

PFCC Decision Report

Please ensure all sections below are completed

Report reference number: 003/21
Classification; Not protectively marked
Title of report: Stalking Advocate
Area of county / stakeholders affected: Countywide
Report by: Kirsty Smith
Date of report: 18 January 2021
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1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. To seek approval for the allocation of £32,117 in the form of a crime and disorder reduction grant to Changing Pathways to provide a Stalking Advocate.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Approve the allocation of £32,117 to Changing Pathways for the salary of a Stalking Advocate who will support victims of stalking and harassment.

3. Benefits of the proposal

- 3.1. A Stalking Advocate will provide emotional support and practical assistance, including help to access legal advice, assistance with safety planning, risk assessment, signposting/connection with other agencies, information on rights, legislation and entitlements for victims.
- 3.2. The role provides support for victims in order for them to cope and move on from the impact of the crime. This is evidenced by monitoring outcomes of victims. In 2019/20 victims of stalking who were supported by an independent advocate showed:

83%	strongly agreed or agreed with the statement:	I feel better able to recognise abusive behaviour
91%	strongly agreed or agreed with the statement:	I feel more confident about asking for help when I need it
79%	strongly agreed or agreed with the statement:	My support networks have improved

83%	strongly agreed or agreed with the statement:	I am clear that the abuse was not my fault
83%	of those that had children, strongly agreed or agreed with the statement:	I feel more confident in my parenting skills
86%	of those that had children, strongly agreed or agreed with the statement:	I understand more about the impact of abuse on my child / children

4. Background and proposal

- 4.1. Changing Pathways are a charitable organisation who supports victims of domestic abuse.
- 4.2. Stalking is a form of domestic abuse. It is defined as a pattern of unwanted, fixated and obsessive behaviour which is intrusive and causes fear of violence or serious alarm or distress.
- 4.3. The restrictions of the COVID pandemic is expected to increase the risk of stalking and harassment. Published in a recent article¹ 'Deputy Chief Constable Paul Mills, stalking and harassment lead for the National Police Chiefs Council, said: "*Nationally we have seen an increase in stalking offences since March and factors such as loss of employment, working from home or being furloughed has increased perpetrator's time and capacity to target victims.*' In Essex stalking and harassment crime has seen an increase of 5% Nov 2019 – 23070, Nov 2020 – 24262.
- 4.4. Changing Pathways recognised the need to provide specialist support to victims of stalking and in 2016 Changing Pathways launched a stalking advocate role with the support of Big Lottery funding.
- 4.5. Changing Pathways have demonstrated that there is a need for this specialist support in Essex and victims of stalking and harassment require advocacy support that understands the impact that stalking has on their lives. In 2019/20 Changing Pathways Stalking Advocate supported 83 victims and on average each victim was supported by the service for six months.
- 4.6. The current funding is coming to an end and Changing Pathways are seeking support for this role to continue. It is proposed that the PFCC allocates £32,117 to continue to support the stalking advocacy role for one year from 1st April 2021 until 31st March 2022.

5. Alternative options considered and rejected

- 5.1. The PFCC could opt not to support this project and Changing Pathways will have to continue to seek alternative funding opportunities. If the PFCC chose not to support this increases the risk that Changing Pathways will not be able to continue with this dedicated post.

6. Police and Crime Plan

¹ <https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/stalking-analysis-reveals-domestic-abuse-link>

6.1. This grant supports the PFCC priority to break the cycle of domestic abuse by supporting victims of stalking which is a form of domestic abuse.

7. Police operational implications

7.1. There is no impact to operational policing

8. Financial implications

8.1. The PFCC will allocate £32,117 from 2021/22 Victims Fund

9. Legal implications

9.1. The award of the grant is subject to the PFCC's standard funding agreement.

10. Staffing implications

10.1. Changing Pathways will be responsible for the management of this new role.

11. Equality and Diversity implications

11.1. Changing Pathways will manage human resourcing ensuring they meet recruitment standards.

11.2. Through data reporting full demographic data will be requested from Changing Pathways to ensure that services are accessible and available to all.

11.3. Domestic Abuse is typically a gender-based crime towards females. The service does support male victims however, it is expected that the service will support a higher proportion of female victims.

12. Risks

12.1. There is a risk that the new post does not meet its set objectives. The outcomes for this new role will be monitored through existing quarterly performance meetings.

13. Governance Boards

N/A

14. Background papers

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.

Deputy M.O.



Sign:

Print: Darren Horsman

Date: 21 January 2021

Chief Finance Officer / Treasurer

Sign: 

Print: Elizabeth Helm

Date: 25 January 2021

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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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:

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.....

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

Decision and Final Sign Off

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: 

Print: Roger Hirst

PFCC

Date signed: 18 March 2021

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

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.....
.....

Sign:

Print:

PFCC/Deputy PFCC

Date signed: