

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR LEICESTERSHIRE

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Report of	OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER
Subject	DOMESTIC ABUSE PERPETRATOR PROGRAMME
Date	MONDAY 6 MARCH 2023
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Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the panel regarding the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme located at the Jenkins Centre in Leicester, the options for funding and the long-term sustainability of the programme.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that members comment on the contents of the report.

Background

3. The Domestic Abuse Perpetrator programme for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) engages with men and women who are identified as using abusive behaviour in a relationship setting. The aim of this service is to reduce this type of behaviour and improve the safety of the victims, reduce the risk of this behaviour reoccurring and establishing an improvement in health and wellbeing for partners, ex-partners, children and the perpetrators themselves. The local need spans across genders, sexual orientations, race and religions; this is not surprising given the multicultural mix across the city and county areas. For example, over the past three quarters of the financial year 2022/2023, we have seen 13 females, 93 males, 1 identifying as LGBTQ+, 73 who identify as White British, 25 Asian, 4 mixed race and 2 Black/African/Afro-Caribbean.
4. The need for this service is still prevalent as shown by the data from the previous three quarters of a steady intake of referrals to this service from across the city and county districts. The service in the year 2021/2022 provided support to 189 perpetrators, 188 victims and 341 secondary/children victims.
5. The service meets several objectives detailed in the Police and Crime Plan for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, regarding victim support, reduction of crime and complements the local work on a Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy, whilst offering a renewed and novel approach to supporting the perpetrators in understanding and changing their behaviours.
6. The current service provision is contracted to domestic abuse services provider FreeVa, at their Jenkins Centre until 31st March 2023 with no further option to extend under existing arrangements. The service was previously funded through grant monies

received following a successful application to a round of Home Office funding. In order to align with existing arrangements, the provision for the City Council is paid to the City Council directly to manage through the contract between themselves and FreeVa. A separate contract is held between the OPCC and FreeVa for the service on behalf of Leicestershire County Council.

7. In January 2023, the Home Office released a round of funding available to Offices of Police and Crime Commissioners, in order to continue previously funded projects and develop new initiatives where applicable. The funding period is from 1st April 2023 until 31st March 2025.

The Funding

8. The Home Office released a round of funding for Offices of Police and Crime Commissioners in January 2023, with a deadline of mid-February to complete up to five applications, with a budget limit of up to £1 million per application. The application included questions regarding the suitability of a project, the staffing and experience that are a part of any initiative, the risks and contingencies, as well as longevity of any project potentially awarded funding.

Application

9. The OPCC has submitted a bid for one round of funding to maintain the work undertaken by the Jenkins Centre, with an additional element to the programmes on offer. Currently, there are a variety of programmes which would continue if funding is awarded, including:
 - (a) Foundations - This is designed to work with services users identified by professionals having shown some levels of risky behaviours within their intimate relationships. The aim of Foundations is to support these individuals to take accountability for any unhealthy or abusive behaviours they may be using or have historically used within their intimate relationships. Foundations consists of 6 group sessions and one 121 session. The group sessions are held weekly, on Saturday mornings. The 121 session is offered between week 4 and 6. If individuals are found to be unsuitable for the other programmes on offer, on the basis of lack of accountability or motivation, then Foundations would be offered.
 - (b) Second Step – This programme is the most used service and works on the basis that domestic violence/abuse are patterns of behaviours intended to control and coerce one's partner and children, rather than simply being a series of abusive behaviours. As such, assessors endeavour to help perpetrators understand this pattern and how violence 'works' or functions in their relationship. Uncovering this enables the assessor and others to better anticipate escalations in risk (e.g. they will use violence to stop their partner leaving; so, if the partner wishes to separate, the Second Step service can anticipate an increase in risk).
 - (c) Step Up Programme – This programme consists of 10 group sessions and two individual sessions. The Step-Up Dads (SUDs) programme is unlike the other Jenkins Centre programmes in the following ways. It is a closed programme (the men who start the programme on session one are the only attendees of that programme). The SUDs programme is primarily about focus on fathering, it is not a programme to address male violence towards partners.

- (d) Partner Support Service – For every perpetrator identified there is often a network of partners, ex partners and children affected. The Partner Support Service offers long-term practical and emotional support to partners and ex-partners of those engaging with the programme. Support is offered for up to a year and is tailored around risk and the needs of the service user.
- (e) To enhance the offering with this round of funding, the application has proposed the service be expanded to identify perpetrators who disclose their previous experiences of trauma, abuse or Adverse Childhood Experiences. FreeVa are unique in their position as the incumbent provider of this service and a key service partner in the delivery of the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Service System across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Therefore, when a perpetrator discloses their experiences as part of the perpetrator programme(s), the new service will aim to identify their needs and refer on to their victim services on completion of the perpetrator programme.

Finance

- 10. The amount of funding that the OPCC has placed a bid for totals £741,942.00. This can be split down as £370, 083 for the first year, and £371,859 for year 2. These figures are the totalled amounts for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Risks

Funding is not successfully awarded

- 11. This is a significant risk for the Panel to consider; currently there are no further arrangements for funding of this service to continue beyond 31st March 2023. This programme is unique to the area and therefore cannot be compared to other services; there are several domestic abuse commissioned services and charity organisations, however, there are no other perpetrator specific services. Individuals who display harmful behaviours and are perpetrators of domestic violence are shown in research to be victims of their own historical trauma or violence. Therefore, the uniqueness of this service is underpinned by a moral responsibility to provide safe, therapeutic programmes to change behaviours and address the historical violence and trauma of their previous experiences. The risk reduction for victims is not only felt by the partners and victims of the perpetrator, but also the children of the perpetrators who will generationally learn to potentially break the chain of domestic abuse.

Closure of the Jenkins Centre

- 12. Should risk of funding not being awarded become reality, the Jenkins Centre will close with immediate effect. An exit strategy is currently in place with staff redundancies as the greatest risk; the OPCC has agreed in principle with FreeVa to fund staff costs only for the month of April 2023 if funding is awarded but delayed. From previous experience, the indicative timelines for receipt of award notifications can be delayed; as the exit strategy aims to fully conclude the service by 31st March 2023, the OPCC has agreed to continue paying staff costs for one month in order to avoid redundancies impacting new service delivery.

Staffing and Resources

- 13. The following are staff directly impacted by the funding for the Jenkins Centre:

- (a) 1 FTE Service Manager
- (b) 2.5 FTE Interventions Workers
- (c) 1 Senior Support Worker
- (d) 1 Support Worker
- (e) 1 Project Support Worker

Options

Option 1 – Finance is successfully awarded from the Home Office

14. Should the application for funding prove successful, assurances from FreeVa have been sought to ensure project delivery will continue from 1st April 2023. Currently, as part of the exit strategy, new referrals have been halted until confirmation of funding is received and therefore, these referrals will be accepted and started on the next available programme(s).

Option 2 – The Jenkins Centre is funded locally

15. As described earlier in this report, this centre is a vital part of the wider Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence offering in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. If funding is not received for this centre, it will close unless funding can be sought from partners across the area, including the OPCC and the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs). The Commissioning Manager attended a Leicestershire County CSP meeting in November 2022 to engage with the leads for the districts and request consideration for match funding of this service. Whilst this was prior to the current round of Home Office funding being released, the request is still relevant as it will ensure longevity of the programme. Even in the event of successfully being awarded Home Office funding, the need to ensure this service continues beyond the two-year contract term remains.

Option 3 – The Jenkins Centre closes

16. An exit strategy is currently in place for the existing provision. Should there be no funding available, this exit strategy will be completed and the centre will close on 31st March 2023. The risks associated with this closure will have an impact on the wider Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence service provision across the local area, as partners, secondary victims such as ex-partners and children, may not be as easily identified unless supported elsewhere through other victim services. This option is the least viable as it creates a large blind spot in the area regarding the identification and supportive measures provided to perpetrators of domestic violence.

Evaluation

17. The OPCC are internally reviewing the current service provision and providing an evaluation of the service to the Home Office. The OPCC is obtaining information sharing agreements to look at individuals who have completed the programme versus offender data to ascertain a reoffending rate, with the hope that it shows a decrease on successful programme completion. This evaluation will be in line with the objectives of the contract to reflect on the number of victims supported with both the Partner Support Service and the wider Victim Service pathways. As FreeVa are in the unique position of delivering both services, this data is readily available and the evaluation will be completed by mid-March 2023. The Panel is welcome to receive a copy of this evaluation on request.

Conclusion

18. The OPCC is confident the Home Office application for funding will be successful and the service will continue for a further two years. However, the Panel is asked to consider the long term future of this service and any support that may be available in the event that funding is not received, to avoid total closure of the service.

Persons to Contact

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