

PFCC Decision Report

Report reference number: 066-24

Classification: Not protectively marked

Title of report:

Ministry of Justice General Grant Sexual Violence Test Funding Acceptance 2024-25

Area of county / stakeholders affected: Countywide

Report by: Greg Myddelton (Strategic Head of Partnerships and Delivery)

Date of report: 4 April 2024

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report seeks approval from the PFCC to accept £656,265.64 from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) for Sexual Violence Local Commissioning Test Funding 2024-25. This funding is used to fund the countywide Synergy sexual abuse support contract.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the PFCC endorses the receipt of £656,265.64 victims' funding from Ministry of Justice.
- 2.2 That the PFCC acknowledges that this funding is allocated to the Synergy rape crisis partnership as per decision report 200-23.
- 2.3 That the PFCC signs the associated grant agreement addendum attached at 16.1 below.

3. Background to the Proposal

- 3.1 The PFCC was advised of £656,265.64 of MoJ general grant funding for 2024-25 via letter on 4th March 2024 (see sec. 16.2). This funding is allocated by the MoJ to the Essex PFCC for the devolved Rape and Sexual Abuse

Support Fund Test Area, Essex being one of five test areas nationally to receive this funding.

4. Proposal and Associated Benefits

- 4.1 This grant enables the PFCC to commission specialist support services for victims of rape and sexual abuse, including Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs), counselling, advocacy and therapeutic support. The allocation of this funding was agreed via decision report 200-23.

5. Options Analysis

- 5.1 This funding will support the PFCC's ongoing victims' commissioning programme. Any unspent funding must be returned to the MoJ at year end.
- 5.2 The PFCC was successful in securing devolved funding test area status in 2018 and has received a specific annual MoJ grant to deliver local support services since then. The PFCC could choose not to accept this year's grant but would then be unable to continue commissioning the services it supports. Given that demand for this service significantly exceeds supply, this course of action is not recommended.

6. Consultation and Engagement

- 6.1 This grant funding was discussed at the PFCC's Senior Management Team meeting on 5th December 2023.

7. Strategic Links

- 7.1 This funding allows the PFCC to fulfil the commitments within the Police and Crime Plan to:
- Invest resources into activity essential to preventing the harm caused by high-risk sexual offenders
 - Encourage victims to report crime and support them through the criminal justice system
 - Increase investment in specialist support services such as counselling, advocacy, therapeutic support and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors so victims get the support and help that they need to move on
 - Monitor and work with partners to drive compliance with the Victim's Code
 - Ensure victims are referred to support services tailored to their needs
- 7.2 The proposal also supports the commitment in the Police and Crime Plan to partnership working, including with the voluntary and community sector, to protect the vulnerable.
- 7.3 In addition, the proposal supports delivery of the Victim Commissioning Strategy.

8. Police operational implications

- 8.1 There are no operational implications of this decision for Essex Police. However, Essex Police is one of the primary referral routes for the services commissioned through this funding. Synergy Essex will support victims regardless of whether they report to the police and regardless of whether they have an active criminal justice case.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 The PFCC will receive £656,265.64 funding from MoJ into the PFCC's 2024-25 Victims' Fund. The total MoJ general victims' grant for 2024-25 is now £2,429,799.05. The PFCC will allocate all of this £656,265.64 grant to the Synergy rape crisis partnership as per decision 200-23.

10. Legal implications

- 10.1 The PFCC agrees to the terms of the MoJ's grant agreement (see section 16.1).

11. Staffing implications

- 11.1 The PFCC will be expected to manage and monitor the effective use of this funding and report back to the MoJ on a six-monthly basis.

12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion implications

- 12.1 This grant funding must be used to provide support for victims of crime in line with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime. The primary purpose of the Essex Rape Crisis Partnership (Synergy Essex) commissioned through this funding is to provide accessible specialist sexual violence and sexual abuse support services across Essex. The allocation of this funding for this purpose was agreed via decision report 200-23.

- 12.2 In Quarter 3 of 2023/24:

- 14% of all service users were from minoritised or other marginalised groups
- 32% had mental health issues
- 13% had a long term illness
- 6% had a learning disability
- 9% had a physical or sensory disability

- 12.3 The partnership is able to provide specialist sexual violence counselling to young people aged 13 to 24. It had 237 active cases as at 31 December 2023, with a further 252 on its waiting list. It also offers a children's ISVA service for victims aged under 18. 312 young people accessed this service in Quarter 3 of 2023/24, with 33 more on the waiting list. The partnership can

also provide specialist child and family support services for children aged 12 and under. It had 64 active cases as at 31 December 2023, with a further 23 on its waiting list.

- 12.4 Synergy Essex provides easy read information and has software available on its websites to increase accessibility for people who could not otherwise access the information they need by providing visual, auditory and translation support.

13. Risks and Mitigations

- 13.1 The value of this MoJ grant has gradually eroded over recent years. The PFCC received £769,057 in 2022-23 and £693,733 in 2023-24 and will receive £656,265.64 in 2024-25 – a reduction of around 15% over three years. This makes it more challenging for the PFCC to deliver effective and efficient services to victims of sexual abuse, especially when faced with increased demand on local services. Through the Essex Chief Executives Forum, Essex Partners Board and direct conversations with other commissioning organisations, the PFCC's office is seeking to encourage other commissioners to contribute to the costs of this service going forward, however successful outcomes from these conversations are not guaranteed.

14. Governance Boards

- 14.1 As set out at 6.1 above, this grant funding was discussed at the PFCC's Senior Management Team meeting on 5th December 2023, although the value of the grant was not known at that time.
- 14.2 The PFCC approved the allocation of this funding via decision report 200-23, which extended the Synergy sexual abuse support contract until the end of March 2025.

15. Links to Future Plans

- 15.1 This funding supports delivery of the PFCC's Police and Crime Plan as described in 7.1 above.
- 15.2 The service is due to be recommissioned for 2025-26 onwards.

16. Background Papers and Appendices

- 16.1 Decision report 200-23 (Essex Synergy contract extension 2024-25)
- 16.2 MoJ general grant addendum (for signing as part of this DR process)



Essex General Grant
Addendum - 5.docx.

Report Approval

The report will be signed off by the PFCC's Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the PFCC / DPFCC.



Chief Executive / M.O.

Sign:

Print: P. Brent-Isherwood

Date: 12 April 2024



Chief Finance Officer

Sign:

Print: Janet Perry

Date: 15 April 2024

Publication

Is the report for publication?

YES

NO

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State 'None' if applicable)

None

If the report is not for publication, the Chief Executive will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

Redaction

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

1. Of Decision Sheet?

YES

2. Of Appendix?

YES

NO

NO

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

N/A

Date redaction carried out:

Chief Finance Officer / Chief Executive Sign Off – for Redactions only

If redaction is required, the Treasurer or Chief Executive is to sign off that redaction has been completed.

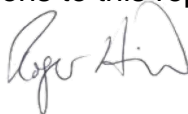
Sign:

Print:

Chief Executive / Chief Finance Officer

Decision and Final Sign Off

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: 

Print: Roger Hirst

PFCC

Date signed: 16/04/2024

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

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.....
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Sign:

Print:

PFCC/Deputy PFCC

Date signed: