

DMPC Decision – PCD 1691

Title: Commissioning of Domestic Abuse Victim Services for 2024/25 to 27/28

Executive Summary:

Following the discontinuation of the procurement process for the recommissioning of London's service for victims and survivors of domestic abuse and to secure safe service continuity for Londoners, this decision seeks approval to extend the contractual arrangements for the domestic abuse services currently due to expire on 30th September 2024. This is necessary to enable MOPAC to deliver on its commitments in the PCP and to discharge MOPAC's devolved responsibility for arranging the provision of services for victims of domestic abuse in London. This decision requests reprofiling of a total funding amount up to £5,000,000 (as awarded in PCD 1517) for the extension of current services, extending existing provision until 30th September 2025. In line with this request, this decision also requests an extension of the Drive IDVA Service (as awarded in PCD1436) to 31 March 2025.

This decision also seeks approval to initiate a renewed procurement process to identify a provider to deliver support services for victims of domestic abuse for a period of 30 months (2.5 years), with the option to extend for up to a further 24 months (2 years). The contract will also include a mobilisation period of 6 months, meaning the initial contract term will be up to a maximum of 36 months (3 years). It is proposed to publish the new tender with a total maximum value across the full 5-year period of £29,250,000.

The decision requests the profiling of a total funding amount up to £12,500,000 across financial years 2025/26 to 2027/28, for the initial contract period and up to a maximum value of £29,250,000. Any extensions beyond 2028 or in-year budget uplift will require further DMPC approval.

Recommendation:

The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime is recommended to:

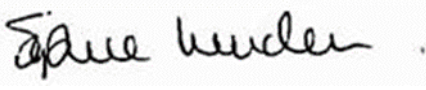
1. Approve the contract variation to extend the Domestic Abuse element of the London Victim and Witness Service and the modification of the grant agreement with the Ascent Advice Partnership until 30 September 2025 at a maximum total cost of £5,000,000.
2. Approve the grant modification to extend the current arrangements with the Domestic Abuse element of the London Victim and Witness Service for the provision of Drive IDVA Service until 31 March 2025 at a maximum total cost of £180,887.

3. Approve the initiation of the procurement process to replace existing arrangements for the delivery of the London Victim and Witness Domestic Abuse Service at a potential maximum cost of £29,250,000.
4. Approve the allocation of up to a maximum total value of £12,500,000 across financial years 2025/26 to 2027/28 to the successful provider following the outcome from the procurement process. The indicative annual values of the specialist service for victims of domestic abuse is £5,000,000 p.a.
5. Note that any further contract extensions or uplifts above the original value of £12,500,000 up to a potential maximum value of £29,250,000 are subject to DMPC approval and additional funding being identified.
6. Delegate authority to sign and execute the contracts to the Chief Financial Officer, in accordance with the general power of delegation in paragraph 1.7 of the MOPAC Scheme of Consent and Delegation.

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 30/07/2024

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

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. A key priority of the Police and Crime Plan (PCP) 2022-25 is to improve the support available for victims of crime in London. The Mayor has been relentless in his pursuit of ensuring good quality support provision is available in London for those affected by crime, whether they chose to report to the police or not.
- 1.2. Since 1st April 2019, MOPAC has commissioned the London Victim and Witness Service (LVWS) to provide practical and emotional support to adult victims of crime in London (including survivors of domestic abuse), helping them to cope and recover from the impact of crime and which supports approximately 50,000 victims/witnesses each year and a specialist service supporting victims of domestic abuse, through the Ascent Advice Partnership, supports approximately 2,000 victims/survivors a year.
- 1.3. MOPAC has worked with stakeholders across the VAWG sector to co-develop and shape the design of future services and has carried out comprehensive engagement with stakeholders across the sector.
- 1.4. MOPAC published an Invitation to Tender (ITT) for the New Domestic Abuse Service on 03 November 2023 with a view for the new service to start by 1st October 2024 as approved by PCD 1617.
- 1.5. Following the evaluation of the bids received, and issue of letters with the intention to award, a review of the procurement process was undertaken and potential issues with the process were identified. As a result, MOPAC have taken a decision to discontinue the procurement process and to start a new updated competition with a view for the new service to start by 1st October 2025.

2. Issues for consideration

- 2.1. Whilst the LVWS and Ascent Advice Partnership has proven successful, the context and market in London has seen significant change since they were last commissioned in 2018/19. In 2021, MOPAC commissioned the Strategic Needs Assessment for Victims in London which outlined that the demand for victims' services has increased, as has the complexity of cases presenting to services. This has in part been driven by the socio-economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the rising cost of living but also an increase in the number of crimes involving Violence Against Women and Girls reported to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS).
- 2.2. The current LVWS Domestic Abuse and Ascent Advice Plus Services are due to expire on 30 September 2024 in line with the previously anticipated start date of the new service. Given the discontinuation of the previous procurement and to ensure that service continuity of the existing provision is secured as the first priority so that Londoners will remain unaffected, this decision is requesting 12-month extensions of the LVWS DA

service provided by Victims Support and the Ascent Advice Plus Service provided by Solace Women's Aid.

- 2.3. This decision is also requesting approval for the commencement of a new procurement process, implementing the lessons learned from the discontinued process to commence immediately with a view to procure the new service to open 1st October 2025.
- 2.4. The initial contract term will be for up to 36 months (3 years) and will all include a service delivery period of 30 months (2.5 years) and a mobilisation period of 6 months. The contract for the specialist service for victims of domestic abuse will commence from 1st April 2025, to allow for 6-month mobilisation and transition period. The contracts will also all include an option to extend for up to a further 24 months (2 years), subject to DMPC approval.
- 2.5. PCD1517 approved funding for the anticipated new Domestic Abuse Service for a maximum initial budget of £17,500,000 for frontline delivery between 1st October 2024 and 31st March 2028. Following the discontinuation of the original procurement process (as per paragraph 1.5), this decision is requesting the reprofiling of these funds to assign:
- up to a maximum of £5,000,000 for the extension of current services (as 2.3) from 1st October 2024 to 30th September 2025; and,
 - up to a maximum initial budget of £12,500,000 for the new Domestic Abuse Service from 1st October 2025 and 31st March 2028.
- 2.7. The maximum initial budget for the new Domestic Abuse service is £12,500,000. The services will have an option to extend by up to a further two years at a value of £10,000,000. and). £18,250,000. It is proposed to publish the tender with a total maximum value across the full 5-year period of £29,250,000 in line with PCD 1517. This is made up of the £12,500,000 for the initial term, £10,000,000 for the potential extension and 30% headroom of £6,750,000. Any extension or uplift above the initial budget of £12,500,000 will require further DMPC approval.
- 2.8. The contracts for the new services will include appropriate terms to allow for future variations that would enable MOPAC to increase their value, should additional funding for these services become available. They will also include terms to allow MOPAC to reduce the value of any of the individual contracts and vary their service specifications as required, to ensure that MOPAC can mitigate the risk of any potential future reductions in funding beyond the end of the current funding settlement with MoJ.
- 2.9. PCD 1436 formally awards a total of £361,774 for financial year 2024/25 to the LVWS provider for the provision of IDVAs to support the delivery of Drive. As per the request in this decision to extend the contract with Victim Support to continue delivery of LVWS to 30 September 2025, this decision is also requesting the extension of the grant agreement for the Drive IDVA service to 31 March 2025 as agreed in PCD 1436.

3. Financial Comments

- 3.1. The current budget for the domestic abuse service is £5,000,000 p.a. with expenditure funded through a combination of funding from MoJ and Mayoral funding.

- 3.2. This decision is seeking approval to extend the current service delivery of the LVWS Domestic Abuse Service and the Ascent Advice Plus Partnership by 12 months up to a maximum combined value of £5,000,000 (from October 2024 to September 2025: £2,500,000 in 2024/25 and £2,500,000 in 2025/26).
- 3.3. This decision is also seeking approval to go out to tender for a period of 3 years, including 6 months for mobilisation and 2.5 years of service delivery, with the option to extend by up to a further 2 years at a value of up to £29,250,000 (this is broken down as £12,500,000 for the initial contract term of 3 years, £10,000,000 for the 2 year extension and 30% headroom of £6,750,000). However, any further contract extensions or uplifts above £12,500,000 will be subject to DMPC approval and additional funding being identified.
- 3.4. As set out in the table below the intention is to award a contract for a period of up to 3 years, including 2.5 years service delivery and 6 months for mobilisation, at a maximum cost of £12,500,000 (£5,000,000 p.a.) in line with existing funding.

Service	Financial Year		
	2025/26 (6 months of mobilisation and 6 months of delivery)	2026/27	2027/28
Domestic Abuse	£2,500,000	£5,000,000	£5,000,000
Total	£2,500,000	£5,000,000	£5,000,000

- 3.5. There is no confirmation of MoJ funding beyond 2024/25, and future funding allocations are subject to the Comprehensive Spending Review. In the event funding is reduced, budget allocations will be reduced accordingly. The contracts will include terms that allow MOPAC to reduce the value of any of the individual contracts to offset the impact of any potential future reduction in external funding.
- 3.6. The mobilisation of this service will run in parallel with the existing service pending extension of the existing provision to the 30th of September 2025.
- 3.7. PCD 1436 awarded £361,774 for financial year 2024/25 to the LVWS provider to deliver the IDVA provision within the Drive Service. Victim Support currently hold the contract for this service at a maximum value of £180,887 until 30 September 2024. This decision seeks approval to award a 6-month extension to Victim Support for delivery of this service from 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025 up to a maximum value of £180,887. This will be funded from the 2024/25 Drive budget.

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 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) of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 provides power for MOPAC, as a local policing body, to provide or commission services “intended by the local policing body to help victims or witnesses of, or other persons affected by, offences and anti-social behaviour.” The provision of this service would be consistent with this power.
- 4.3. 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 business cases for revenue or capital expenditure of £500,000 or above.
- 4.4. The Mayor's Office for Policing Crime is a contracting authority as defined in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations"). All awards of public contracts for goods and/or services valued at £214,904 inclusive of VAT or above will be procured in accordance with the Regulations.
- 4.5. Paragraph 4.13 of the MOPAC Scheme of Delegation and Consent provides that the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime (DMPC) has delegated authority to approve all requests to go out to tender for contracts of £500,000 or above.
- 4.6. The delegation of responsibility for the finalisation of contractual arrangements, including relevant terms and the signing of agreements, to the Chief Finance Officer is in accordance with the general power of delegation in paragraph 1.7 of the MOPAC Scheme of Consent and Delegation.
- 4.7. Officers must ensure the Financial Regulations and Contract Regulations are complied with.
- 4.8. Officers should ensure that contracts are put in place with and executed by MOPAC and the provider(s) before any commitment to fund is made.
- 4.9. Officers confirm that sufficient assurance has been carried out to this Decision to determine that the DMPC has legal authority to agree the recommendations.

5. Commercial Issues

- 5.1. Recommendation 1 refers firstly to the variation of MOPAC’s existing contract with Victim Support for the extension of the Domestic Abuse element of the London Victim and Witness Service. Contract variations to a contract with an original value of £500k or above can be approved by the DMPC in accordance with 4.14 of MOPAC’s Scheme of Delegation.
- 5.2. Following Approval, the variation must be applied and recorded with suitable paperwork with the provider. Further, a Modification Notice will be published to advise the market of the variation.
- 5.3. Recommendation 1 further refers to the variation of MOPAC’s existing grant with the Ascent Advice Partnership. Recommendation 2 refers to a modification to multiple

existing grants (with SafeLives, Rise, Victim Support, MPS) for the provision of Drive IDVA Services. Grant modifications can be approved the DMPC in accordance with 4.8 of MOPAC's Scheme of Delegation.

- 5.4. Recommendation 3 refers to a request for approval to proceed to procurement. Due to the estimated contract value and the classification of the contract as a Light Touch Services contract, the procurement process shall comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 for an above threshold procurement process.
- 5.5. In accordance with 4.13 of MOPAC's Scheme of Delegation, the DMPC can approve proceeding to procurement for contracts with a value exceeding £500,000.
- 5.6. The actions proposed can be taken in compliance with procurement legislation and MOPAC's Contract Regulations.

6. Public Health Approach

- 6.1. City Hall's public health approach to violence, including violence against women and girls, recognises the tiers of intervention/opportunities to act. The Violence Reduction Unit looks at violence as a preventable consequence of a range of factors, such as adverse early-life experiences, or harmful social or community experiences and influences intervening early when issues start to emerge and resolving them prior to escalation.
- 6.2. The service(s) included in this decision will support people who have already been impacted by violence and exploitation or are at high risk of being impacted, intervening to ensure ongoing issues are well managed to avoid further crises and reduce the harmful consequences of the issues already faced.

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.
- 8.2. Each year, approximately 800,000 Londoners report their victimisation to the Metropolitan Police Service. Research also tells us that many crimes also go unreported and so genuine rates of victimisation are likely to be much higher than this.

Victims of crime in London come from a diverse range of demographic groups and research shows that some communities and individuals are disproportionately affected by crime and subsequent access to justice.

- 8.3. This commissioning programme was informed by a Strategic Needs Assessment for Victims in London (SNA) - the biggest ever review of victim's services in London. Findings from the SNA emphasised the effectiveness of MOPAC's commissioned services in supporting victims to cope and recover from crime and navigate the CJS. However, the SNA concluded that the system of support is under significant strain and the current model for provision is not sustainable. There are 3 driving factors for this:
- Demand outweighs provision
 - Expenditure is not aligned to victims' profile or needs
 - Projections of an increase in violent crime
- 8.4 In addition, the SNA found there are a number of barriers that prevent people from ethnic minority backgrounds, LGBTQ+ and disabled victims from accessing support and engaging with the criminal justice system. The report also highlighted that African/Caribbean and South Asian people are consistently overrepresented among victims of crime, including of the most serious offences such as robbery, sexual offences and violence with injury. MOPAC recognises that 'by and for' provision is most effective in reaching and supporting victims from marginalised communities. That is why MOPAC has continued to invest in programmes like the VAWG Grassroots Fund to grow and develop these services. MOPAC will be incentivising bidders to form partnerships with smaller specialist providers to deliver the services resulting from these procurement processes.
- 8.5 The SNA also found that demographic data could be better recorded by existing services. MOPAC will be setting common minimum requirements across services with a specific focus on improving demographic data.
- 8.6 Cultural awareness, recognising intersectionality, and a commitment to anti-racism have been core design principles agreed with partners as part of the co-design process. The design decisions have been made in line with this principle and been tested with stakeholders through the design and consultation process.
- 8.7 Providers continue to navigate the post pandemic climate, facing increased austerity, comparative reductions in funding due to inflation and recruitment and retention issues. These challenges have become increasingly difficult to manage as certain crimes (or those seeking support for such crimes) have shown increases over recent years including domestic abuse and sexual violence. Public campaigns and several high-profile misconduct cases have shone a spotlight on Violence Against Women and Girls which in turn has seen a positive drive for those wishing to access support and report abuse. However, services have struggled to manage the increased demand within existing resources.
- 8.8 Pressure on resources is exacerbated by the delays many victims face in accessing justice. Already too slow, London's CJS is struggling to bounce back from the postponement of jury trials and social distancing practices during the pandemic and

subsequent strikes from the Criminal Bar Association throughout 2022. A combination of these factors has led to a significant backlog of cases in London's Crown Courts. These delays are significantly above the national average and represent the longest recorded waiting times since records began. Support services work especially hard through the period of limbo to keep victims supported and engaged in the justice process.

- 8.9 Whilst delays pose a threat to justice, so too does victim satisfaction and trust in the Police. Both have been further eroded by several high-profile cases such as the murder and kidnap of Sarah Everard by a serving Police Officer and the conviction of David Carrick, another MPS officer, for heinous crimes against women. The recently published Casey Review echoes victims, women and children have, in particular, been failed by the MPS. Resourcing and structural issues in the force have resulted in a de-prioritisation of victims' needs, and victims receive a poor service as a result. This is reflected in rates of victim satisfaction which have been stagnant around 65% for several years and are even lower for those who report online at 33%. The dissatisfaction is more evident amongst black, LGBTQ+ and disabled victims.
- 8.10 MOPAC and the commissioned services as part of this ecosystem will play a role in the delivery of the MPS Commissioner's Plan "A New Met for London". In addition to maintaining an inward facing focus to identify and respond to disproportionality that arise through the course of delivering these services, the ecosystem will also play an important outward facing role in supporting and challenging MOPAC and other statutory agencies to follow through on their commitment to address disproportionality and discrimination.

9. Background/supporting papers

- 9.1. PCD 1234
- 9.2. PCD 1517
- 9.3. PCD 1436

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 and the GDPR Project Manager has been consulted on the GDPR issues within this report. A DPIA will be completed 	✓
Drafting Officer Sangeeta Bhuhi 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** 30/07/2024