

PLYMOUTH DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICE BRIEFING REPORT

Strategic Co-operative Commissioning



I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The Plymouth Domestic Abuse Service (PDAS) is currently delivered by Sanctuary Housing Association. A procurement of a new service in Spring 2023 was abandoned due to feedback from the market. The commissioner further engaged with the market and other stakeholders to provide additional information and clarifications, particularly around the housing costs associated with the delivery of the service. The new tender was then relaunched in September 2023 but we were unable to award the contract following the completed evaluation of the tender and tenderers were notified before Christmas.
- 1.2. Commissioners and partners have been working together to gather further feedback from the market on the tender process. The process was fully compliant with regulations and demonstrated that the market does not have the capability to deliver the specified requirement at this time. The commissioning intentions are being reviewed and the next-stage commissioning process is being developed with partners. Therefore the preferred option to ensure the current service is sustained during this process is to award a second direct contract to Sanctuary Housing Association until 31 March 2025.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Plymouth Domestic Abuse Service (PDAS) is currently delivered by Sanctuary Housing Association. The current contract was a direct award covering December 2023 to April 2024 with an optional 1-month extension until end of May 2024, in case there was slippage in the original tendering timescales. This decision made use of the delegation granted by Cabinet in December 2022.
- 2.2. The service tender in Spring 2023 was abandoned due to feedback from the market. The new contract would have been in place for 01 December 2023 but the procurement was abandoned in Spring 2023. The PDAS bridging contract was awarded to cover the new tendering timescale (December 2023 to April 2024) with the new contract due to start on 01 May 2024.
- 2.3. The new tender was then relaunched in September 2023 but we were unable to award the contract following the completed evaluation of the tender and tenderers were notified about the outcome of the tender before Christmas. We met with the Sanctuary Housing Association in January to discuss the continuation of the service whilst the new commissioning approach is developed, which they have agreed to until 31 March 2025.
- 2.4. Commissioners and partners have been working together to gather feedback from the market on the tender process to make improvements for the next procurement and align work with the [Plymouth's VAWG DASV Strategy and Action Plan 2023-26](#). The commissioning intentions are being reviewed and the commissioning process is being developed with partners. Therefore, a new bridging contract for the PDAS from June 2024 to March 2025 will be required to cover the commissioning of the new service to start in 01 April 2025.
- 2.5. The Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Behaviour Change Programme was also to be tendered as part of the new integrated contract. The incumbent provider Ahimsa's IOM Behaviour Change contract has been extended until 31 March 2025 to cover the same commissioning and procurement process. The IOM Programme led by Devon & Cornwall Police ends on 31 March 2024 and the new alternative model which is being developed with

partners should be delivered from September 2024 under the existing Ahimsa contract with the new contract being in place for 01 April 2025.

3. PROPOSED CHANGES AND REASONS

- 3.1. Directly award a second bridging contract to the incumbent Plymouth Domestic Abuse Service provider for 10 months from 1 June 2024 until 31 March 2025. This will ensure continuity of service for victims and survivors of domestic abuse whilst new commissioning intentions are being defined and the procurement process is carried out. The new PDAS contract(s) will be in place by 1 April 2025.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1. Do Nothing – allow the PDAS contract to end on 31 May 2024. This is not appropriate as we have a statutory duty to provide safe accommodation and there will be vulnerable adults and families with children who are survivors of domestic abuse with no support.
- 4.2. Award a direct contract for an extended period of 3-5 years. This would not make the required changes needed to ensure that the service meets the needs of the victims and survivors of domestic abuse into the future and a longer contract could be challenged by other providers who would want the opportunity to bid for the service.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISK

- 5.1. For 2024/25, the total budget for PDAS is £777,297.

6. TIMESCALES

- 6.1. The new PDAS contract will start on 1 June 2024 and end on 31 March 2025. The new PDAS will be tendered within this time.