

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing
<b>Date:</b>	3 December 2024
<b>Title:</b>	Approval to spend for Domestic Abuse Services
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Public Health

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### Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to spend from the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing to procure domestic abuse services to be provided after current contracts end on 31 March 2026. The maximum value for the proposed services is up to £38,500,000, from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2033. Any spend approved will be allocated in accordance with the current procurement regulations. In addition, the report sets out a proposed change in the commissioning arrangements for one element of the domestic abuse services. This is the part of the service that delivers behaviour change interventions to perpetrators of abuse.

### Recommendations

2. That the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing provides approval for permission to spend up to £38,500,000 on domestic abuse services from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2033. This spend covers support services for victims and survivors as well as behaviour change services for perpetrators of abuse.
3. That the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing gives approval to spend up to £1,500,000 of the total amount over the same seven-year period on perpetrator behaviour change services. This spend would be via a change in the commissioning arrangements as set out in the report, with the final amount to be delegated to the Director of Public Health.

4. That the Director of Public Health has delegated authority to spend for domestic abuse services within the overall approval value, noting that the amount and service level will be dependent on national domestic abuse funding allocated to Hampshire County Council.

## **Executive Summary**

5. Hampshire County Council currently commissions services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, and services for people using abusive behaviour (also known as perpetrator services). The services for victims and survivors include support in refuge accommodation across the Hampshire County Council area as well as community support for adults and children. Services for people using abusive behaviours include specialist behaviour change programmes and support for partners and ex-partners.
6. Since the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act in 2021, Hampshire County Council has had a specific statutory duty around the commissioning of support in safe accommodation for victims and survivors of domestic abuse and their children.
7. This report seeks approval from the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing to spend up to £38,500,000 to continue to provide domestic abuse services over the seven-year period between 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2033.

## **Contextual information**

8. Domestic abuse has significant and devastating impacts on the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors and their families. It is a widespread crime that includes violence, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological or emotional abuse. It is estimated that in the last year, more than 52,000 people over the age of 16 and 43,000 children and young people were subjected to domestic abuse in Hampshire.
9. Hampshire County Council commissions specialist domestic abuse services in line with its duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. There are separate services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, and for perpetrators of abuse.
10. Under the Domestic Abuse Act, the Council must ensure that specialist domestic abuse support is available to victims and survivors of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation. Safe accommodation is a term that is used to cover:

- i. refuges - single sex accommodation, generally women-only which is usually shared accommodation in a single premises
- ii. sanctuary schemes - enhanced security measures to enable victims and survivors of abuse to remain safely in their own homes
- iii. dispersed accommodation - self-contained accommodation which is accessible to a more diverse population than refuge.

11. The current contracts for domestic abuse services include the following specialist provision:

- i. Refuge accommodation
- ii. Sanctuary scheme
- iii. Dispersed accommodation support
- iv. Community support
- v. Support for patients accessing Hampshire hospital settings
- vi. Services for people using abusive behaviours (perpetrator services)

12. In 2023/24, the commissioned services for domestic abuse supported:

- i. 298 adults and 381 children and young people in specialist refuge accommodation across 11 refuges in Hampshire.
- ii. 954 victims and survivors in community services, many of whom received more than one service. This included 696 people who received a sanctuary scheme to remain safe in their own homes (positively impacting 1,079 children and young people); 832 victims who received outreach support; 625 victims who received intensive support; 717 victims who received group work support.
- iii. 169 victims and survivors (including 42 pregnant women) to receive domestic abuse support in Basingstoke, Winchester, and Andover hospital settings (positively impacting 177 children and young people).

13. Alongside the commissioned domestic abuse services, Hampshire County Council leads the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Board to deliver shared strategic priorities through action with key partners. This is also a requirement of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

14. Since April 2021, Hampshire County Council has been allocated funding on an annual basis by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG, formerly the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and

Communities) to deliver its duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. In 2024/25, this allocation is £2,397,120. There is no confirmation of additional funding from MHCLG after April 2025.

15. The current commissioned domestic abuse services for the Hampshire county area are primarily funded by the Public Health Grant and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire, and the additional MHCLG funding. Given the uncertainty over the national funding allocation for domestic abuse services, the future services from April 2026 are being planned using a range of funding scenarios. The upper limit for approval in this paper is based on the current core funding with the maximum allocation received from MHCLG in 2024/25.
16. Currently, Hampshire County Council is the lead commissioner for the service for victims and survivors, as well as the service for people using abusive behaviours, working in partnership with the co-funders. It is proposed that the Council will continue to be the lead commissioner for the service for victims and survivors from April 2026, but that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner will take the lead for commissioning perpetrator services from that date, with continued co-funding from Hampshire County Council. This will enable economies of scale and consistency for perpetrator services across the Hampshire Constabulary geography, which also includes Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight.
17. The future services to commence in April 2026 are being informed by the voices of victims and survivors of abuse, engagement with the provider market, the specific needs of the Hampshire population (assessed through data and intelligence) and the statutory requirements. The services for victims and survivors will include the following elements:
  - a) Specialist domestic abuse support in safe accommodation
  - b) Community support
  - c) Domestic abuse support in health care settings

## **Finance**

18. The present contracts for Hampshire's domestic abuse services are due to expire on 31 March 2026. This report seeks approval from the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing to spend up to £38,500,000 to continue to provide domestic abuse support services in Hampshire between 1 April 2026 and 31 March 2033.
19. Included in this spend is up to £1,500,000 over seven years for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to commission co-funded perpetrator services on the County Council's behalf. This funding will be spent in line with legal and procurement requirements.

20. The domestic abuse services commissioned by Hampshire County Council will be funded from the Public Health Grant, additional allocated national grant funding and contributions from co-commissioning arrangements with other organisations where appropriate.
21. In previous years, there has been additional funding allocated to Hampshire County Council via non-recurrent grants for domestic abuse services. There has been no confirmation to date as to whether this will be allocated in 2025/26 or beyond. As a result, the upper limit of the approval to spend has been calculated on the basis of the maximum external funding that might be allocated. If it is not allocated, the contract value will be based on the budget available and the service specifications will reflect this.

## **Legal**

22. The procurement will be conducted in accordance with the current procurement regulations.

## **Performance**

23. The MHCLG has mandatory annual reporting on domestic abuse safe accommodation measures.
24. In addition, qualitative and quantitative measures will be collected via quarterly contract management including demographics, access and quality indicators, risk and safety measures, health outcome measures and measures related to resilience to re-victimisation and to negative mental health outcomes. The statutory duty to have victims' and survivors' voices represented at the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will also enable objective collection of service user insights and experiences.

## **Consultation and Equalities**

25. The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) guidance sets out the requirement of local authorities to commission specialist domestic abuse support in safe accommodation. The guidance stipulates that this should be designed specifically for victims and survivors with relevant protected characteristics.
26. Domestic abuse is a gendered crime, with a greater proportion of women being subjected to abuse than men. This fact will inform how the services are configured, and although services need to be tailored and responsive to

women as the population group most impacted, it is also important to recognise that men can be subjected to domestic abuse and need to access services. Therefore, the domestic abuse services will be commissioned in a way that is inclusive, whilst also being responsive to the evidence showing that some groups are more significantly impacted.

27. Engagement is taking place with service users, key partners and agencies during October and November 2024 through focus groups, interviews and surveys. This will inform the shape of future services.
28. The full Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken, reference number 713, and is included in Appendix B.
29. Delivery of domestic abuse support services will be available to all victims and survivors of all ages in the Hampshire County area requiring support for domestic abuse, with specialised services provided in safe accommodation, community, and health care settings. Annual equity audits will be undertaken to monitor uptake of people with protected characteristics with actions plans implemented to address any identified access issues.
30. The Impact Assessment identified potential positive impacts on age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, sex, sexual orientation. In addition, positive impacts were identified for people experiencing poverty. Positive impacts will be achieved through ensuring a varied workforce of specialist/intensive support, advocacy, peer supporters and volunteers are aware of the additional needs and barriers faced by individuals and have the ability to tailor support approaches to meet these needs. This includes ensuring the service is non-judgemental, offers choice, and locations are accessible, service user feedback is utilised to continually improve the services delivered, and partnerships and pathways are developed with related organisations in the voluntary and statutory sectors such as health services.

## **Climate Change Impact Assessment**

31. Climate change considerations are included as a core element of the Public Health service specification which is tailored to each service. For domestic abuse services, the key opportunities for action around climate change mitigation are in relation to travel and accommodation. Consideration will be given to: ensuring that locations of domestic abuse services will promote and enable sustainable travel; the balance of virtual appointments and meetings versus face to face; and the standard and environmental sustainability of safe accommodation options secured by providers. These factors will be taken into account alongside the emergency nature of some aspects of domestic abuse services, for example where face to face support must be prioritised.

32. A full assessment of climate change vulnerability has been considered but the initial vulnerability assessment showed that the project is at minimal risk from the climate vulnerabilities.

## **Conclusions**

33. Hampshire County Council has duties around domestic abuse under the Domestic Abuse Act (2021). The current contracts which enable the Council to meet these duties expire in 2026.
34. This report seeks approval to spend up to £38,500,000 from the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing for domestic abuse services from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2033.

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	yes

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>	
<u>Title</u> Domestic Abuse Act Part 4 (Safe Accommodation) <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/12/section/4">Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (legislation.gov.uk)</a>	<u>Date</u> <b>2021</b>

<b>Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents</b>	
<p>The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	



## **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:**

### **1. Equality Duty**

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

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

### **2. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

2.1 The Impact Assessment identified potential positive impacts on age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, sex, sexual orientation. In addition, positive impacts were identified for people experiencing poverty. Positive impacts will be achieved through ensuring a varied workforce of specialist/intensive support, advocacy, peer supporters and volunteers are aware of the additional needs and barriers faced by individuals and have the ability to tailor support approaches to meet these needs. This includes ensuring the service is non-judgemental, offers choice, and locations are accessible, service user feedback is utilised to continually improve the services delivered, and partnerships and pathways are developed with related organisations in the voluntary and statutory sectors such as health services.