

PFCC Decision Report

Report reference number: 071/2020
Classification Not protectively marked
Title of report: MoJ Emergency Funding – Assessment process
Area of county / stakeholders affected: Countywide
Report by: Kirsty Smith Date of report: 20th May 2020 Enquiries to: kirsty.smith@essex.police.uk

1. Purpose of the report

To seek approval of the process to assess and distribute the additional grant from the Ministry of Justice to organisations that support victims of crime following the impact of COVID-19.

2. Recommendations

Approve the assessment process and criteria for the additional Ministry of Justice grant.

3. Benefits of the proposal

The COVID-19 pandemic has required victim support services to deliver their services using alternative methods in response to the restrictions that have been enforced. All commissioned support services responded quickly and positively to these changes and amended their working models to provide remote and virtual support. The delivery of remote working has however had a financial impact on some of the organisations. This funding will help recoup some of these costs.

During the COVID-19 pandemic there has also been a change of victim demand. Victims are staying engaged with support services for longer following the impact that COVID-19 is having on victims; for example, because they are unable to engage in specialist therapy / support sessions due to the COVID restrictions. COVID-19 has also impacted on the criminal justice process with court cases being postponed, and prolonged investigations increasing the length of victim engagement with the support services. Additional funding will support organisations to manage this cohort of victims through this difficult time.

There is also a concern that volumes will significantly increase into support services following the cessation of COVID-19 restrictions; for example, as “hidden harm” that has been sustained during lockdown is uncovered and victims are referred into appropriate support services. Funding will be utilised to prepare for this increased demand and ensure victims are supported when they need to be, thus reducing the requirement for waiting lists.

4. Background and proposal

The PFCC has a statutory responsibility to commission services to support victims of crime. In order to deliver this the Ministry of Justice provides a Victims grant which is utilised by the PFCC to commission domestic abuse, sexual abuse and all other victim support services.

COVID-19 has had an impact on these commissioned services which includes:

- The cost impact of moving to remote / virtual working to ensure victims continue to be supported
- Increased complexities of victims and increased numbers of victims remaining engaged with services for longer
- A new risk of a post-COVID surge in victims once restrictions are lifted.

In response to this the Ministry of Justice secured £28 million from the Treasury in order to support services. The MoJ allocated this funding in four groups:

- £10 million to domestic abuse services
- £10 million to sexual abuse services
- £5 million to sexual abuse services which receive rape support funding
- £3 million to Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVA) services

In order to distribute these funds, the MoJ agreed to pass through £20 million of this via Police and Crime Commissioners.

The MoJ has used the funding formula currently used to determine the existing Victim grant to distribute the £20 million between Police and Crime Commissioners. Essex’s allocation is:

Domestic abuse services already commissioned by PCCs	£310,000
Sexual violence services that are commissioned by PCCs and those that are not	£155,000
Domestic abuse services that are not commissioned by PCCs	£155,000

In order to access this grant PCCs need to follow the MoJ’s process:

- PCCs need to agree an assessment process for funding and open this up to all domestic abuse and sexual violence services (using the criteria that the MoJ has set out)
- PCCs need to assess each request and submit the successful bids to the MoJ for approval by 4th June
- The MoJ will then make final approval decisions and release grants

It is proposed that the PFCC uses the attached templates for commissioned and non-commissioned services in order to request and assess applications



Non Commissioned
Services covid-extraor



Commissioned
Services covid-19-exti

5. Alternative options considered and rejected

The PFCC has a statutory responsibility to commission services to support victims of crime. The PFCC can choose not to utilise this additional funding that has been made available however this will risk the ability of services to deliver a quality service and manage the demand / impact of COVID-19.

The PFCC could adopt alternative assessment forms / processes but this is not suggested as the attached are recommended by the MoJ (with some enhancements to ensure that the PFCC has considered safeguarding and additional due diligence questions).

6. Police and Crime Plan

Victims are at the heart of the Police and Crime Plan and this funding will ensure that victims continue to be supported during these unprecedented times.

7. Police operational implications

There are no operational implications for Essex Police.

8. Financial implications

The MoJ has provided the opportunity to apply for funding for the amounts listed below:

Domestic abuse services already commissioned by PCCs	£310,000
Sexual violence services that are commissioned by PCCs and those that are not	£155,000
Domestic abuse services that are not commissioned by PCCs	£155,000

9. Legal implications

The award of the grant to successful applicants will be subject to the PFCC's standard funding agreement.

10. Staffing implications

There are no staffing implications.

11. Equality and Diversity implications

All support services commissioned by the PFCC are available and accessible to all. This funding will support the continuation for this during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

These funds are available to commissioned and non-commissioned services. In order to share this with non-commissioned services a notification will be issued on the PFCC website and shared with PFCC partners to distribute through their networks.

12. Risks

The key risk identified is the mis-use of funds allocated. For commissioned services this risk is mitigated because organisations are in contract (and full procurement due diligence would have taken place). Commissioned organisations already provide regular performance data in order to monitor activity. The risk is greater with non-commissioned services as the PFCC may have had no previous experience with organisations that bid. In order to mitigate the risk due diligence will take place that will include:

- Negative website search
- Organisation check utilising Companies House or the Charity Commission (this will review accounts, board structures etc)
- Experience and organisation history

Any organisation awarded funds will be subject to the PFCC's standard grant agreement and will have to agree to provide performance monitoring at agreed intervals.

13. Governance Boards

n/a

Report Approval

The report will be signed off by the OPFCC Chief Executive and Treasurer prior to review and sign off by the PFCC / DPFCC.

Chief Executive / M.O.

Sign:

Print: P. Brent-Isherwood

Date: 20 May 2020

Chief Finance Officer / Treasurer

Sign:

Print: Elizabeth Helm

Date:

Publication

Is the report for publication?

YES

NO

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State 'None' if applicable)

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.....N/A.....

If the report is not for publication, the Chief Executive will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

Redaction

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

1. Of Decision Sheet?

YES

2. Of Appendix?

YES

NO

NO

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

.....
.....N/A.....

Date redaction carried out:

Treasurer / Chief Executive Sign Off – for Redactions only

If redaction is required, the Treasurer or Chief Executive is to sign off that redaction has been completed.

Sign:

Print:

Chief Executive/Treasurer

Date signed:

Decision and Final Sign Off

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: 
Roger Hirst

Print:

PFCC

Date signed: 28 September 2020

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

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.....
.....

Sign:

Print:

PFCC/Deputy PFCC

Date signed: