



**Open Report on behalf of Glen Garrod,
Executive Director - Adult Care and Community Wellbeing**

Report to:	Executive
Date:	06 September 2022
Subject:	Domestic Abuse Support Services Re-Commissioning
Decision Reference:	I025685
Key decision?	Yes

Summary:

The Council currently commissions domestic abuse support services through countywide contractual arrangements that have been in place since 1st August 2018 and come to an end on 31st March 2023, with no further options to extend. The existing services are:

- Outreach including Targeted Children’s Domestic Abuse Support Service; which risk assesses and provides safety and support planning for all adult victims and supportive interventions for children and young people (5 to 16 years) whose non-abusive parent is accessing outreach support.
- Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service; which supports all high-risk victims (aged 16 and over) referred to a Lincolnshire Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). The service provides safety planning, advice, and support to increase the safety of victims assessed as high risk of serious harm or death.

To support decision making about the future scope, commissioning, and procurement of these services a comprehensive review of the current contracts has been undertaken. The review included learning from service delivery, performance against contract measures and an analysis of current demand and prevalence intelligence. The review findings have been considered alongside stakeholder feedback, current legislation, local strategies, and the emerging policy landscape surrounding domestic abuse to inform the proposed remodelled service from 1st April 2023.

Several changes to the current arrangements are proposed in the new Domestic Abuse Support Service (DASS) including;

- An integrated single countywide service that encompasses the core elements of the current Outreach and IDVA services.
- Revised eligibility criteria for accessing specialist interventions to focus resources on those at highest risk of harm whilst strengthening the universal offer to all domestic abuse victims, their family, friends and colleagues.

- New service elements including recovery support and a dedicated Outreach and Engagement Team to proactively target hard to reach victim groups and build community resources.

The reconfigured DASS seeks to:

- Support the Council and the Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Partnership to meet its Domestic Abuse Act 2021 duties and the ambitions of the Preventing Domestic Abuse Strategy (2021-24) to stop domestic abuse through education, prevention, and holistic interventions.
- Embed preventative, early intervention and recovery approaches into service delivery.
- Deliver strength based and person-centred interventions to meet the diverse needs and desired outcomes of victims.
- To champion raising awareness and understanding of domestic abuse.

This report presents the case for re-commissioning a remodelled Domestic Abuse Support Service and seeks approval from the Executive to procure a new contract commencing 1st April 2023.

Recommendation(s):

That the Executive:

1. Approves the commissioning of a Domestic Abuse Support Service and the undertaking of a procurement to establish a contract, to be awarded to a single provider of a county-wide service effective from 1st April 2023.
2. Delegates to the Executive Director of Adult Care & Community Wellbeing in consultation the Executive Councillor for Adult Care and Public Health the authority to determine the final form of the contract and to approve the award of the contract and the entering into of the contract and other legal documentation necessary to give effect to the above decisions.

Alternatives Considered:

1. Negotiate revised contracts with the current provider

The Council has existing contracts for the delivery of domestic abuse support services; these contracts do not have provision for any further extension.

2. To do nothing

- Whilst there is currently no direct legal duty on the Council to deliver the proposed elements of the Domestic Abuse Support Service, further legislation and guidance is anticipated during the proposed contract term through the Victims Bill, that may impose a statutory duty for tier one local

authorities to provide community-based support for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

- Re-procuring a countywide Domestic Abuse Support Service (DASS) supports the Councils' key Corporate Plan priority of creating thriving environments by improving the safety of local communities. Tackling domestic abuse is equally a core priority for the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership.
- Domestic abuse can have long-term effects on victims' psychological, emotional, and physical wellbeing. Ensuring the right support can reduce demand on costly and acute provision later, such as refuges, emergency services and statutory mental health provision.
- During 2021-22 over 6,700 adults and 700 children and young people were supported by the current services via general advice or engagement with a specialist domestic abuse worker or IDVA.
- To cease commissioning domestic abuse support services may lead to an increase in domestic homicides in Lincolnshire, as victims whom the services currently support will have limited access to local direct specialist interventions and will be reliant on national helplines and victim services for support.

Reasons for Recommendation:

1. The proposed remodelled Domestic Abuse Support Service (DASS) offers critical advice and support to victims of domestic abuse in Lincolnshire. The outcome focused service seeks to maximise the safety of victims and provide person-centred, strength and recovery focused specialist interventions to those at most risk of harm and death, whilst ensuring all victims have access to information, appropriate resources, and advice. The current contracts providing such support will have run their full contract terms including available extensions on the 31st March 2023.
2. The reconfigured service model has been designed to provide maximum flexibility and responsiveness to potential demand fluctuations, legislative and external funding changes during the proposed contract term. It builds on the learning and successes of the current services whilst seeking to address the known challenges surrounding unpredictable demand within the wider complex system.
3. The increased service budget and scope is jointly funded by the Council, Health and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and will maximise the number of victims supported through direct and universal support methods. The service is equally likely to attract further national funding opportunities potentially through the anticipated Victims Bill that may impose a statutory duty for tier one local authorities to provide community-based support for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.
4. Co-commissioning the DASS alongside key partners reflects the ethos of current legislation, guidance, and the emerging policy landscape placing duties on local areas to collaborate and plan to address complex issues such as serious violence and domestic abuse. This approach also places Lincolnshire in a good position to respond to the anticipated guidance surrounding Violence Against Women and

Girls and the Victims Bill. The DASS may equally be a suitable vehicle for responding to recommendations from the Violence Reduction Programme following the conclusion of the Strategic Needs Assessment.

5. The alternatives considered have been deemed unacceptable in delivering the required outcomes of the service.

1. Background

- 1.1. Domestic abuse has a significant impact upon the communities and public services of Lincolnshire:
 - Annually there are approximately 30,000 Lincolnshire residents aged 16-74 years who will be victims of domestic abuse.
 - Data suggests a further 5,500 children may witness domestic abuse in their home each year.
 - On average over the past five years there have been over 10,000 domestic abuse incidents reported to Lincolnshire Police each year.
 - In 2020-2021, there were 930 victims who were at high risk of serious harm or death referred into Lincolnshire's Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) by partner agencies.
 - Since the introduction of the Statutory Domestic Homicide Reviews in April 2011 there have been 18 cases involving 27 deaths that have met the criteria for a domestic homicide review in Lincolnshire.
 - Domestic abuse is the single most prevalent assessment factor identified in children's social care assessments.
- 1.2. The legislative and national policy landscape surrounding domestic abuse and serious violence have seen several recent and emerging developments likely to influence the local system response to domestic abuse during the proposed new contract term. Since April 2021, Lincolnshire has developed a separate Domestic Abuse Partnership that sits alongside the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership, Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board; putting domestic abuse at the core of the safeguarding agenda and ensuring it gets the focus and dedication it needs.
- 1.3. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 4) placed new statutory duties on tier one local authorities to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. Under the new duty, the Council appointed a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board and established Lincolnshire's Preventing Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-2024. The strategy sets out the shared ambition and key priorities for the Partnership for tackling domestic abuse based on a local needs assessment for accommodation-based domestic abuse support.
- 1.4. Whilst the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory duty is targeted on the provision of refuge and safe accommodation support, due regard should be given to the Draft Statutory Guidance Framework (July 2021) aimed at statutory and non-statutory bodies informing their wider response to domestic abuse and commissioning services, highlighting the essential role of agencies working together through strategic planning and co-commissioning to create effective joined-up services.

- 1.5. The newly introduced Serious Violence Duty under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (the PCSC Act) includes domestic abuse and sexual violence within the definition and equally requires local authorities, the police, fire and rescue authorities, specified criminal justice agencies and health authorities to work together to formulate an evidence-based analysis of serious violence in their local area in order to produce and implement a strategy detailing how they will respond to those particular issues. The Duty does not specify a 'lead' organisation or person whose responsibility is to coordinate activity or prescribe a structure within which specified authorities are expected to work. Indeed, local areas are encouraged to use existing multi-agency partnerships such as the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership.
- 1.6. Lincolnshire's Preventing Domestic Abuse Strategy acknowledges the need for local strategies and delivery plans to be highly adaptive to respond to key emerging guidance and legislation. Further developments are also likely to directly impact the legal standing and delivery of domestic abuse support service including:
 - The Victims Bill: a key element of the consultation surrounds the commissioning and co-ordination of community-based services for domestic abuse and sexual violence.
 - Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan (March 2022)
 - Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (July 2021)
 - Violence Against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations (March 2022)
- 1.7. The national funding of domestic abuse services to date has been dominated by short-term funding opportunities, often involving providers, the Council and the OPCC applying for additional grant funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) to support short term project work or dedicated specialist posts. Whilst the new duties within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 did provide funding to meet these obligations for refuges and safe accommodation, any statutory duty and/or associated national funding for community-based support remains unclear. It is therefore likely that continued short-term funding initiatives to support community-based domestic abuse and sexual violence services will continue to be a feature for the foreseeable future.

2. Current Services Summary

- 2.1. In 2018 the Council re-commissioned its current arrangements for a countywide Domestic Abuse Outreach Support Service and an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service. The previous service iterations had been in place since 2013 and consisted of four Outreach Service lots based on district council boundaries delivered by three providers and a separately commissioned countywide IDVA service.
- 2.2. Following the procurement process, Ending Domestic Abuse Now in Lincolnshire (EDAN Lincs, previously known as West Lindsey Domestic Abuse Service) were awarded both coterminous contracts in 2018 which run to 31st March 2023, with all extension options having now been utilised.

- 2.3. The current IDVA Service supports all victims (adults and young people aged 16 and over) within Lincolnshire who have been assessed as at high risk of serious harm or death and have been referred to a Lincolnshire Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). The service provides timely (within 48 hours of referral) access to advice, support, and safety planning to increase the safety of high-risk victims, as well as attending local MARACs to represent the views of the victim and facilitation of access to onward support services.
- 2.4. The current iteration of the IDVA Service is largely unchanged from the previous service in place from 2013 with a similar scope and eligibility criteria. All victims who meet this criteria and consent to MARAC and support must be contacted within 48 hours of referral with the contract precluding the use of waiting lists. Demand management within the current service requires the provider to advise the Council of any demand challenges and how they intend to resolve them. Performance management is predominantly centred on timely interventions with victims, measures which the provider has maintained consistently high achievement during the current contract term. Referrals to the IDVA service are on a steadily increasing trend, mirroring the trend in MARAC cases. Future process changes and capacity within MARAC are key determining factors in demand levels for IDVA services going forward.
- 2.5. During the current contract term, the Council and the OPCC have provided additional funding for dedicated Hospital IDVA posts to support those affected by domestic abuse attending Accident and Emergency Departments. The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) has also directed additional funding to support specialist IDVA posts within the service linked to working with children, within the criminal justice system and rural areas of the county.
- 2.6. The existing Domestic Abuse Outreach Support Service supports all adult victims (16 years and upwards) assessed via the Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment risk assessment tool (DASH) as Standard and Medium risk. The service risk assesses and produces safety and support plans for all who engage with the service with a maximum support period of six months. An enhancement to the service in 2018 was the inclusion of a targeted Children and Young Peoples (CYP) element; widening the service scope to include interventions for 5 to 16-year-olds whose non-abusive parent is accessing domestic abuse support via outreach. This programme of support to children and young people exposed to domestic violence seeks to help them understand their experiences and develop resilience to develop healthy future relationships.
- 2.7. The Outreach Service has also maintained the same eligibility criteria from the previous contracts in place from 2013, supporting all Standard and Medium risk adult victims (16 years and upwards). The current model is purely reactive to inward referrals from partner agencies and direct self-referrals with all victims of domestic abuse that meet the eligibility criteria required to be offered support if requested. Demand management within the current Outreach contract is via waiting lists, with the Provider required to provide the Council with information about the numbers and the specific needs of those on any waiting list and agree with the Council remedies to try to alleviate the waiting list. The Provider has effectively utilised risk prioritisation

during the current contract to manage waiting lists for protracted periods of recent service delivery.

- 2.8. The Outreach Service has experienced a significant increase in demand since 2021, a key driver for this has been the increase in Police Public Protection Notification (PPN) referrals since an internal process change by Lincolnshire Police from December 2020. This has contributed to a 69% increase in referral volumes in 2021 (calendar year compared to 2020). As a result, additional staffing capacity has been funded by the Council and the OPCC to support the service to respond to the increased referral demand to mitigate the risks of victims waiting protracted periods for support.

3. Service Review

- 3.1. The services have been reviewed over the last eight months. The review was structured into a number of workstreams:
- Workstream 1: Future scope and Demand Analysis
 - Workstream 2: Review of exiting support services including consideration of feedback from the Domestic Abuse Partnership and service user feedback
 - Workstream 3: Budget and Cost Review
 - Workstream 4: Specification Development including new model development and market engagement
 - Workstream 5: Legal requirements
- 3.2. Throughout the review period there were a number of key proposals and associated options that the Domestic Abuse Programme Board was asked to consider as part of the new service. The key findings from the current services review are summarised as follows:
- The IDVA service model functions well and has maintained consistently high performance against the current Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) focused on timely interventions with victims.
 - The Outreach service has been significantly impacted by recent referral demand increases, affecting the Provider's ability to meet timescale targets for victims.
 - The targeted Children and Young Peoples (CYP) outreach service element has been highly effective, with refinements throughout the current contract leading to clear and timely support interventions to build on in a new service model.
 - The current reactive referral model means hard to reach and certain victim profiles are not being reached or proportionately presenting to service due to an absence of proactive and targeted outreach activity as part of existing commissioned services.
 - The current broad access criteria for the outreach service are no longer sustainable or advantageous.
 - Future service eligibility should ensure specialist service interventions are targeted at those at highest risk whilst strengthening the offer to all domestic abuse victims, their family, friends and colleagues through digital, self-serve information, advice, and resources.
 - Lower risk victims have been successfully supported by a reduced intervention offer through a pathway pilot, bolstering the self-serve offer to these victims

may be an opportunity to support demand management and meet needs in a more flexible way.

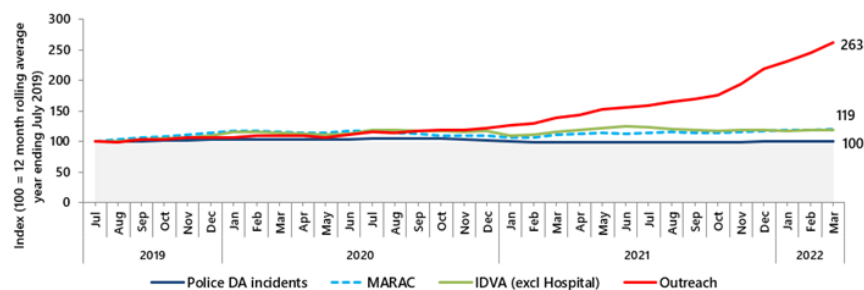
- A fully completed DASH (or equivalent updated universal tool) should be a mandatory requirement for all referring professionals to avoid unnecessary duplication.
- Tighter timescales for support interventions are recommended to focus interventions to victims and bring the service in line with comparator short term intervention offers.
- Specialist service interventions would benefit from embedding a strength-based approach to assessment and support with an enhanced offer to promote recovery from the multi-faceted impacts of domestic abuse and prevent revictimisation.
- Improved data intelligence is key to driving responsive commissioning and effective service development and capacity management.

3.3. The demand and financial modelling work undertaken focused on the specific challenges facing the current services whilst considering local prevalence intelligence to inform the management of demand in a new model. The key findings were:

- The present outreach model is highly vulnerable to demand fluctuations, especially from referring partners changing internal processes.
- The existing contract mechanism for managing demand and capacity via waiting lists has become increasingly untenable in light of continual demand increases requiring additional funding to maintain timely support to the highest risk victims.
- Referral volumes for outreach support have seen a significant increase since early 2021 as depicted below.

Comparison of Police DA incident, MARAC, IDVA and Outreach trends, indexed 12 month rolling averages, 2018-21

Sources: Lincolnshire Police, MARAC referrals and EDAN Lincs



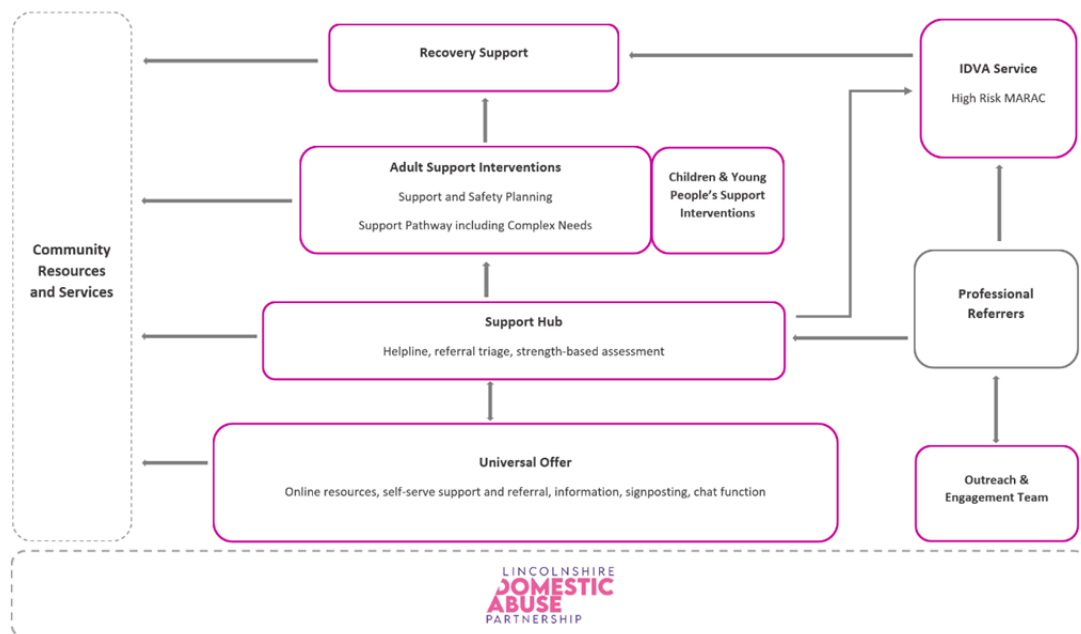
- The noted increased referrals to the Outreach service are mainly a result of a process change within Lincolnshire Police (although police demand linked to DA has not increased during this time). However, the police still only refer a minority of their demand (equivalent of 12% of DA incidents in 2021) and may refer even more in the future as their internal processes evolve. Hence, there is scope for demand on the current iteration of services to increase from current levels.
- Health referrals, while relatively high in the national context, are not as high as might be expected based on victim disclosure rates to health professionals. Referrals from GP services are especially low. Crime survey data suggests that as many people disclose their abuse to health professionals as to the police (c.

17/18% of victims). It is therefore possible that health referrals could increase to similar levels to that of the police during the next contract term, resulting in an increase of 27% to overall referral volumes.

- An effective engagement and outreach team will equally drive increased partner referrals and self-referrals from within underrepresented victim groups and localities.
- Predicting the annual need for support services from the county's victims is challenging as some of this demand may be served by other services commissioned locally/regionally/nationally. Yet, the overall need for support services in the county, is estimated to be c.2,450-5,700 victims disclosing to victim support, helpline, or specialist support services.

4. Proposed Changes to the Current Arrangements

4.1. The service and demand review, market engagement, stakeholder feedback and Lincolnshire's Preventing Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-24 have culminated in the development of the proposed countywide Domestic Abuse Support Service model for Lincolnshire as depicted below;



4.2. The key features of the revised and enhanced model are:

- A universal digitally based support offer to all victims of domestic abuse in Lincolnshire including self-serve information and referral, a chat function, and a range of online resources and signposting for victims, their family, friends, and colleagues.
- A Support Hub, including helpline, effective triage function and strength-based assessment provision.
- Community-based Specialist Support Interventions for Adults and Children and Young People, providing person-centred, outcome focused, support and safety planning whilst leveraging community assets and collaborating with other key partners to develop complex needs pathways alongside Substance Misuse, Mental Health, and Offender Management Services.

- An integrated IDVA Service supporting the highest risk victims including children and young people through specialist and community based IDVA workers embedded within the wider service elements and offer.
 - The creation of a Recovery Support element to provide a maximum additional 8 weeks of dedicated support to adult victims navigating civil court or injunctions, accommodation transitions and/or partnership dual working to build resilience and help prevent further victimisation.
 - The introduction of a dedicated Outreach and Engagement Team to proactively target known underrepresented victim groups and develop community support networks and peer support systems to identify and enhance the community response to domestic abuse.
- 4.3. The new model will seek to manage demand through revised eligibility for victims who require access to specialist interventions from Domestic Abuse Workers to prioritise support to higher risk cases. This will be implemented alongside a universal support offer to all victims of domestic abuse in Lincolnshire including a telephone helpline, digital self-serve information and referral, a chat function, and a range of online resources and signposting for victims, their family, friends, and colleagues appropriate to their circumstances.
- 4.4. For some lower risk cases, universal support will be their default offer rather than direct support from a specialist Domestic Abuse Worker. Examples of this may include cases of historic abuse, low level coercive and financial behaviours. An implication of amending the eligibility criteria for specialist interventions will be the associated children of those lower risk cases accessing universal support only would no longer be assessed for interventions in their own right. However, this can be mitigated to some extent by strengthening the offer and information available via the digital and universal offer to domestic abuse victims with children.
- 4.5. Through close monitoring of referral volumes and eligibility profiles, the proportion of victims supported via specialist intervention versus universal support can be further refined and flexed in response to demand, emerging guidance and/or intelligence during the contract term in agreement with the provider and the Domestic Abuse Programme Board.
- 4.6. As an alternative to the management of excess demand via waiting lists, in-principle agreement has been reached between the Council, the OPCC and health to include an additional volume payment mechanism within the new service contract. Therefore, should demand exceed the service volumes agreed during the procurement exercise, additional funding may be made available at the collective discretion of the Council, OPCC and CCG to support increasing service capacity.
- 4.7. In recognition of the high volume of referrals from Lincolnshire Police, the OPCC are also initiating an extension of their current role with victims of domestic abuse (excluding high risk MARAC cases) to conduct an initial triage and conversation with victims. This will be delivered through their commissioned provider Victim Lincs prior to onward referral for specialist interventions if appropriate, eligible, and consenting to engagement. It is anticipated that this change will assist in protecting the revised

model from future demand increases, focus specialist resources and act as a blueprint for other key referral partners.

- 4.8. A further proposed key change for the re-commissioning is to develop a countywide service model that builds on the features of the current service contracts for Outreach and IDVA into one Domestic Abuse Support Service for Lincolnshire. The benefits and efficiencies of this approach would enable more flexibility for supporting victims across risk profiles and staff skills in an array of circumstances. It also recognises the valued interdependency and seamless working between the current services which is advantageous to maintain through commissioning a single provider for both elements.

5. Budget and Cost Implications

- 5.1. The 2022-23 combined annual core contract price for the Outreach Support Service and IDVA Service is £839,985 (£589,995 and £249,990 respectively), with the majority (96%) making up staffing costs. The Outreach Service has especially seen an increase in demand over the term of the contract with the impact of COVID on household situations and mental health alongside changes to processes by referral organisations contributing to this trend. Additional funding from the MHCLG, MOJ, OPCC and the Council has resourced dedicated specialist posts and bolstered wider service capacity during the current contract term. The current collective investment in these services to maintain the existing service capacity and staffing resources is £1,360,000 per annum.
- 5.2. The existing service model and short-term funding sources maintaining current delivery are not sustainable and do not meet current demand effectively. The proposed DASS model has been developed to meet the needs of Lincolnshire informed by the service and demand review, prevalence data and strategic needs assessment. Costing the proposed model was informed by analysis of the cost structure of current delivery, annual demand, and current modelling on the proportions of victims reaching specialist interventions.
- 5.3. The cost of fully implementing the proposed DASS model described in section 4 is projected to be £1,752,000 per annum. This includes the creation of the new Recovery and Outreach and Engagement Team service elements and strengthening the core universal offer to all victims whilst targeting specialist interventions to those at highest risk.
- 5.4. CCG colleagues have made the decision to allocate dedicated staffing roles to support domestic abuse victims within acute settings rather than invest the full requested contribution of £250,000 per annum into the DASS. This reduces the confirmed budget for the service to £1,655,000 as the requirement to provide dedicated domestic abuse workers within acute settings will no longer be within the specification of the DASS although close working with the identified CCG employed staff will remain critical for seamless support to victims.

- 5.5. The secured combined budget for the remodelled DASS is £1,655,000 per annum, consisting of partner contributions per annum as set out below:
- The Council £853,597
 - Domestic Abuse Act allocated funding £404,547 (aligned to accommodation support needs)
 - OPCC £200,000
 - MOJ £46,600 (as distributed across the full contract term)
 - Lincolnshire CCG £150,000.
- 5.6. The tripartite in-principle agreement to fund additional volume payments in the event of excessive demand, is not included in the combined budget outlined above. Such payments would be subject to approval on a case-by-case basis with financial contributions informed by analysis of the source of additional demand.

6. Risks and Dependencies

- 6.1. The Council also commissions a countywide Domestic Abuse Refuge Service and currently co-funds the Make a Change Perpetrator Programme, these services are not within scope of this procurement exercise. Whilst these services are commissioned and procured separately, there are clear interdependencies in referral routes and support for victims requiring close collaboration between these services.
- 6.2. Accurate future demand projections are inherently challenging to predict due to the vulnerability of support services to changes in the referring practice of key partners. The demand and prevalence analysis clearly identified lower than anticipated referrals from health sources and some demographic profiles which the DASS will seek to address, the relative success of engagement activities will therefore directly influence future demand. This has been partly mitigated by the enhanced budget secured for the delivery of the remodelled DASS and agreement referred to earlier to collectively consider and potentially fund additional volume delivery if required during the contract term.
- 6.3. Further legislative changes are likely within the proposed contract term including the conclusion of the current consultation on the commissioning and any accompanying statutory duty for community-based domestic abuse services. The outcomes focused specification should allow sufficient flex and scalability to respond to emerging duties, policies, and associated expectations.
- 6.4. All indications are that there will continue to be short term funding initiatives and opportunities made available to support provision for IDVA, sexual violence and domestic abuse going forward. The tender documentation will make provision to inform the market of any known or emerging changes as further guidance is published to enable the contract to adjust as required to additional expectations that may emerge.

7. Commercial Approach

- 7.1. Taking account of the findings from the review work undertaken, including the market engagement feedback, demand, and financial modelling, and required service model improvements, it is proposed the commercial model for the new service will be structured as summarised below.
- 7.2. Delivery will be by a single countywide Domestic Abuse Support Service (DASS) including the previously separately commissioned IDVA service to maximise efficiencies and flexibility in service delivery. The competition phase will not preclude bids from consortia and sub-contracting models, which should maximise the level of competition and potential solutions.
- 7.3. This is a complex service with a fixed sum budget set by the Council which cannot be exceeded, and which has underlying budgetary pressures. Assessing the quality element will include specific method statements linked to demand prioritisation, innovation, and case management with survivors of domestic abuse involved in evaluating delivery and support scenarios.

8. Payment and Performance

- 8.1. Payment will be by way of a fixed sum (block payment) for the delivery of the DASS, bidders can submit tender costs up to but not exceeding the fixed sum confirmed by the Council prior to publication. Included as part of their pricing submission interested providers will be required to submit details of the service volumes and outcomes achievable within their respective delivery solutions and pricing proposal. Unit prices for specific service elements will also be generated via bidders' financial submissions which will be used as the basis for an additional payment mechanism, should demand exceed the service delivery volumes established during the tender process. An in-principle commitment has been reached with OPCC and CCG partner representatives that any additional payments applied through this mechanism would be subject to approval within a tripartite agreement with financial contributions informed by the source of demand.
- 8.2. It is proposed that the terms and conditions will include an indexation clause in order to support competition and ensure the market is not required to factor this into their solutions and future delivery methodology. This information will be included within the pricing schedule to ensure it is clear to bidders that this risk has been considered and mitigated.
- 8.3. Utilising the Service Provider's financial submission at tender stage, the contract will include an Open Book Accounting approach as a basis for assessing whether the Service Provider is generating any excess profit. The open book approach will enable any efficiency savings to be apportioned via a gain share mechanism should the actual costs of service delivery be below the tendered service delivery cost.
- 8.4. Performance management and monitoring will be driven by industry standard user outcome measures and timely service interventions to support individual risk mitigation. Targets will also accompany reaching key demographic and

underrepresented victim profiles identified within the demand and prevalence analysis. It is proposed that the application of Service Credits is targeted at a limited number of Key Performance Indicators aligned to service user experience and outcome measures, respectively and that they are not unduly onerous.

9. Contract Commencement and Duration

- 9.1. The current Domestic Abuse Outreach Support Service and IDVA Service contracts end on the 31st March 2023 with the new contract required to commence on the 1st April 2023.
- 9.2. The term of the new contract will be a maximum period of 5 years, with an initial period of 3 years and opportunities to extend by up to a further 2 years.
- 9.3. This approach was tested as part of the market engagement process, through which feedback suggested that this is an acceptable term for the arrangement and would provide sufficient financial assurance for the successful provider.

10. Procurement Implications

- 10.1. The Procurement will be undertaken in accordance with regulations 74 to 76 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR) under "Light Touch Regime" utilising an Open Procedure method. A Contract Notice will be published on Find a Tender in September 2022 and a Contract Award Notice will be issued on any award to a successful bidder.
- 10.2. In undertaking the procurement, the Council will ensure the process utilised complies fully with the Principles of Openness, Fairness, Transparency and Non-discrimination.
- 10.3. The procurement process shall conform with all information as published and set out in the Contract Notice.
- 10.4. All time limits imposed on bidders in the process for responding to the Contract Notice and Invitation to Tender will be reasonable and proportionate.
- 10.5. Subject to the maximum available budget and a commitment to deliver the service requirements, which have been profiled as described at section 5, the final cost of the service will be determined via competition.
- 10.6. ITT evaluation will focus on a combination of service cost and quality, and the capability of the single provider and any organisations they may wish to form subcontracting arrangements with, to deliver the required volume of service and quality outcomes across the county set against clearly defined financial budgetary controls. The ultimate decision as to which organisation is awarded the single provider status will be based on their evaluation performance.

11. Public Services Social Value Act

- 12.1 In January 2013, the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 came into force. Under the Act the Council must before starting the process of procuring a contract for

services consider two things. Firstly, how what is proposed to be procured might improve the economic social and environmental wellbeing of its area. Secondly, how in conducting the process of procurement it might act with a view to securing that improvement. The Council must only consider matters that are relevant to the services being procured and must consider the extent to which it is proportionate in all the circumstances to take those matters into account. In considering this issue the Council must be aware that it remains bound by the PCR 2015 which itself through its requirement for transparency, fairness and non-discrimination places limits on what can be done to achieve these outcomes through a procurement.

- 12.2 A stronger and well-resourced Domestic Abuse Support Service will have the potential to deliver increased social and economic benefits to the area by;
- 12.3 Helping people who are victims of domestic abuse to find safety for themselves and their children; helping relieve pressure on acute hospitals, and the wider health system by assisting, supporting and sustaining arrangements that will enable them to stay safe and become independent and contributing members of society.
- 12.4 Ways will be explored of securing social value through the way the procurement is structured. The operation of sub-contracting and consortium arrangements will be explored as a means of ensuring a role for local small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the delivery of the services. The qualitative award criteria for the tender will include Social Value, and bidders proposals for the social value benefits resulting from their proposed delivery model will be assessed against this criteria as part of tender evaluation.
- 12.5 Under section 1(7) of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 the Council must consider whether to undertake any consultation as to the matters referred to above. The service and the value it delivers is well understood. Best practice recently adopted elsewhere has been reviewed. This and the market consultation carried out is considered to be sufficient to inform the procurement. It is unlikely that any wider consultation would be proportionate to the scope of the procurement.

12. Legal Issues:

Equality Act 2010

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in section 149 may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

The duty cannot be delegated and must be discharged by the decision-maker. To discharge the statutory duty the decision-maker must analyse all the relevant material with the specific statutory obligations in mind. If a risk of adverse impact is identified consideration must be given to measures to avoid that impact as part of the decision-making process.

The purpose of the service is to support victims of Domestic Abuse including children of the victim. The majority of the victims of Domestic Abuse are women for whom their sex is a protected characteristic. Children of victims are more likely to themselves become victims of domestic abuse, hence having targeted interventions and universal advice support for children and young people and parents will seek to mitigate this risk. The new services will improve links with the community and create a service delivery model that provides multiple referral routes to the service and the use of online information and methods of contact. This will enable men who are victims of domestic abuse to access much needed services as it is found that traditionally they are less likely to access domestic abuse services. The community focused element will make it easier for those who identify as disabled as a protected characteristic to be supported as well as hard to reach groups such as individuals who identify with age, sexual orientation, race and religion as a protected characteristic.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken and is available at Appendix B. This is not the final version as the EIA is a live document that is updated throughout the re-commissioning process. The EIA identifies that the new service model inclusive of the

proposed changes does not have any perceived adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)

The Council must have regard to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) in coming to a decision.

The re-commissioned Domestic Abuse Support Service (DASS) contributes and supports the aims set out in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy;

- *A strong focus on prevention and early intervention;*
The introduction of a dedicated Outreach and Engagement Team will be focused on proactively targeting known underrepresented victim groups and develop community support networks and prevention initiatives. The DASS will equally support the Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Partnership's priorities around early intervention and prevention through awareness raising and community engagement.
- *A focus on issues and needs which will require partnership and collective action across a range of organisations;*
Domestic abuse can have long-term effects on victims' psychological, emotional, and physical wellbeing. The re-modelled Domestic Abuse Support Service is funded in partnership with Lincolnshire CCG and the OPPC and is aligned to the support the priorities of the Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Partnership and Safer Lincolnshire Partnership. The DASS will work in partnership with a range of organisations including Substance Misuse Services, Integrated Offender Management and Mental Health Services to ensure victims receiving specialist interventions are effectively supported to meet their wider needs as part of their support plan.
- *A focus on tackling inequalities and equitable provision of services;*
The Outreach and Engagement Team has been introduced into the service model in response to identifying victim groups and geographical locations with lower than anticipated engagement with support services. A key aim of this team will be to ensure all victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence can access information, advice and support and work to identify and overcome any barriers that persist.

Crime and Disorder

Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council must exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment), the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area and re-offending in its area.

This service is directly designed to contribute to the furtherance of the section 17 obligations through partnership working with Substance Misuse Services and through the direct support to victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence to prevent further or future victimisation. The newly introduced Recovery Service specifically seeks to provide victims with a longer period of support to promote recovery from the impacts of abuse and prevent revictimisation. Thus, by seeking to increase victims' safety and resilience the service contributes to reducing the risk of further domestic abuse offences. The DASS will also work with the Integrated Offender Management Team to support individuals whose offending behaviours is inherently linked to their experience of domestic abuse and cohesive control.

13. Conclusion

- 13.1. Re-commissioning a countywide Domestic Abuse Support Service (DASS) supports the priorities and delivery of; the Councils' Corporate Plan, the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership, Lincolnshire Preventing Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-24, and the Councils' statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The proposed service model is scalable to respond to anticipated guidance surrounding Violence Against Women and Girls and potential new duties from the Victims Bill. The DASS may equally be a suitable vehicle for responding to recommendations from the Violence Reduction Programme following the conclusion of the Strategic Needs Assessment.
- 13.2. Co-commissioning the DASS alongside key partners from the OPCC and health reflects the ethos of current legislation, guidance, and the emerging policy landscape placing increasing duties on local areas to work together to address complex system wide issues such as serious violence and domestic abuse through joint delivery plans and service collaboration to meet the needs of Lincolnshire residents.
- 13.3. It is expected that the proposed improvements and integration of the current Outreach and IDVA Services under the umbrella of DASS, through the specification and associated processes, will enable the Council and partners to maximise the service impact and outcomes for individuals to build resilience, help prevent further victimisation and support victims to live safe, happy, and healthy lives.

14. Legal Comments:

The Council has the power to commission the services and enter into the contracts proposed.

The proposed procurement process is compliant with the Council's legal obligations.

The decision is consistent with the Policy Framework and within the remit of the Executive if it is within the budget.

15. Resource Comments:

The funding construct for this service is detailed in section 5.5 above and has been confirmed by all parties.

The service is highly likely to receive new grant funding to support delivery of the new model. Any new grant funding will reduce the partners contributions.

Demand monitoring will be in place to track the source of referrals into the service and if referrals increase, trigger the tripartite funding agreement which will be in place when the new model commences

16. Consultation

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

n/a

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

Yes

c) Scrutiny Comments

On 19 July 2022, the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Domestic Abuse Services Re-Commissioning, and unanimously supported the Recommendations to the Executive.

Members were pleased to have received a detailed report and were supportive of the proposals set out in the report which aimed at tightening support measures around vulnerable individuals.

Members commented on the supportive, proactive outreach on offer, as described in the report and believed that this was helpful to dealing with the increased number of cases reported and the various risk categories identified.

d) Risks and Impact Analysis

See body of report and Appendix B Equality Impact Assessment

17. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	DASS Re-commissioning EIA

18. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Reena Fehnert, who can be contacted on reena.fehnert@lincolnshire.gov.uk.