

DECISION NOTICE

Decision author and proposer: Laura Mercer

Subject:
Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse Helpline – Independent Choices

Type of decision:			
Deputy Mayor's decision	X	Chief Officer's decision	

In all cases this will need to be approved by the Assistant Director Police, Crime, Criminal Justice and Fire.

<p>The decision is that:</p> <p>It is proposed that GMCA should continue to contribute to the funding of the Independent Choices Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse Helpline at a cost of £30,000 for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019. This will be funded from the MoJ Victims Fund.</p> <p>Additional funding is provided by Manchester City Council (£50,000 per annum) and a contribution is also made by Independent Choices from their reserves.</p>
<p>The reasons for the decision are:</p> <p>The Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse Helpline provides information and support to anyone experiencing or has experienced domestic abuse in any form. The service provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to a confidential helpline service for victims of domestic abuse in Greater Manchester, this includes emotional and practical support, information and options for referral or signposting • Safety planning • Support for professionals in relation to issues such as help finding Refuge/Accommodation in an emergency situation, practical advice, referral and signposting information <p>The Community Helpline Language Service also provides:</p>

- Support for South Asian Women, particularly where there are language barriers and cultural needs and sensitivities
- Specific support for victims and knowledge to professionals around cultural issues and barriers facing Black Minority Ethnic Refugee (BMER) communities, such as Honour Based Violence/Abuse, Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation, immigration issues, no recourse to public funds, Sharia divorce, domestic work and slavery.

On average the Charity receive 5000 incoming contacts a year, increasingly dealing with clients with multi-complex needs including mental health problems. The large majority of clients are victims of abuse to their ex-intimate partner or current intimate partner.

A recent review of the helpline suggests that the service supports each of the Greater Manchester local authorities and GMP in terms of their response to domestic abuse. Whilst the review highlighted some areas for improvement, there was a general consensus that the service is well used, in particular by professionals seeking immediate advice for victims of domestic abuse. It was suggested that existing services would struggle to provide a similar level of support for victims should the phonenumber service not be available.

Work is currently being undertaken to address the issues that were identified and in particular to establish clear pathways which align with the Greater Manchester Victim Assessment and Referral service.

This decision will contribute to priorities of the the Greater Manchester strategy in the following ways:

This work will support the following priorities within the Greater Manchester Strategy:

- Young people equipped for life
- Safer and stronger communities
- Healthy lives, with quality care available for those that need

Financial comments:

The funding for 2018/19 will come from the MOJ Victims Fund and there are sufficient funds within the budget.

Legal comments:

Funding will be provided for 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019.

Risk Assessment:

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Failure to provide the service would mean that the large number of victims supported by the Helpline would be left at risk at not being able to access support. In addition, those organisations, such as local authorities and the police, for which the Helpline provides an essential resource (either directly or as a referral agency) would face increased pressure on their service. Independent Choices are aware of the standards of monitoring required and have procedures in place for monitoring and evaluation.

Sustainability

Whilst it is clear that the helpline facility provides benefits for both professionals and directly to victims, the future of the service should be considered as part of the whole approach to funding services for victims, rather than in isolation. As such, any future investment will be based on the outcomes of this strategic work.

Is safeguarding of children relevant and has this been considered:

It is recognised that whilst the service is not available specifically for children under the age of 18, in many of the cases that present safeguarding issues in relation to children exist. Independent Choices has policies and procedures in place which ensure that relevant safeguarding arrangements for children are considered in their practice.

Is safeguarding of vulnerable adults relevant and has this been considered:

Independent Choices have policies and procedures in place for safeguarding vulnerable adults.

Agreed by Assistant Director – Police, Crime, Criminal Justice and Fire

Signed.....

Date.....

Agreed by Deputy Mayor

Signed: *Bursey-Hughes*

Date: *17/2/18*

Contact Officer:

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