

# 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 2023.
- 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 have been 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 extend the current contract to Sanctuary Housing Association until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

## 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 June 2024 until the end of March 2025.
- 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 May 2024) with the new contract due to start on 1<sup>st</sup> June 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 2023. We met with the Sanctuary Housing Association in January 2025 to discuss the continuation of the service whilst the new procurement takes place, which they have agreed to until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.
- 2.4. Commissioners and partners have been working together to gather feedback from the market through an Expression of Interest in October 2024 to make improvements for the next procurement and align work with the [Plymouth's VAWG DASV Strategy and Action Plan 2023-26](#), Specialist Supported Housing Strategy and Needs Assessment including the needs of individuals and families who have experienced domestic abuse and the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy. Sanctuary Housing Association have agreed with the landlord to move from a lease agreement to a management agreement for the refuge in 2025/26.
- 2.5. The commissioning intentions have been reviewed and the commissioning process developed with partners under the new procurement regulations which came into effect from 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025. Therefore, a new bridging contract for the PDAS from April 2025 to end of March 2025 will be required to cover the procurement of the new service to start in April 1<sup>st</sup> 2026.

**2.6.** 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<sup>st</sup> March 2026 to cover the same commissioning and procurement process. The IOM Programme led by Devon & Cornwall Police ends on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and the MATAC pilot has begun in March 2025 which has been developed with partners under the existing Ahimsa contract with the new contract being in place for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026. The Ahimsa contract has been extended separately and is not part of this decision.

### **3. PROPOSED CHANGES AND REASONS**

3.1. It is proposed to extend the current contract to the incumbent Plymouth Domestic Abuse Service provider for 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. 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<sup>st</sup> April 2026.

### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1. Do Nothing – allow the PDAS contract to end on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2025. 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 have the capability and expertise to bid for the service.

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISK**

5.1. For 2025/26, the total budget for PDAS is £782,519.

### **6. TIMESCALES**

6.1. The new PDAS contract will start on 1st April 2025 and end on 31st March 2026. The new service contract will be tendered within this time.