

PFCC Decision Report

Report reference number: 148-22

Classification: Not protectively marked

Title of report: Stalking Advocacy Service 2022-23

Area of county / stakeholders affected: South Essex

Report by: Greg Myddelton (Strategic Head of Partnerships and Delivery)

Date of report: 11 April 2023

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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report seeks approval to allocate a grant of £32,117 to Changing Pathways for the delivery of a stalking victim advocacy and support service.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1. That the PFCC approves the allocation of a grant from the 2022-23 Victims' Fund to Changing Pathways for the delivery of the stalking advocacy and support service.

3 Background to the Proposal

- 3.1. The Changing Pathways Independent Stalking Advocacy Service commenced in 2021 following concerns around the increasing profile and reporting of stalking cases and the lack of specialist provision to support victims. The service is available across Changing Pathways' operating area of South Essex. A similar project is delivered in the north of Essex by Next Chapter.
- 3.2. In 2021-22, Changing Pathways received 50 referrals into the service, including six self-referrals. 43 of the 50 referrals were accepted into the service.

- 3.3. The continuation of this service directly supports victims of stalking and informs considerations of the integration of specialist stalking support services into future commissioned domestic abuse services.

4 Proposal and Associated Benefits

4.1 The service undertakes risk assessments for victims and develops safety and support plans, bespoke to each person, based on their risk level and individual circumstances.

4.2 Of those individuals engaged in the service, 88% reported an overall improved score. 88% felt safer, 54% felt more confident and 62% felt optimistic about the future. 81% had an improvement in perception of the risk posed by their stalker. 100% felt listened to and believed by staff.

4.3 The following are examples of feedback about the service:

“Having someone listen to me and to know that the stalking is not in my head. There is help out there and I would encourage anyone to come forward for help.”

“I feel a lot more confident. I have learnt more about being manipulated. I feel safer now I have moved.”

“I was in a really bad place and could not see a way out. The service has helped me see that I had options and showed me a way out. It felt like I was given a map that led to my freedom. I am so grateful for all the help and support that was given to me.”

5 Options Analysis

5.1 This is the only dedicated stalking support service in south Essex. Whilst our specialist domestic abuse providers can support victims of stalking, those caseworkers are not necessarily specialists in supporting victims of stalking. The absence of this service would diminish our ability to understand the experience of stalking victims and provide them with a tailored support offer.

5.2 It is our intention to integrate stalking into our future commissioned domestic abuse services once the current contract term ends in 2025. Until then, the maintenance of this service is considered vital to improve our understanding and provide direct support to those that need it.

6 Consultation and Engagement

6.1 This proposal has been discussed with our Southend, Essex and Thurrock domestic abuse partnership lead.

6.2 The decision was also discussed at the PFCC’s Senior Management Team meeting on 11th April 2023.

7 Strategic Links

7.1 This service supports the PFCC to deliver against the Police and Crime Plan, particularly the priorities around protecting vulnerable people and breaking the cycle of domestic abuse and reducing violence against women and girls. The proposal will contribute to the achievement of the commitments to:

- Increase investment in specialist support services such as counselling, advocacy, therapeutic support and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors so victims get the support and help that they need to move on.
- Work with police and partners to look for ways to reduce the fear women feel in their communities.
- Work with communities and listen to women and girls directly affected by violence and harassment to discuss and understand what we can do differently and use this feedback to inform our future work.

7.2 The proposal will also contribute to the achievement of the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB) partnership strategy.

8 Police operational implications

8.1 There are no direct operational implications of this decision on Essex Police.

9 Financial implications

9.1 The PFCC will allocate £32,117 from the 2022-23 Victims' Fund to Changing Pathways to deliver the stalking advocacy service. This allocation was already factored into the PFCC's 2022-23 Victims' budget.

10 Legal implications

10.1 This grant will be subject to the PFCC's standard grant agreement.

11 Staffing implications

11.1 This funding will be used to fund a staff post at Changing Pathways to deliver the project. No ongoing or long-term liability will be placed on the PFCC as a result of this grant arrangement.

12 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion implications

12.1 Stalking can affect anyone. The service collects and shares demographic data about those supported.

13 Risks and Mitigations

13.1 There are no identified risks associated with awarding this funding.

14 Governance Boards

14.1 This proposal was discussed at the PFCC's Senior Management Team meeting on 11th April 2023.

15 Links to Future Plans

15.1 This funding will support the PFCC to deliver against the Police and Crime Plan and the partnership domestic abuse strategy, as set out in section 8 above.

15.2 As set out in paragraph 6.2 above, it is our intention to integrate stalking into our future commissioned DA services once the current contract term ends in 2025.

16 Background Papers and Appendices

16.1 n/a

Report Approval

The report will be signed off by the PFCC's Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the PFCC / DPFCC.

Chief Executive / M.O.

Sign: 

Print: P. Brent-Isherwood

Date: 5 May 2023

Chief Financial Officer

Sign: 

Print: Janet Perry

Date: 02 June 2023

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)

None

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
NO

2. Of Appendix? YES
NO

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

N/A

Date redaction carried out:

Chief Finance Officer / 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 / Chief Finance Officer

Decision and Final Sign Off

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: 

Print: Roger Hirst

PFCC

Date signed: 09/06/2023

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

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Sign:

Print:

PFCC/Deputy PFCC

Date signed: