

Individual Executive Decision Notice

Report title	Domestic Abuse Act Funding Allocations	
Decision designation	GREEN	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Jasbir Jaspal Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing	
Wards affected	(All Wards);	
Accountable Director	John Denley, Director of Public Health	
Originating service	Public Health and Communities	
Accountable employee	Hannah Pawley	Community Safety Manager
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Report to be/has been considered by	Public Health Leadership Team	28 September 2021

Summary

This report seeks authorisation from the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Director for Public Health, to approve the award of a contract for services to the Haven Wolverhampton (totalling £400,902) and a Service Level Agreement to Wolverhampton Homes (totalling £250,000).

Authority was delegated to the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Director for Public Health to allocate £650,902 of funding received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to support victims of domestic abuse and their children residing in domestic abuse safe accommodation. The funding was allocated to the City of Wolverhampton Council to ensure that it was able to meet the local authority obligations set out in the new Domestic Abuse Act (2021).

The report also requests approval to make a minor amendment to the process approved by Cabinet by awarding funding via a service level agreement and a contract for service, rather than via grants. This ensures that the City of Wolverhampton Council maintain sufficient oversight of delivery against the funding.

Recommendations for action or decision:

That the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Director of Public Health:

1. Approve the award of a contract for service to The Haven Wolverhampton, to the value of £400,902 to enhance support for victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation.
2. Approve the creation of Service Level Agreement with Wolverhampton Homes to the value of £250,000 to enhance support for victims of domestic abuse and their children accessing the Safer Homes (sanctuary) scheme.

Signature
Councillor Jasbir Jaspal

Date: 11/10/2021

Signature
John Denley

Date: 11/10/2021

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Part Four of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) includes a new duty on tier one local authorities in England to provide support for victims of domestic abuse and their children within domestic abuse safe accommodation.
- 1.2 In order to ensure that local authorities are able to comply with the new duty funding has been allocated to local authorities (until 31 March 2022). The City of Wolverhampton Council has been allocated £650,902 from MHCLG.
- 1.3 A Memorandum of Understanding has been issued stating that the grant funding for 2021-2022 is to be paid based on the understanding that the grant only covers revenue expenditure relating to the functions set out in the new statutory duty (within the Domestic Abuse Act) relating to the provision of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing within safe accommodation locally.

2.0 Local Preparation

- 2.1 To inform the distribution of this funding a local mapping exercise has taken place. This identified The Haven Wolverhampton and Wolverhampton Homes as current providers of domestic abuse safe accommodation (as outlined in the Domestic Abuse Act and associated guidance).
- 2.2 A local needs assessment has also been developed which identifies areas of priority need for additional support within these settings. These areas are outlined below and will form the basis of the contract and service level agreement with providers.
 - A. Increased and enhanced emotional, practical, and social support for all victims of domestic abuse within Domestic Abuse safe accommodation;
 - Emotional and practical wrap around support for victims and families
 - Support with legal, housing and welfare rights
 - Support with parenting, child contact or maintaining relationships
 - B. Increase and enhance emotional, practical, educational, and therapeutic support for children within domestic abuse safe accommodation
 - 1-2-1 and group activities to suit the child or young person's needs
 - Emotional and practical support for children and young people
 - Support with educational opportunities and interaction with school
 - C. Increase and enhance emotional and practical support for victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation with complex needs and those who face

additional barriers such as people from the LGBT, BME, disabled and marginalised communities

- Inclusive provision that includes those who face social and economic barriers to accessing support.
- Inclusive provision that can cater to victims with complex cases, such as substance misuse, disability and mental health needs.

D. Increase and enhance the health and well-being of victims of domestic abuse within domestic abuse safe accommodation

- Support for emotional, psychological, and physical well-being
- Support with accessing courses/programmes to enhance social, practical, and physical well being
- Support with social integration and life skills
- Support with access to employment, education and/or training

2.3 It is proposed that funding is allocated to Wolverhampton Homes (via a Service Level Agreement) and The Haven Wolverhampton (via a contract for services) as the current providers of safe accommodation within the city in order to enhance current provision in the above identified areas.

3.0 Evaluation of alternative options

3.1 Distributing funding through the award of grants was considered, however it is considered that the direct award of a contract for service and a service level agreement is most appropriate in this case. This allows the City of Wolverhampton Council to maintain sufficient oversight and robustly monitor delivery against its new statutory duty.

3.2 It is not recommended that recommendations are refused as the City of Wolverhampton Council would not be able to deliver against the statutory responsibilities and could not provide account for expenditure to the MHCLG in relation to support for victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation. It would also have a negative impact on the most vulnerable victims of domestic abuse within our city.

3.3 A full tender process was not recommended for the distribution of this funding. This is because the purpose of the grant is to provide support for victims of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation settings (as defined by the Home Office). Wolverhampton Homes and the Haven Wolverhampton are the only providers who meet this definition operating within Wolverhampton.

4.0 Reasons for decisions

- 4.1 The approval of the recommendations within this report will ensure that funding is distributed to current providers of domestic abuse safe accommodation in a timely manner to ensure that the City of Wolverhampton Council are delivering against their new statutory duty and meeting local need based on the findings of the domestic abuse needs assessment.

5.0 Financial implications

- 5.1 The City of Wolverhampton Council has been allocated £650,902 by the MHCLG to commission support to ensure that statutory duties with the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) are discharged. This funding will be utilised to commission additional support for victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation in line with the Memorandum of Understanding, which outline conditions of the grant and related expenditure.
- 5.2 Approval was received by Cabinet on 21st April 2021 to establish supplementary budgets totalling £650,902 fully funded from grant. This will be utilised to fully fund the proposed contract and service level agreement proposed within this report.

[LD/30092021/C]

6.0 Legal implications

- 6.1 The activity outlined in this report will utilise MHCLG grant funding to ensure that additional support is provided to victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation and that the local authority is effectively discharging its statutory responsibilities as outlined in Part Four of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021).
- 6.2 The Contract with Haven will be awarded via Regulation 32 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 as there are only two providers who under the terms of the grant agreement are able to deliver the service, one being Haven and the second being Wolverhampton Homes. The Contract to Wolverhampton Homes will be awarded via Regulation 12 of the Public Contract Regulations. The award of a contract for services will ensure that the local authority maintain oversight of delivery against the statutory duty and are able to report back to central government.

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7.0 Equalities implications

- 7.1 It is recognised that some victims of domestic abuse can experience additional barriers in seeking support, including underrepresented groups, children, male victims and older victims. The needs assessment and mapping activity outlined in this report have allowed for a better understanding of these barriers and activity outlined within this report will support in addressing them.

- 7.2 As part of the needs assessment engagement has taken place across a range of specialist domestic abuse services as well as with victims and survivors of domestic abuse in the form of focus groups. This has informed the areas of focus outlined within the report.
- 7.3 The contract and service level agreement proposed in this report will support in ensuring that local provision meets the needs of all victims within safe accommodation settings and equalities data around those accessing the support will be routinely collected and analysed to ensure that the services are supporting our diverse communities.

8.0 All other Implications

- 8.1 Health and Wellbeing Implications – Activity outlined within this report will increase capacity to local services supporting victims and families experiencing domestic abuse. This will impact positively on the health and wellbeing of victims of domestic abuse and their children. Provision will support victims and children to break the cycle of abuse, respond to the negative effects of abuse and reduce the physical and mental harm of becoming a repeat victim of abuse.
- 8.2 Covid-19 Implications – The restrictions around Covid-19 have increased the risk to victims of domestic abuse, particularly those who live with their perpetrators. Reports of domestic abuse have increased throughout the pandemic, as has the demand on specialist services. Increasing the support which victims can access within domestic abuse safe accommodation services will contribute to the partnership response to reduce harm to these victims and ensure that they can access the support which they need as restrictions ease.

9.0 Schedule of background papers

- 9.1 Cabinet, 21 April 2021 - Domestic Abuse Bill Grant Allocation (2021-2022)