



**Leeds**  
CITY COUNCIL

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**Report of Paul Money Chief Officer Safer Leeds**

**Report to Director of Communities & Environment**

**Date: 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

**Subject: Safer Leeds Domestic Violence Team – MHCLG Fund for West Yorkshire Wide Domestic Abuse Services, including Refuge, to help local areas meet the Priorities for Domestic Abuse Services**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

The five West Yorkshire local authorities (Leeds, Bradford, Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield), and the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) have received £499,223, up until March 2020, from the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to increase support to victims of domestic abuse across the district. The work will build on previous Department for Communities Local Government (DCLG) funded work to improve access to accommodation for victims with complex needs, promote cross border working and drive up service standards in primary care settings. Leeds City Council will be the lead authority.

Across West Yorkshire, we support approximately 400 people each in refuge and dispersed units and approximately 4800 people are supported annually with Outreach/IDVA Resettlement and crisis support. To take this work forward we will require five temporary posts based within commissioned domestic abuse services across the district and three posts based within the Safer Leeds Domestic Violence Team. These posts are fully funded through the MHCLG grant.

## **Recommendations**

The Director of Communities and Environment is asked to note that Leeds will be the lead authority for this project, and to give permission to accept the grant funding of £499,223 from the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Leeds City Council will then transfer £94,430 in the 2018/19 financial year and £192,637 in 2019/20 (Total - £287,067.00) in five equal parts to each of the other four councils in West Yorkshire (four parts) and one commissioned provider in Leeds. Leeds will be the lead authority for this project and, in consultation with the four Local Authority partners, will allocate funds through existing commissioners and contractual arrangements.

## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek support and approval for Safer Leeds to lead on the MHCLG project, working in partnership with the other four local authorities and the PCC, across West Yorkshire. The project aims to increase and improve service provision and access to accommodation to victims of domestic abuse with complex needs. The work will also seek to improve responses to victims from marginalised groups, in particular LGBT+ communities, as well as victims with No Recourse to Public Funds.

## **2. Background information**

- 2.1 In August 2018 the five local authorities across West Yorkshire and the PCC collaborated on a bid to the MHCLG, applying for funding to increase and improve service provision to victims of domestic abuse across the district. The work will build on previous work done through the DCLG project. In November 2018 we received confirmation that the bid was successful.
- 2.2 Previous DCLG funding allowed a series of specialist secondments to support victims with complex needs across the district. It also supported the delivery of West Yorkshire Domestic Violence Services Quality Mark and an accompanying training programme. It helped us to develop cross border referral pathways, deliver better responses to victims with uncertain immigration status and provide target hardening and counselling for victims. Through the MHCLG funded project we aim to build on the strong foundations established over the last two years.
- 2.3 The keys areas of work will include; Strand 1 - Advanced Practitioners (APs) will be based and managed within refuge and domestic violence service settings to support staff working with victims with complex needs (mental health difficulties, substance misuse issues, BME victims, older victims, disabled victims, young victims aged (16-17yrs) and LGBT+ victims) to improve access to accommodation, maintain tenancies and reduce repeat homelessness;
- Strand 2 - We will upgrade joint working across West Yorkshire to benefit victims with uncertain immigration status and No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) who are particularly restricted in their options for obtaining protection. Training delivered over the last two years improved each district's ability to respond to this issue however services identified a need for further bespoke training to ensure more staff fully understand their responsibilities and limits in this multifaceted area of work. This strand will also address training needs to help increase skills and knowledge for service providers to enrich the support they offer to victims from LGBT+ communities;
- Strand 3 - We will deliver a framework for driving improvements in GP Surgeries and social prescribing services through the delivery of a Domestic Violence Primary Care Minimum Standards Quality Mark. GPs and health professionals are well placed to identify both victims and perpetrators through connected health needs including injury, depression and substance misuse. This strand will promote routine enquiry and help progress NHS England North's aim to disseminate the Leeds model of Routine Enquiry within GP Practices across the north of England.

### **3. Main issues**

- 3.1 The recommendations contained in this report will have positive implications for victims of domestic abuse and their children.
- 3.2 The APs will broker partnership arrangements and referral pathways across the five local authority districts to ensure DHR, MARAC, MAPPA and child safeguarding arrangements are in place and aligned as they help place victims who require time-intensive interventions to access cross border accommodation and support. This support will be accompanied by the offer of Start Up Packs for victims accessing dispersed accommodation or taking up new tenancies. The Start Up Packs will go some way in addressing the barriers victims face in establishing themselves in independent living arrangements. The packs will provide basics such as kitchen utensils, bedding and towels. Outcomes from this strand will include reduced repeat victimisation, increased access to accommodation and improved support to the most vulnerable and high risk victims
- 3.3 We will promote and deliver customised training, bringing in expert immigration partners to intensify knowledge and raise service standards to ensure no victim is turned away. We will also advance the development of a West Yorkshire protocol by securing further engagement from commissioners, housing providers, third sector domestic violence services, children's services and agencies providing help to migrant communities.
- 3.4 We will address training needs to enrich support to victims from LGBT+ communities. Leeds Women's Aid recently undertook research with LGBT+ people which highlighted that transgender people experience abuse in relationships at rates higher than the rest of the population. Two events were held in Leeds in 2017 to consult with LGBT+ communities and LGBT+ led services and the need for anti-oppressive domestic violence training was identified as a solution to address a lack of workforce awareness and understanding. The target audience will be front line practitioners working across all sectors. Outcomes for this strand will include increased workforce knowledge and understanding, improved anti-oppressive practice, reduced risk for victims and increased service user satisfaction.
- 3.5 The implementation of the DV Quality Mark will promote consistency of good practice and a minimum set of standards within GP surgeries and health settings across the district. Evaluation of a pilot in Leeds indicated that routine enquiry in GP settings leads to early identification of domestic violence and, in particular, helps victims with sexual abuse related health issues to access appropriate support. This will also boost work already undertaken to roll out the West Yorkshire Domestic Violence Quality Mark through the DCLG project. GP surgeries and health providers will be targeted to roll out the Domestic Violence Quality Mark according to numbers of MARAC notifications, BME victims and levels of incidents reported. Outcomes from this strand will lead to reductions in risk to victims through early identification of domestic violence, effective signposting and more timely interventions.

- 3.6 We will upgrade current practice in terms of quantity and quality of interventions offered to victims with complex needs and their children. There is a clear identified need for victims and their children to be able to travel to across boundaries in order to be safe. The service changes will afford uncomplicated referral procedures across local authority areas and present a marked expansion in workforce awareness and understanding. The service changes will also bring about innovative practice such as routine enquiry in GP practices to promote early identification.
- 3.7 We will review project performance, identify gaps, ensure that service interventions are user led and informed by the voice of the victim. The priorities for domestic abuse services cover a much needed breadth and depth of service change and affirm that, whilst we have considerable good practice in place across West Yorkshire, further work is needed to improve on areas with deficit.

#### **4. Corporate Considerations**

##### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the all the local authority leads, PCC, commissioned service providers and commissioning team, members of the Domestic Violence Programme Board have been informed and updated on the progress of the MHCLG project described in this report.

##### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.1 An equality impact assessment screening tool (EIA) has been completed in relation to the recommendation detailed in this report.

##### **4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

- 4.3.1 Elements within each strand of the project contribute to, or reflect, a number of ambitions set out in the Best Council Plan 2018 - 2019; encouraging more victims to self-report incidents of DV; contributing to keeping people safe from harm; protecting the most vulnerable; helping people out of financial hardship. The MHCLG project will also support the delivery of the West Yorkshire Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy

##### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

- 4.4.1 We will agree key performance indicators to measure the impact of funded activity and monitor progress in partnership with commissioners, to ensure value for money is being achieved. We will capture outputs and outcomes through quarterly monitoring and case studies which will be reported to the PCC's Domestic and Sexual Violence Board and inform the PCC's strategy. We will build identified good practice into future planning and commissioning as well as sharing good practice through the Core Cities Programme and other regional and national forums.

##### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 4.5.1 This is a key decision and is subject to Call In, there are no grounds for treating the contents of this report as confidential with the Council's Access to Information Rules.

## **4.6 Risk Management**

- 4.6.1 The arrangements as described in this report, will allow continuity of service provision and enable the Council, the other four local authorities and commissioned service providers across the district to continue to build on the work previously done through the DCLG project. We will work collectively to integrate and enhance services whilst developing innovative ways of working to meet the needs of domestic abuse victims with complex needs. The contract will be performance managed by each local authority to ensure value for money is being achieved and any performance issues can be addressed.

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 This report seeks approval from the Director of Housing and Communities for Safer Leeds to lead on the MHCLG project across the district and in partnership with the four other local authorities and PCC. The project end date will be March 2020, subject to change in the event of any underspend.

## **6. Recommendations**

The Director of Communities and Environment is asked to note that Leeds will be the lead authority for this project, and to give permission to accept the grant funding of £499,223 from the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Leeds City Council will then transfer £94,430 in the 2018/19 financial year and £192,637 in 2019/20 (Total - £287,067.00) in five equal parts to each of the other four councils in West Yorkshire (four parts) and one commissioned provider in Leeds. Leeds will be the lead authority for this project and, in consultation with the four Local Authority partners, will allocate funds through existing commissioners and contractual arrangements.

### **Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 6.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.