

**ORIGINATOR:** Stephanie Stearman

**DECISION NO.** 01/2022

**REASON FOR SUBMISSION:** For Decision

**SUBMITTED TO:**

Giles Orpen-Smellie – Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk

**SUBJECT:**

Norfolk and Suffolk Victim Care Service – Contract Variation  
(STAFFING AND PROPERTY)

**SUMMARY:**

1. Following a rigorous procurement process, compliant with European Union (EU) procurement regulations, Victim Support were awarded the contract to provide the Norfolk and Suffolk Victim Care (NSVC) service for three years from April 2020 with the option to extend the contract for a further two-year period. The service is jointly commissioned by Norfolk and Suffolk PCCs.
2. At the end of the first year of the contract there was an underspend of £69,000. Victim Support proposed that the underspend should be used for two new staff positions on fixed term contracts namely an Engagement Officer and a new Case Manager.
3. Victim Support have also proposed to decommission their Lowestoft Office and look for alternative premises in Ipswich.
4. The proposed contract variation sets out these changes in writing on the advice of 7F Procurement.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. It is recommended that the PCC authorises this contract variation agreeing an increase in staffing levels and changes in the property portfolio within the Norfolk and Suffolk Victim Care service contract, for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2023.

**OUTCOME/APPROVAL BY: PCC**

*The recommendations as outlined above are approved.*

**Signature**

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**Date: 21/01/2022**

## **DETAIL OF THE SUBMISSION**

### **1. OBJECTIVE:**

- 1.1 To comply with terms under existing contract to issue a Contract Variation to Victim Support who deliver the Norfolk and Suffolk Victims Care Service jointly commissioned by the Norfolk and Suffolk Offices of the Police and Crime Commissioners.

### **2. BACKGROUND:**

- 2.1 Since 2015, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) have been responsible for commissioning victim assessment referral services for their force areas, utilising grant funding from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The availability of an assessment and referral service is an entitlement set in the Victims Code of Practice and EU directive relating to services for victims of crime.
- 2.2 Following a competitive tender process in 2019 the PCC for Norfolk and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk entered into contractual arrangements with Victim Support to deliver the Norfolk and Suffolk Victim Care (NSVC) service from 1 April 2020. Decision Notice 2019/59
- 2.3 NSVC is a victim assessment, support and referral service for victims of crime in both counties. The delivery model is designed to improve outcomes for service users through:
  - Enhanced case management and independent victim advocacy
  - A single point of contact approach
  - Digital resources and online self-referral channels
  - Dedicated support for domestic abuse victims.
- 2.4 This decision paper recommends that the PCC agrees to a contract variation agreeing an increase in staffing levels and changes in the property portfolio for remaining contract period.

### **3. AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION:**

#### **Staffing**

- 3.1 At the end of the first year of the contract (2020/21) there was an underspend of £69,000. The underspend was mainly due to staff payroll costs but there were savings on travel expenditure during the year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and as a result of the overall underspends there was a proportionate reduction in National Support costs.
- 3.2 As per the contract, any use of underspend must be agreed jointly with the Commissioners. A proposal was received from Victim Support to create two new roles on fixed terms contracts using the 2020/21 underspend.

## **Engagement Officer**

This role is based on 30 hours a week for 12 months and will focus on engagement with the Constabularies as the largest referral source to the service in order to change referral behaviour and deliver training. The aim is to further move to the model being based on considered consent by the victim to be contacted by NSVC. Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have said that they are supportive of this post.

## **Case Manager**

A new Case Manager will be a part time post (22.5 hours per week) for a 2-year period. This additional generic Case Manager is required to backfill for an existing Case Manager whose job role will develop to incorporate a 'complex needs' specialism, focussing support on cases with mental distress and wellbeing needs. These complex needs specialism will work across both counties, build experience within the team and develop partnership and pathways so that referrals can be made to specialists for those with more complex mental health needs. Victim Support report that of 769 vulnerabilities logged (in Q3 2020/21), 142 related to mental health (18%). These cases require longer, and more intensive support and onward referrals are often subject to lengthy delays. The changes mean that the subject matter expert will take on this case load and support other team members. Victim Support have said that this type of role has been trialled in North Wales with positive impact.

3.3 The proposed staffing structure can be found in Appendix A.

## **Property**

3.4 The Victim Support tender for the service noted that "It is crucial that there are multiple ways a victim can access Norfolk and Suffolk Victim care (NSVC) services. They must be easily accessible and geographically available". Office locations were proposed for Norwich, Thetford, Ipswich and Lowestoft, based on demand analysis and to ensure that the average travel distance from the offices to victims across both counties was under ten miles. At that point in time, remote-working capabilities meant the average travel distance to victims was under six miles.

3.5 The office in Thetford was not pursued due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic also meant that office-based staff moved completely to home working. In Q1 2021/22 most staff continue to work from home but some are starting to return to the offices.

3.6 With the Covid-19 pandemic changing the way employees work and current premises assessed as not fit for purpose (see Appendix B for further detail), Victim Support have proposed to decommission their Lowestoft office and look for alternative premises in Ipswich.

3.7 The Lowestoft office is not public facing and has limited facilities. One member of staff was previously based at the office but occupancy is estimated at 50%

given the nature of the role. The member of staff will become a home-based worker and giving notice on this property will result in a saving of approx. £1,500 per annum.

- 3.8 The current NSVC base in Ipswich is a small office in a shared office building with the Suffolk Sexual Abuse Referral Centre (SARC). This is a secure building which makes public access for clients and partner meetings difficult. Victim Support have agreed to secure a more fit for purpose property before surrendering the current office space.
- 3.9 The OPCCs have stressed to Victim Support that an appropriate level of physical presence in communities is important, particularly in areas where highest levels of referrals are received. Beyond a commitment to maintaining physical premises in Ipswich and Norwich the OPCCs have agreed with Victim Support that they will seek opportunities to utilise third sector partner and public sector premises for client and other meetings to minimise costs of room hire.
- 3.10 7F Procurement have advised that the proposed changes to staffing and property should be formally documented in the form of a contract variation.
- 3.11 Monitoring of the changes will be undertaken as part of the scheduled quarterly performance meetings with Victim Support and both Norfolk OPCC and Suffolk OPCC.

#### **4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED:**

- 4.1 Not to re-invest the underspend in the service where additional need has been identified. – This option was rejected.

#### **5. STRATEGIC AIMS/OBJECTIVE SUPPORTED:**

- 5.1 The primary statutory legislation that drives commissioning of victims' services across the Local Authority and Police Force areas are:
  - The primary statutory legislation that drives the commissioning of victim's services across Local Authority and Police Force areas are:
  - Crime and Disorder Act 1998
  - Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
  - Health and Social Care Act 2012
  - Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012
  - Equality Act 2010
  - Directive of 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime
- 5.2 In addition to the above the following aims/strategic objectives are supported:

- Police and Crime Commissioners responsibility under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime – responsible for the commissioning of practical and emotional support services for victims of crime in Norfolk through the Victims Fund devolved by the Ministry of Justice to Police and Crime Commissioners
- The Norfolk Police and Crime Plan
- Home Office Strategy to end Violence Against Girls and Women (VAWG)

## **6. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications for the PCC's commissioning budget as the proposed changes will be met within the existing contract budget. Victim Support have provided a revised budget forecast for the period.

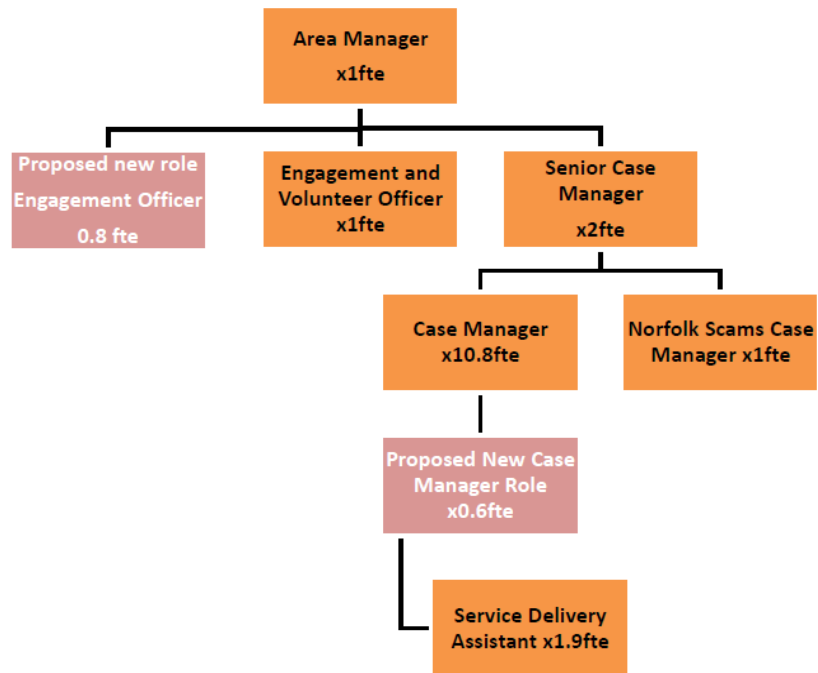
## **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS:**

- 7.1 There are no adverse implications as a result proposed contract variation.

# APPENDIX A



## 2021 Proposed Structure



# APPENDIX B



NSVC Property  
Proposal.pdf

<b>ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)</b>	<b>PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'</b>
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	<b>No</b>
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	<b>Yes</b>
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	<b>Yes</b>
Have human resource implications been considered?	<b>Yes</b>
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	<b>Yes</b>
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	<b>Yes</b>
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	<b>No</b>
In relation to the above, have all relevant issues been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks' section of the submission?	<b>Yes</b>
<p data-bbox="204 1462 786 1496"><b>Is this report a Confidential Decision?</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <input data-bbox="1066 1473 1187 1547" type="checkbox"/> <input data-bbox="1259 1473 1380 1547" type="checkbox" value="NO"/> </div> <p data-bbox="204 1570 1430 1603">If Yes, please state reasons below having referred to the <a href="#">PCC Decision Making Policy</a></p>	



**APPROVAL TO SUBMIT TO THE DECISION-MAKER** (this approval is required only for submissions to the PCC).

**Chief Executive**

I am satisfied that relevant advice has been taken into account in the preparation of the report, that the recommendations have been reviewed and that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the PCC.



**Signature:**

**Date: 21/01/2022**

**Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)**

I certify that:

- a) there are no financial consequences as a result of this decision,  
OR
- b) the costs identified in this report can be met from existing revenue or capital budgets,  
OR
- c) the costs identified in this report can be financed from reserves  
AND
- d) the decision can be taken on the basis of my assurance that Financial Regulations have been complied with.

**Signature:**



**Date: 21/01/2022**

**PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION:** *Information contained within this submission is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and wherever possible will be made available on the OPCC website. Submissions should be labelled as 'Not Protectively Marked' unless any of the material is 'restricted' or 'confidential'. Where information contained within the submission is 'restricted' or 'confidential' it should be highlighted, along with the reason why.*