

## **Harrow Council**

### **Specification for Domestic and Sexual Violence Services**

**2015 - 2018**

#### **Specification**

1. Harrow Council invites applications to tender for a contract to provide a domestic and sexual violence service for the London Borough of Harrow to run until the end of September 2017 with possible extensions of one year plus a further year. The service comprises:

- Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) Service and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) co-ordinator;
- Housing Support Services (Floating Support and the management of a 6 bed hostel).

2. Most data on Domestic Violence is collected by the Police in responding to calls for assistance. Over the seven years from 2008 to 2013, the average number of reports for each three month period has been between 500 and 600 requests for assistance which have resulted in between 200 and 300 recorded offences each quarter.

3. The IDVA Service will receive referrals from the Police, the Council, the Health Service, Voluntary and Community Organisations and from the public with the likely number being in line with the prevailing trend over the last few years. The service will risk assess these referrals and offer support to those assessed as high risk. In the event that there is capacity within the service, it may also offer support to those assessed as having a medium or standard risk. If appropriate, separate arrangements should be made to support male victims.

4. Coordination of the MARAC will involve receiving referrals from the Police, the Council, the Health Service and Voluntary and Community Organisations, researching the background to the cases referred, compiling agendas for monthly meetings, ensuring that referrers are notified of and invited to the meeting, noting proposals for mitigating risks, preparing action lists to remind agencies of their interventions and actions.

5. Those seeking refuge accommodation should normally be eligible for Housing benefit or able to fund the costs of their stay themselves. However, the Council is asking tenderers to identify ways in which victims with no recourse to public funds may be able to be helped including leveraging external funding to ensure that this service is available on the basis of need. Details of the approach that tenderers intend to adopt will form part of the tender evaluation.

6. Floating support is a service that provides housing related support to vulnerable adults (over 16) to enable them to maintain their independence in their own home. Floating support services will generally be short term (less than 2 years)

and will have the flexibility to support a person wherever they live - as distinct from accommodation based services, where support is tied to particular accommodation. This kind of support service helps clients and their children, if any, who have been through domestic violence and who are living in Harrow. It is designed to ensure that once clients have accommodation they are supported to maintain independent living.

7. The London Borough of Harrow welcomes consortia or partnership bids to meet the range of skills, areas of expertise and requirements set out in this specification. Bids of this nature must identify a single agency to act as a nominated point of contact with the Council.

### **Definitions and scope**

8. **Domestic Violence.** The Home Office has defined domestic violence as “Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and/or emotional.

9. **Controlling behaviour:** is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

10. **Coercive behaviour:** is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim.

11. **Independent Domestic Violence Advisors.** Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) are professional case workers who support ‘high risk’ victims of domestic abuse and their children.

The full definition as published by Safelives (previously known as Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA)), is as follows:

“The main purpose of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) is to address the safety of victims at high risk of harm from intimate partners, ex-partners or family members to secure their safety and the safety of their children. Serving as a victim’s primary point of contact, IDVAs normally work with their clients from the point of crisis to assess the level of risk, discuss the range of suitable options and develop safety plans.

IDVAs are pro-active in implementing the plans, which address immediate safety, including practical steps to protect themselves and their children, as well as longer-term solutions. These plans will include actions from the MARAC as well as sanctions and remedies available through the criminal and

civil courts, housing options and services available through other organisations. IDVAs support and work over the short- to medium-term to put them on the path to long-term safety. They receive specialist accredited training and hold a nationally recognised qualification”.

12. **MARAC Co-ordination.** The MARAC coordination function will support the development and delivery of Harrow’s Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) in line with the ten guidance principles for an effective MARAC, as defined by Safelives. The main aim of the MARAC is to reduce the risk of serious harm or homicide for a victim and to increase the safety, health and wellbeing of victims - adults and any children.

13. **Housing Support Service.** This includes the provision of temporary emergency accommodation to women aged 16 or over including their daughters and sons up to the age of 13 (if any) living in any part of the United Kingdom. The refuge is a safe accommodation for up to six women and their children at any one time and the tenancy is normally for a period of up to two years.

14. Floating Support is to ensure the provision of practical and emotional support, advice and advocacy to women and their children on matters such as housing, welfare benefits, legal options, health, education, training and childcare. It is envisaged that 55 hours of floating support would be available for up to 16 households at any one time and that 6 of these households will be within the second stage project managed by Women’s Pioneer Housing Limited. The remaining 10 households can be anywhere within Harrow.

15. **Harrow Council’s Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy 2014-17**  
This strategy was adopted in September 2014. It identifies the scale of the issues in Harrow and sets out the approach that the Council has adopted. The strategy is appended to this specification for information.

#### 16 **Current Service Provision**

The current Domestic Violence Service contract provides for:

- Independent Domestic Violence Advisers for 126 hours a week to provide advice and support to victims at high risk of further violence;
- A part-time (7.2 hours a week) Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) co-ordinator to manage the submission of high risk cases for consideration;
- Management of a 6 place refuge and support to the people living there and
- 55 hours of Floating support hours for victims of domestic violence.

17. These contracted services are delivered in conjunction with additional services provided by different procurement arrangements including:

- A grant funded Independent Sexual Violence Advocate;
- A Young person’s Violence Adviser based in the Early Intervention Service;
- A Community Groups Programme to support young people who have witnessed domestic violence and their parents/carers;

- Harrow Shield, a MOPAC funded programme of young people's education and awareness raising;
- Detached services provided by the West London rape Crisis Centre; and
- MOPAC's Pan-London Domestic VAWG Service.

18. **New Service.** Harrow Council is commissioning the following domestic violence services from November 2015 until the end of March 2018:

- IDVA Services;
- MARAC Co-ordination Services;
- The Refuge service; and
- Floating Support Service

19 The service will comprise

- Provision of 144 hours a week of IDVA support;
- 18 hours per week for MARAC Co-ordination
- Refuge staff: support worker (33 .3 hours per week)
- Floating Support staff (55 hours per week)
- Project Management – Floating Support (4 hours per week)
- Project Management-Refuge Service (6 hours per week)

20 IDVAs will be fully qualified (either on appointment or within six months of the contract implementation date). The Service will address any child protection issues arising from a victim's circumstances and adopt Local Safeguarding Board Procedures and standards in relation to child protection issues.

21. The Provider will complete DASH risk assessments for all appropriate victims which can be used by partner agencies to ensure effective safety planning for victims and utilise the Empowerment Outcome Star to demonstrate improvements in client perception of safety. The Provider will also support the MARAC framework through referrals and the co-ordination of and lead on the organisation of MARAC meetings. The results of these assessments will form part of the management and performance information required to be supplied by the provider. The provider will also participate in MARAC self Assessments and help in developing and implementing actions arising from the findings of such reviews. The provider will maintain and supply records of the occupancy of the Refuge, the length of stay and the form of accommodation taken up by residents when they leave and of all client' comments and complaints. These will be shared with the Commissioner.

22 The Provider will ensure that people at risk of becoming victims of domestic abuse, including those from hard to reach or minority communities, are given appropriate advice and that pro-active support is available to victims of domestic violence to safeguard them, reduce repeat victimisation and ensure that they are aware of their rights. The Provider will signpost appropriate support to victims of domestic violence to safeguard them, reduce repeat victimisation and ensure that they are aware of their rights.

23 For residents of the Refuge, the Provider will deliver help in finding other accommodation and setting up and maintaining that home or tenancy, which will also include providing transitional support and assistance to users that have moved on to other accommodation for a period of up to 6 weeks. The Provider will also deliver the Refuge Service and, where necessary, the Floating Support Service 7 days a week, 52 weeks of the year, with flexible arrangements in place that allows greater access to meet the needs of the service users, including an emergency out of hours service.

24. The Provider will ensure that arrangements are in place for continuous professional development for all staff associated with the contracted services and ensure compliance with health and safety, staff welfare and other relevant employment legislation.

25 **Outcomes.** The Provider will deliver sensitive, non-judgemental and non-oppressive support to those who have experienced domestic violence. The Provider will use the Empowerment Outcome Star tool to measure client progress towards independence and choice in the following areas: Safety, Support Networks; and Empowerment and Self Esteem. All clients supported will be accurately assessed and supported with safety plans. Clients will be supported through the criminal justice system.

26 The Provider will deliver emotional and practical support to women and children fleeing domestic violence and ensure that clients are safer and better resourced to remain safe. This support will encourage clients to retain/regain their sense of autonomy and control and develop and/or maintain strong and resilient support networks so that clients believe they can live free from violence. Clients will develop increased resilience and the resources to prevent further experience of violence.

27 Clients in the refuge and those accessing floating support will have improved mental, emotional and physical health and the opportunity to maintain these improvements. By the time that clients are no longer supported, they will have increased financial stability and independence and more stable accommodation, increased access to education and employment opportunities hopes and goals for the future. Children will be safer and better equipped to remain safe and adult clients will be better equipped for parenting.

## Invitation To Tender

1. **Tender Requirements.** These are pre-requisite criteria for providers wishing to bid for this tender and must be clearly evidenced. If the bid fails any of these criteria, due to missing evidence or evidence that does not support the criteria, the bid will not be considered further.

- All organisations involved in submitting the bid must be independent and their objectives must be for public benefit and not for profit;
- All services must be free at the point of delivery;
- A primary purpose of the provider(s) must be to address violence against women and girls with expertise on domestic violence;

- The organisation(s) delivering service must have an evidenced track record of delivering advocacy support to meet the needs of survivors of domestic violence;
- At least one provider involved in submitting a bid for the service must be an active member of a national professional, specialist VAWG body and should provide evidence of utilising the national accredited quality service standards for working with BME (black and minority ethnic) women and girls;
- The provider(s) must have the ability to put in place mechanisms and systems for recording data in line with the service requirements and agree to share data with the Council and other partners;
- The provider(s) must have proven ability to work in partnership with existing local partners and services to ensure that delivery enhances and improves existing service provision locally; and
- The provider(s) must demonstrate commitment to equal opportunities and understanding of equality issues. All providers and services must be compliant with the public sector equality duty set out in section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. This requires MOPAC (and its providers and services) to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations by reference to people with protected characteristics.

2. **Governance and reporting arrangement.** As commissioner of the service, the Council is responsible for contract management to ensure effective delivery and value for money. The Council's DSV Strategy Group will offer overall oversight and decision making with regard to the service and the provider will be expected to attend its quarterly meetings. The provider will also be expected to attend the Domestic Violence Forum which also meets quarterly.

3. **Performance monitoring.** To satisfy the governance structure and payment processes, it is proposed that the successful provider develop a performance framework. Data from this monitoring process will be required from the provider every quarter. This performance information is to include evidence that the service outputs and outcomes as detailed in the successful bid are being achieved. Further details of this will be agreed prior to contract start and will be included as part of the grant agreement issued to providers. At the end of each twelve month period the Council may request additional information/data to surmise progress at year end.

4. The provider(s) of the Supported Housing Services will be acting as a managing agent for Network Stadium Housing Association and therefore must be able to satisfy their vetting criteria. This is attached as appendix 1

5. The following information must also be provided in the bid. Please ensure that your bid responds to each sub-heading separately and is set out accordingly.

- A single named lead contact;
- An outline timetable showing how and when the specification requirements will be delivered;
- A risk register for the delivery of the services outlined;

- Proposed methodology for performance management, monitoring and data collection
- Details of relevant experience supporting the criteria;
- Proposed methodology for achieving the service outcomes listed above
- Details of equal opportunities policies for all providers involved in the bid;
- Completed Diversity Monitoring form;
- Two relevant references from previous work undertaken (by the lead provider if the bid is from a consortium) ;
- Two sets of audited accounts (of lead provider if the bid is from a consortium);
- Consortium/partnership arrangements (only if the bid submitted is from more than one provider). Please provide an outline of the partnership, who takes lead responsibility and how performance and quality are assured;
- Any match funding or other possible funding streams you may have access to for supporting this work.

6. **Evaluation and scoring.** The award of the contract will be subject to a competitive tender process and evaluated by a panel against the requirements outlined in this document. Each evaluation outcome will be scored on a scale from non-compliant to outstanding. After each panel member has awarded a score, these will be discussed by the panel and a consensus reached. Those tenders which score 3 or above for all responses to the award criteria, the evaluation will proceed. Those in which one or more criteria scores 2 or less will not proceed.

7. The evaluation criteria are:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
<b>Quality of the proposed service</b>	Please describe how you intend to deliver the services as prescribed in the specification	Effective provision of IDVA Services	<b>10%</b>
		Effective Co-ordination of the MARAC	<b>5%</b>
		Effective management of the Refuge and support for the residents there	<b>10%</b>
		Effective management of Floating Support services	<b>10%</b>
		Co-ordination of all these services with the existing pattern of services in Harrow	<b>5%</b>
		Effective support systems to ensure the provision of independence and choice resulting in a reduction of further harm and an increase in safety, support networks, empowerment and self-esteem.	<b>10%</b>

<b>Relevant expertise and experience</b>	Please demonstrate your organisation's experience in relation to the following areas of expertise	Expertise in and experience in the provision of supported housing to women and girls experiencing domestic violence	<b>15%</b>
		Expertise in and experience in the violence against women and girls sector and of domestic violence.	<b>15%</b>
<b>Value for money in relation to quality of service provided</b>	Please demonstrate your organisations commitment to service improvement and value for money	Ability to effectively integrate with and work in partnership with local partners, local services and referral pathways	<b>5%</b>
		Evaluation of price in light of the service proposed. Deliver best value taking account of price and quality	<b>10%</b>
		Provision of added value. Harrow Council welcomes any additional value through 'in kind' match, funding or other ways that victims will receive added value	<b>5%</b>