



London Borough of Enfield

Report Title	Domestic Violence Refuge and Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Contract Award
Report to:	Councillor Cazimoglu
Date of Meeting	24 November 2023
Cabinet Member	Councillor Cazimoglu
Director:	Doug Wilson - Director of Health and Adult Social Care
Report Authors:	Iain Hart – Adult Social Care Service Development
Ward(s) affected:	All
Key Decision Number	KD 5608
Classification:	Part 1 & 2 (Para 3)
Reason for exemption:	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Purpose of Report

1. Provide information regarding the procurement process and proposed contract award for the Domestic Violence Refuge Support Provision and the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (IDVA).

Recommendations

- I. Agree the contract for the provision of the Domestic Violence Refuge Support and the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) Services to the winning bidder as detailed in the restricted annex of this report, for an initial contract length of three (3) years with an option to extend for two further periods of two (2) years) each. Giving a total contract length of up to seven (7) years
- II. Agree the funding of the contract as detailed in the restricted annex of this report for the same period subject to funding availability from the Council and from the Mayoral Office for Police and Crime (MOPAC).
- III. Subject to good performance and funding; that the authority to extend the awarded contracts is delegated to the Director of Health and Adult Social Care in discussion and agreement with the Head of Community Safety.

Background and Options

2. 'Almost one in three women aged 16-59 will experience domestic abuse in her lifetime. Two women a week are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales alone'¹.
3. On the 29th April 2021 The Domestic Abuse Act came into force.

Section 57(1) the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 states that a local authority must:

(a) assess, or make arrangements for the assessment of, the need for accommodation-based support in its area and then

(b) prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of support in its area.

Section 57 came into force on 1 October 2021.

4. The Domestic Abuse Act places the above duties on the Tier 1 authority which for Enfield is the Greater London Authority (GLA). It is therefore the responsibility of the Mayoral Office to assess need and publish a strategy.
5. The Mayor of London Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy (draft) was published on the 5th November 2021. The strategy highlights some fundamental changes and raises additional points, some of which are summarised below:

¹ [Office for National Statistics](#) (2019) *Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2019*

- A pan London single point of entry for entry to safe accommodation
 - Furthermore, safe crisis accommodation provision is often not effectively integrated with wider community-based services, such as IDVAs and social services.
6. To address some of the points raised Access to the accommodation is coordinated through the National Domestic Violence Helpline, London-wide helplines, self-referral or agency referral. With information about vacancies collated nationally via the Women's Aid Routes to Support service.
 7. Survivors and their children are often transferred to Enfield from other parts of London to ensure they are removed from danger and placed in a safe location.
 8. Enfield hosts a 21 bed Domestic Violence refuge for women and children (under the age of 16). This purpose-built accommodation for women and young children; with additional office space is owned by Christian Action Housing. The additional office space is utilised as a hub by the IDVA support service, in order to reach out to all groups within the community.
 9. The aim of the refuge is to provide a safe supported accommodation for women and young children fleeing or at risk from domestic violence. The support provided at the refuge will be culturally sensitive and non-judgemental. Helping survivors:
 - access counselling support,
 - raise their self-esteem,
 - deliver emotional support,
 - register with appropriate health professionals,
 - access legal and financial advice and community services such as drug treatment services.
 - develop life skills,
 - prepare for move-on to independent living.
 10. The IDVA service works both within the refuge and out in the community. The IDVA service:
 - Empowers Survivors to report offender's abuse and to hold them to account for their actions,
 - supported those survivors at the point of crisis and to help reduce risk,
 - Provides a specialist ISVA working with individuals who have survived rape and sexual assault irrespective whether reported to the Police,
 - Helps those survivors in the refuge and the wider community reduce risk to themselves and rebuild their lives.
 11. Previously the Refuge and IDVA had been separate contracts. Enfield took the opportunity to undertake a joint tender to deliver the services under a single contract.

12. The incumbent provider of the refuge and IDVA contracts is Solace Women's Aid; who was direct awarded a 12-month contract commencing on 3 July 2022, with an optional extension of 6 months.
13. The current contract for the refuge and IDVA ends on the 02nd January 2024.
14. A one stage procurement procedure has been followed to procure this service. Firstly, a Prior Information Notice (PIN) (Ref. [2022/S 000-036122](#)) was issued on the government procurement site (FTS) on 20/12/2022 to alert the market to the opportunity. Then Enfield issued a contract notice (Ref. [2023/S 000-019371](#)) on July 7, 2023. Tenders were received by the return deadline, 08 August 2023.
15. Based upon 60% Quality and 40% Price weighting criteria. The tenders were evaluated by the Head of Community Safety, Domestic Violence Manager and a Service Development Manager. Evaluations of pricing were carried out by procurement and finance teams. The results of the tender evaluation are presented in restricted annex of this report.
16. Funding for the Refuge comes from the Housing Related Support budget under the Director for Health and Adult Social Care. The IDVA service is funded through a budget given by MOPAC and held by the Community Safety Team.
17. The new contract will commence on the 03rd January 2024.

Preferred Option and Alternative

18. The preferred option is to award the contract to the winning bidder as detailed in the restricted Annex (Part 2) of this report, for the initial period of three years. Upon a review of the successful delivery of the contract and dependent upon funding; that the authority may extend the contracts for further two periods of extensions with each extension having two (2) year term (total 3+2+2 = 7 years). That any decision to authorise the extension of the contract is delegated to the Director of Health and Adult Social Care in discussion and agreement with the Head of Community Safety.
19. Under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 a local authority must make provision for accommodation-based support. In order to avoid being in breach of the Act and also non-compliant with the Mayoral Office Pan London Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy there is no alternative but to ensure that services are provided and awarded in accordance with Procurement regulations.

Relevance to Council Plans and Strategies

20. The project supports **Priority 2 – Strong, healthy and safe communities** and the pledge that “.... *We are working with our partners to improve feelings of safety, and to prevent and address serious youth violence and domestic abuse.*”.

Financial Implications

Found in the confidential Part 2.

Legal Implications

21. The proposals in this report ensure that the Council will be able to meet the statutory responsibilities imposed by Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, relating to the provision of accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation.
22. The proposals in this report are in line with the Council's powers under Localism Act 2011 as well as s. 111 of the Local Government Act 1972.
23. The Council has a general duty under section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act) to have due regard, in the exercise of its functions, to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Relevant protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

24. The Council must ensure that all legal agreements entered into in consequence of the approval of the proposals set out in this report must be approved by Legal Services on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance.

Procurement Implications

25. Any procurement related activity must be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPR's), the Public Contracts Regulations (PCRs) and the Council's Sustainable and Ethical Procurement Policy.

26. The procurement strategy and proposed contract award has been via the Council's Procurement Services Assurance process, with the requisite Gate Reports endorsed. The lead officer within the Service Area must keep records of approvals to proceed with the proposed award and any future optional extensions to evidence compliance with the rules.
27. Award of the contract must be published on the government's procurement website, Find a Tender Service (FTS) and Contracts Finder to comply with the rules and the Government's transparency requirements.
28. In accordance with the Councils CPR's, the service area must ensure that the assigned Contract Manager of the contract ensures the monitoring requirements are adhered to, including evidence of regular contract / performance reviews with the Service Providers.
29. The Service Area has completed the Contract Classification Tiering tool and the proposed Contract has been classified as "Gold". The lead officer from the service who will be managing this contract is aware of the contract management requirements in accordance with the Contract Management Framework that is now rolled out across the Council. They will also meet with the Contract and Supplier Relationship Manager within Procurement Services, who will go through the contract management requirements for the management of the Contract prior to its commencement.

Equalities Implications

30. EQIA has been completed and is attached for reference for more detail, but to summarise each protected characteristic:

Age - Women accessing the service must be 18+ with no upper age limit. Parents can access the refuge but consideration must be given to the ages of the children and the dynamics of the refuge. The IDVA and ISVA service are also 18+ but will contact Children's and Families services if it involves survivors below 18 years of age.

Disability – The service is DDA compliant and staff are trained to work with health professionals to support individuals with disabilities.

Gender Reassignment – This service is for Women and Children only, there are actions to remind Police of alternative refuge space for gender reassigned women.

Marriage and Civil partnership - This service is designed to support vulnerable women and their children who may require a place of safety due to domestic abuse, regardless of their marital or civil partnership status. Marital status is always recorded as part of demographic data collection.

Pregnancy and maternity - The refuge and IDVA will support women during their pregnancy. The service will be linked into local Health

Workers, Children's Services, GP services and schools to provide tailored support.

Race – The service has culturally aware training as domestic abuse can be different for victim of ethnic minority backgrounds. Including honour based violence, forced marriage, language barriers, immigration status.

Religion or belief – The service is available for women and children of all religions and beliefs. Religious belief is always recorded as part of demographic data collection.

Sex - This service is for Women and Children only, there are actions to remind Police of alternative refuge space for male survivors of domestic abuse.

Sexual Orientation – This service is supports survivors of abuse, with staff have training in dealing with and linking specialist LGBTQ services.

Socio- Economic – The service assists in benefit maximisation for the survivor and helps the individual, if necessary, become financially independent.

HR and Workforce Implications (if any, delete if not relevant. Include TU consultation if relevant)

31. The service is delivered by an external provider and there are no HR or Workforce implications to Enfield Council staff.

Environmental and Climate Change Implications (if any, delete if not relevant)

32. Any changes to the service will consider the Council's Climate Action Plan to ensure any proposals are in line with the council's current policies.

Public Health Implications

33. Through this contract survivors of domestic violence will be encouraged and supported to register with local health professionals to ensure that they and their children are receiving appropriate healthcare.

Safeguarding Implications

34. All staff employed on the contract will be given Safeguarding Awareness training.
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Appendices

Equalities Impact Assessment

This report has a confidential Part 2 Report

Background Papers

Departmental reference number, if relevant: