reduction Unit's public approach to reducing violence. This has been reviewed and supported by a senior manager within the VRU.	✓
Commercial Issues The Contract Management Team has been consulted on the commercial issues within this report. The proposal is in keeping with the GLA Group Responsible Procurement Policy.	✓
GDPR/Data Privacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDPR compliance issues are covered in the body of the report • A DPIA is not required. 	✓
Drafting Officer Lisa Le Masson has drafted this report in accordance with MOPAC procedures.	✓
Director/Head of Service: The Head of Policy and Commissioning has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the MOPAC's plans and priorities.	✓

Chief Executive Officer

I have been consulted about the proposal and confirm that financial, legal and equalities advice has been taken into account in the preparation of this report. I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime.

Signature**Date 13/02/2023**A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Hannahuchford.", is written on a light blue rectangular background.