

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3321

Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation call-off 2 contract extensions

Executive summary:

Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 includes a duty on Tier 1 authorities (in London, this is the GLA) to support survivors of domestic abuse, and their children, in refuges and other safe accommodation. Key elements of the duty are to produce a strategy; and to give effect to that strategy through commissioning decisions. Through Mayoral Decision (MD) 2902, the London Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation (DASA) Strategy was published in December 2021; and through MD2892, a commissioning approach was approved.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government allocates funding to the GLA yearly, to support the discharge of its duty. A funding allocation for 2025-26 is expected to be confirmed shortly. This decision seeks approval to delegate authority to the Executive Director, Housing and Land, to receive and spend the 2025-26 funding settlement, when it is received.

The DASA commissioning framework began on 1 March 2022 and ends in March 2025. Approval is also sought to extend the existing call-off contracts, awarded under the framework, from 31 March 2025 to 31 March 2026; and spend up to £15,882,353. Further approval is sought to extend the DASA continuation grants for 2025-26; and spend the associated £6,416,268 for this.

Decision:

That the Mayor:

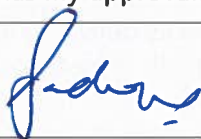
- delegates authority to Executive Director, Housing and Land, to receive the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation (DASA) programme budget from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; and approve spend under this budget for 2025-26
- approves exercising the contractual option to extend the 49 existing call-off contracts under the DASA framework agreement, to continue provision for DASA in 2025-26; and the associated spend of £15,882,353
- approves extending the DASA continuation grants for 2025-26; and the associated spend of £6,416,268.

Mayor of London

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

21/1/25

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE MAYOR

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (the 2021 Act) came into force on 1 October 2021. It confers a statutory duty on Tier 1 authorities (in London, the GLA) to support survivors of domestic abuse, and their children, in safe accommodation. The Domestic Abuse Support (Local Authority Strategies and Annual Reports) Regulations 2021 (the 2021 Regulations) also came into force on 1 October 2021.
- 1.2. The key functions required of Tier 1 authorities – as outlined in the 2021 Act, the 2021 Regulations and statutory guidance – include preparing, publishing and keeping under review a strategy for accommodation-based support for survivors of domestic abuse, and their children. They also require Tier 1 authorities to effect the strategy in carrying out their functions through commissioning and decommissioning decisions.
- 1.3. Mayoral Decision (MD) 2788 and MD2842 gave Mayoral approval to receive from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), and spend, £20.688m of funding (to cover administration and support) for 2021-22. Following this, MD2967 gave Mayoral approval to receive from MHCLG, and spend, £20,745,496 of funding for 2022-23. MD3082 gave Mayoral approval to receive from MHCLG, and spend, £21,160,496 for 2023-24; and £21,559,735 for 2024-25. The Mayor also approved, via these MDs, the GLA entering into a shared-services arrangement with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). Through this arrangement, MOPAC supports the GLA to undertake the activities associated with the new duty.
- 1.4. An anticipated settlement for 2025-26 from MHCLG is expected to be in line with the 2024-25 settlement. At the time of writing, MHCLG had confirmed £160m spend on national domestic abuse safe accommodation (DASA) support in 2025-26; this is a £30m increase on the 2024-25 figure.
- 1.5. This MD is being requested in advance of the confirmed settlement for London from MHCLG. This is because delaying a decision presents a high risk to the Mayor's DASA programme delivery and associated commissioned support services.

The Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation framework

- 1.6. The commissioning approach for DASA was approved via MD2892. This involved the establishment of the DASA framework agreement, dated 20 December 2021. Following this, MOPAC and the GLA jointly procured 49 call-off contracts (under the DASA framework agreement) to support survivors of domestic abuse, and their children, in refuges and other safe accommodation.
- 1.7. The DASA framework agreement includes the option for the GLA to extend the call-off contracts "for a further period or periods up to a total of two years (ending no later than 31 March 2027)".
- 1.8. The DASA framework agreement consists of 67 providers delivering over 80 services. This is split into:
 - Lot 1 – this delivers safe accommodation direct support services (excluding 'by and for' providers but including local authorities)
 - Lot 2 – this delivers safe accommodation direct support services delivered by specialist 'by and for' providers; and includes a single direct award for the Outside Project to deliver the UK's first refuge for trans victims/survivors
 - Lot 3 – this is for systems and infrastructure-related services that do not provide a direct support service to victims/survivors.

- 1.9. The current DASA framework agreement is due to expire on 31 March 2025. This is also the current end date for all the call-off contracts. Approval is sought to extend the DASA call-off contracts until 31 March 2026. This will ensure that these services continue to be funded whilst a new commissioning approach is developed. The exercise of the contractual options must be made before 31 March 2025, when the current contract period ends. When the framework was established, approval was secured for a delegated procurement authority of up to £66m under MD2892. A total of £37,782,998 has already been allocated to contracts under call-off round one and extensions of these; and under call-off round two. (Call-Off 2). This leaves the overall framework value with a remaining balance of £28,217,002.
- 1.10. Approval is sought to exercise the contractual option to extend all call-off contracts for one year. This proposal will cost £15,882,353. Consideration will be given as to how best to meet the future needs of the recipients of the Lot 2 services and any such future project(s) will be the subject of a separate decision form. Subject to funding allocation from MHCLG for 2026-27, Lots 1 and 3 contracts may be extended for a further year, in accordance with the existing contractual options.
- 1.11. A breakdown of these figures is in the table below:

	One-year extension costs for remaining Lot 1 and one Lot 2 service	Maximum one-year extension for Lot 2 specialist services and the Outside Project	One year extension costs for Lot 3	Total
2025-26 costs	£10,517,293.70	£4,290,274	£1,074,784.90	£15,882,353

- 1.12. It has been confirmed that the process of extending the Call-Off 2 contracts will require a paper being taken to the GLA Assurance Meeting (GLAMM). GLAMM will need to approve the extension of 49 contracts under the existing framework for two reasons:
- offering an extension was not written into the individual contracts
 - GLAAM approval is required for contracts that either accumulate to over £1m, or are for £1m.
- 1.13. An MD will need to be in place before the case for extending the Call-Off 2 contracts is taken to GLAMM in January 2025.
- 1.14. The GLA will fund the proposed framework, and contract extensions, from our expected allocation for 2025-26 from MHCLG. In the unlikely event that a settlement from MHCLG is not secured, we hold funds as receipts in advance on the DASA programme balance sheet, which would cover the cost of the extensions.

DASA continuation grants

- 1.15. The Mayor also funds 31 continuation grants under the DASA programme, which are separate to the commissioning framework. These are legacy grants, which were transferred to the GLA from MHCLG when the Domestic Abuse Part 4 Duty came to the GLA in 2021. When the grant fund was launched by MHCLG, organisations applying went through a competitive application process to obtain funding. The grants consist of a mixture of projects, which includes direct victims' services, advocacy, refuge accommodation, and housing-related support to access accommodation and longer-term housing. The GLA has continued to fund these projects to support stability in the sector.
- 1.16. From April 2022 to date, the continuation grants have been extended annually at a total value of £16,585,032. However, the DASA landscape has changed since 2017; these services will need to be replaced to respond to this. For example, the cost-of-living crisis has exacerbated service costs and caused additional pressures; these grants were originally awarded by MHCLG as early as 2017, and have not had an inflationary uplift.

- 1.17. Approval is sought to extend all continuation grants for one year, providing an inflationary uplift of 3.2 per cent to reflect changing demand and costs. This will cost £6,416,268 (of which the inflationary uplift is £352,929.78).

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. All procurements will implement policies and proposals in London's DASA Strategy (2021-24). All grant funding will align with those policies and proposals, whose objectives are to:
- establish a clear and integrated pan-London pathway of support through all stages of a survivor's journey, from early intervention through to crisis, recovery and beyond; this must include supporting victims/survivors to safely remain in their own homes, or to return if and when it is safe to do so
 - support the right of victims/survivors to access physically and psychologically safe spaces where they and their children can recover safely from abuse, supported by services rooted in a rights-based, trauma-informed and gender-informed approach
 - ensure that services, including refuges, meet the cultural, language, religious and other needs of those they serve; and, where appropriate, are run by 'by and for' specialist providers
 - reduce the barriers to accessing services faced by victims/survivors, such as those requiring interpreters; Deaf and disabled victims/survivors; and non-UK nationals with unclear, limited or no recourse to public funds (NRPF¹)
 - ensure that services are of a consistently high quality, in terms of both support and the accommodation provided, to enable victims/ survivors to recover and rebuild; over time, all provision should be self-contained, to support independence and dignity
 - be more strategic in how support is commissioned, delivered and accessed; develop more multi-borough and pan-London level services, where appropriate; and ensure that victims/survivors' access to safety and recovery is not constrained by postcode.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as public authorities, the Mayor and the GLA are subject to a public-sector equality duty and must have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
 - foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2. Protected characteristics under section 149 of the Equality Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status.
- 3.3. Characteristics of victim/survivors of domestic abuse (national figures) are as follows:

¹ The term 'NRPF' is used to mean people with limited or no recourse to public funds. It therefore includes a wider group than those subject to the NRPF condition.

- Gender: women are much more likely than men to be the victims of high-risk or severe domestic abuse. Three-quarters of domestic abuse homicide victims in London between 2005 and 2020 were women.
- Age: younger people are more likely to be subject to interpersonal violence. Most at high-risk victims are in their 20s or 30s. Those under 25 are the most likely to suffer interpersonal violence.
- Pregnancy: nearly one in three people who suffer from domestic abuse during their lifetime report that the first incidence of violence happened while they were pregnant.
- Disability: Deaf or disabled people are more than twice as likely to experience some form of domestic abuse (11.8 per cent) than non-disabled survivors (4.6 per cent). Amongst women, this figure is higher, with 14.7 per cent of victims of domestic abuse being deaf or disabled.
- Separation: domestic abuse is highest amongst those who have separated, followed by those who are divorced or single.
- Drug and alcohol use: victims of abuse have a higher rate of drug and/or alcohol misuse (whether it starts before or after the abuse); at least 20 per cent of at high-risk victims of abuse report using drugs and/or alcohol.
- Mental health: 40 per cent of at high-risk victims of abuse report mental health difficulties.

3.4. Given the above, the proposal in this paper, which seeks to extend and secure service provision, is likely to have positive impacts on several groups with protected characteristics – particularly women, and victims/survivors from marginalised and minoritised groups who are disproportionately impacted by domestic abuse. Specifically, the activities will ensure victim/survivors of domestic abuse have access to various pathways of support.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

4.1. The table below outlines the risks and issues:

Risk description	Rating	Mitigating action
The DASA settlement from MHCLG for 2025-26 has not yet been confirmed, although the overall national funding envelope has been announced. Without a confirmed London settlement, there is a risk to services delivered under the framework, as well as the continuation grants.	Amber	This risk is considered very unlikely, given the continuation of funding for the programme overall and the statutory nature of the GLA's duty. There is funding available under the DASA programme, as a result of underspend from previous financial years. This will be used to pay for the Call-Off 2 extensions and associated staffing costs, should the settlement from MHCLG not be forthcoming.
If the contract extensions proposed cannot be executed by 31 March 2025, all call-off contracts will end. This may result in challenge from services; and could mean victims/survivors will lose life-saving services, which will disproportionately impact the most marginalised women and girls.	Amber	The GLA and MOPAC team will work closely with providers to ensure contracts can be signed in good time.

Continuation grant providers might raise concerns around rising costs that have impacted the services delivered with their continuation grants.	Amber	Any provider offered a continuation grant extension for 2025-26 will receive their agreed grant amount plus an inflation-related uplift. This will go some way in supporting them with increased service costs. MOPAC and the GLA will work with providers to encourage them to develop exit plans over 2025-26, to prepare for the end of continued grant funding.
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Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

4.2. The objectives of the proposals are in line with:

- the Mayor's DASA Strategy 2021-24
- the Mayor's London Housing Strategy, policy 7.2c
- MOPAC's Police and Crime Plan 2022-25 (tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of three priority areas for action to protect people at especially high risk of crime)
- MOPAC's VAWG Strategy.

4.3. New versions of the Mayor's DASA Strategy, the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan, and the Mayor's VAWG Strategy, are currently being developed.

Consultations and impact assessments

4.4. Both the [London Housing Strategy](#) and the [VAWG Strategy](#) were subject to public consultation and equalities impact assessments.

4.5. The development of the Mayor's current DASA strategy (2021-24) and Needs Assessment involved extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. This included those with whom the 2021 Act requires the GLA to consult on the draft strategy: the London DASA Partnership Board (Partnership Board) appointed by the GLA and the London boroughs. Consultation activities included a workshop with the Partnership Board, and surveys of London boroughs and other key stakeholders. The Mayor's draft DASA strategy (2024-27) was published for consultation in October 2024. It is currently being reviewed by the Partnership Board, London Boroughs and wider VAWG sector stakeholders for their feedback. The final DASA strategy for 2024-27 will be published by March 2025.

4.6. There was also in-depth consultation and engagement during the development of the London DASA Needs Assessment, which provides much of the data and information informing the proposals in the draft strategy. This included a workshop with the Partnership Board; interviews with four survivors of domestic abuse; a provider survey; a VAWG coordinator survey; two focus groups with key stakeholders; and 13 one-to-one meetings with key stakeholders.

4.7. MOPAC also convened a series of stakeholder workshops with boroughs and service providers on the commissioning approach and process.

4.8. On 5 November 2021, the draft strategy was published on the GLA and MOPAC websites. It was also sent to the Partnership Board, all London boroughs and other key stakeholders. The public consultation period ran to 21 November 2021, with a meeting of the Partnership Board dedicated to consulting on the draft strategy held on 23 November 2021.

4.9. During the consultation period, 31 consultation responses were received; and stakeholders were consulted at meetings and events. As MOPAC is providing professional support services to the GLA relating to the duties under the 2021 Act, it managed the consultation.

- 4.10. As stated above, an equalities impact assessment has been undertaken and will be published with the strategy (Appendix 3).

Conflicts of interest

- 4.11. The officers involved in the drafting and clearance of this form have not identified any known conflicts of interest.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Mayoral approval is sought to delegate authority to Executive Director, Housing and Land, to receive the DASA programme funding from MHCLG; and approve funding spend for 2025-26. This has been factored into the draft 2025-26 budget, which is to be approved and confirmed in March 2025. However, this budget will be updated when MHCLG has confirmed 2025-26 funding; and approval for its receipt and spend has been granted.
- 5.2. Approval is also requested to: extend the existing call-off contracts under the DASA framework, to continue provision for DASA into 2025-26; and spend the associated £15,882,353. As mentioned, this spend is planned for 2025-26; as per paragraph 1.14, the proposal is to fund this from the expected MHCLG 2025-26 DASA revenue funding. In the unlikely event that a settlement from MHCLG is not secured for 2025-26, there is revenue DASA MHCLG unspent funding held in receipts in advance on the balance sheet, which would cover the cost of the extensions.
- 5.3. Approval is also requested to extend the DASA continuation grants for 2025-26; and to spend the associated £6,416,268. This spend is also planned for 2025-26; and will be funded from revenue DASA MHCLG unspent funding held in receipts in advance on the balance sheet.
- 5.4. DASA contracts and funding mentioned here is managed by the Specialist and Supported Housing Team, part of Specialist Housing Service unit within the Housing and Land directorate.

6. Legal comments

Power to undertake the requested decisions

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Mayor concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers; and fall within the GLA's statutory power to do such things considered to further, or that are facilitative of, or conducive or incidental to, the promotion of social development in Greater London. In formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers have complied with the GLA's related statutory duties to:
- pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people
 - consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the UK
 - consult with appropriate bodies.
- 6.2. In taking the decisions requested, the Mayor must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty – namely, the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation) and persons who do not (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to paragraphs 3.1 to 3.4, above.

Delegation to the Executive Director for Housing and Land

- 6.3. Part of this decision seeks a delegation from the Mayor to the Executive Director for Housing and Land. Any function exercisable by the Mayor on behalf of the GLA may also be exercised by any member of the GLA's staff – to the extent that the Mayor authorises, and subject to any conditions that the Mayor sees fit to impose. To this end, the Mayor may make the requested delegation to the Executive Director of Housing and Land, if he so chooses.

Exercise of contractual options

- 6.4. Part of this decision seeks approval of £15,882,353 spend for the exercise of contractual options to extend the existing call-off contracts under the DASA framework agreement, to continue provision for DASA in 2025-26. Officers have explained at paragraph 1.7, above, that the DASA framework agreement includes a contractual option allowing the GLA to extend the underlying call-off contracts for up to two years. Officers are reminded to exercise the options in accordance with the provisions of the DASA framework agreement and the underlying call-off contracts.

Extension of grant agreements

- 6.5. Decision 3, above, seeks approval to spend £6,416,268 for the extension of 31 DASA-related grant agreements. As set out in paragraph, 1.15, above, the grant agreements relate to projects, which aim to provide direct victims' services, advocacy, refuge accommodation and housing-related support. Section 12.5 of the Code provides that decisions to award grant funding should generally be made based on the outcome of a transparent, competitive application process. Officers have set out at paragraphs 1.14 to 1.16, above, how they have met this requirement.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Decision on Call-Off 2 contracts taken to GLAMM	7 January 2025
Comms sent to providers to announce grant extensions	8 January 2025
Contracting drafted, signed and quality assured for delivery in 2025-26	21 February 2025
Extended services commence delivery	1 April 2025
Final date of service delivery for remaining call-off extended services	31 March 2027

Appendices and supporting papers:

None.

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 GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will be published either within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 – Deferral

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

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under the FoIA should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form? NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to
confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Alexandra Broadhurst has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

Tim Steer has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Tom Copley has been consulted about the proposal and agrees with the recommendations.

✓

Advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Mayoral Delivery Board

This decision was agreed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 6 January 2025.

✓

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature:



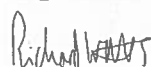
Date:

06/02/2025

CHIEF OF STAFF:

I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor.

Signature:



Date:

06/02/2025

PP Richard Watts on behalf of David Bellamy

