

**OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER
FOR HUMBERSIDE
DECISION RECORD**

Decision Record Number: **26/2013**

Title: **TecSOS**

Executive Summary:

The Police and Crime Plan makes it clear that there is a need to focus on domestic violence and reducing an individual's risk of violence. Where a person has already become a victim of domestic violence, there is a need to protect such vulnerable adults.

The TecSOS (Technical SOS) solution offers victims of high-risk domestic violence a fast track opportunity to contact the police. It is a technology-based solution developed in conjunction with the Vodafone Foundation and Thames Valley Partnership.

Commissioner Comments:

Whilst supporting the initiative because it would help to protect and empower victims and prevent crimes before they happened, the Commissioner commented on the need for Chief Constable endorsement and for the support of the CSPs to be obtained before progressing.

Decision:

That, subject to (i) Chief Constable support, (ii) 50% of the £6000 cost being allocated from the Force Performance Fund, and (iii) discussion with the CSPs to ensure that that they would support this initiative, that there would be no duplication and that it would lead to the achievement of a better service in the future for less, then a six-month trial of the TecSOS solution and evaluation of the potential benefits to high-risk domestic violence victims, be supported and £3,000 be provided from the unallocated provision identified within the Commissioner's budget.

Background Report: Open

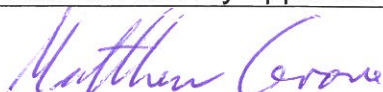
Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside

I confirm I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with my code of conduct.

Any such interests are recorded below.

The above decision has my approval.

Signature



Date 23.07.13

**POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER
FOR HUMBERSIDE**

SUBMISSION FOR DECISION

Title: TecSOS

Date: 23 July 2013

1. Executive Summary

The Police and Crime Plan make it clear that there is a need to focus on domestic violence and reducing an individual's risk of violence. Where a person has already become a victim of domestic violence, there is a need to protect such vulnerable adults.

The TesSOS (Technical SOS) solution offers victims of high-risk domestic violence a fast track opportunity to contact the police. It is a technology-based solution developed in conjunction with the Vodafone Foundation and Thames Valley Partnership.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that consideration is given to carry out a six-month trial of the TecSOS solution and evaluation of the potential benefits to high-risk domestic violence victims.

3. Background

At present both the police and the four Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) provide alarms and mobile phones for victims of Domestic Violence (DV).

In respect of mobile phones, the police will request the local CSP DV services to provide a handset. The provision of these phones varies widely across the Force area depending on the funding within the CSPs. They are generally given out to high and medium-risk victims where it is felt there is a need.

The provision of alarms also varies across the Force area, with some CSPs involved in contracts at present with local suppliers. Alarms that are fitted in victims' houses are normally connected to the house land-line, although there

is the option of having alarms that are independent of the land line. Not all of these alarms are used for DV victims.

TecSOS is not just a product; it is also more of a service that offers victims a fast track opportunity to contact the police. It utilises mobile phone technology and a normal mobile phone where the only function is to call the 999 operator. When the phone is issued to victims, their details go on a database, which means that an activation from that phone will be linked to the victim's details and be recognised at the Command Centre. Both voice and 'silent' calls from the victim are catered for. In future, BT Emergency Services will announce all TecSOS calls, so forces will no longer have to develop mechanisms to recognise TecSOS calls.

The technology was developed by Vodafone in conjunction with the Thames Valley Partnership. The Vodafone Foundation has invested and continues to invest in developing this technology on a not-for-profit basis. The current system has gone through an evaluation, where the following benefits were measured:

- The victim's perception of fear reduced from 9.7 to 3 out of 10.
- The use of this technology freed up the victim from being a 'prisoner' in their own home.
- The confidence in the police improved.
- The police response times improved as information was already available.

This technology will give us a consistent approach across the Force area in the management of high-risk victims.

It will also give consistency across the region with North and West Yorkshire signed up. South Yorkshire have recently put the case to their PCC and Lincolnshire are about to sign up. This will also mean that victims receive the same service across the region.

To date 16 forces have signed up to TecSOS and 2346 phones have been issued to victims. This has resulted in 454 activations so far.

TecSOS carry out regular evaluations of their product. The next evaluation they have planned over the coming months will be based on business benefits. This will no doubt prove interesting reading.

It is recognised that there are other providers of this type of technology. TecSOS is very competitively priced compared to others. The region has bought into TecSOS and they are the major supplier to forces. Also Vodafone are an approved Government supplier.

The cost of the solution is entirely dependent on the number of handsets we lease. Due to the cost and processes required, the focus would be on utilising Tess's for high-risk victims only. By leasing the handsets, this will allow access to any updated to the technology as the Vodafone Foundation develops further solutions such as GPS.

There are a number of other developments which will potentially widen the use of TecSOS in future. They are working with Gwent Police to develop an evidence recovery protocol, which will enable Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs) to retrieve information from the phones in the event of a critical incident or major investigation. In addition, they are working with the Metropolitan Police to develop a pilot around witness protection.

4. Options

The plan would be for the Force to trial the phones initially for 6 months across the whole Force area. This would require around 120 handsets (20 a month), with the cost over this period estimated in the region of £6,000. Over this period, the Force would be able to assess the demand and the benefits to the victims.

5. Risks

The TecSOS solution is a mobile solution and therefore coverage cannot be guaranteed. However, they carry out extensive testing in 'blackspot' areas prior to the solution going live in each police area. To date, they have found that the technology has worked in areas where forces had concerns about coverage. In addition, the solution utilises roaming technology, which means that it will automatically switch to another provider should Vodafone coverage be unavailable.

There is a risk that we could become reliant on the technology when other methods could be utilised. The focus will be on high-risk victims only. In addition, there is a risk that handsets could be handed out to victims when their circumstances would not warrant the use of this technology. In order to mitigate this risk, the Force would control the issuing of the phones.

There is a risk that the Command Centre IT systems will not support the TecSOS technology. When a briefing was provided by TecSOS, one of the Managers from Humberside Police Incident Handling Unit was present and was confident in the IT systems supporting the process. Work would be undertaken between the Force and TecSOS prior to roll-out to ensure that our IT systems are suitable.

There is a risk with victims that they could, for example, damage, not return or lose the phone. The mitigation is that the phone cannot be used for making external calls or receiving calls and it can be disengaged by TecSOS within minutes. It is not identifiable as a 'police' product. Training is also provided for each victim and the battery-life is around 7-days before re-charging.

Due to the extensive testing and development of TecSOS, we are confident that most risks have been taken into account and mitigated where necessary.

6. Financial Implications

This is dependent on the number of handsets we lease. The Force has carried out a snap-shot of the current demand, as well as the allocation of alarms and phones issued by each CSP:

	Alarms	Phones
North East Lincolnshire	6 per month	1 per month
North Lincolnshire	5.5 per month	1 per month
East Riding	20 a month	5 per month
Hull	6 Lifelines for Police 3 Lifelines for DVAP	22 mobiles

It is worth noting that not all these are for DV victims, but as a ball park figure it is estimated that 35 alarms and 22 mobiles are used for DV.

Due to the cost and controlled process required for distribution of TecSOS, the solution needs to be used for high-risk victims only.

The CSPs have existing contracts, which could end in due course. They could continue to support lower-risk victims with normal phones and alarms. There is a potential for CSPs to consider alternative solutions as and when their contracts are due for renewal.

7. Legal Implications

It is recognised that there are other providers of this type of technology. TecSOS is very competitively priced compared to others. The region has bought into TecSOS and they are the major supplier to forces. Also Vodafone are an approved Government supplier.

8. Equalities Implications

The solution will be provided only to identified high-risk domestic violence victims on the basis of it being a suitable 'tool' for their specific circumstances.

9. Consultation

The Thames Valley Partnership, which developed TecSOS in conjunction with the Vodafone Foundation, has carried out three evaluations to date. Their fourth evaluation is due to be undertaken over the coming months. This will look at the business benefits from a cost perspective. Existing evaluation highlighted the reduction in victims' perceptions of fear due to the TecSOS solution.

10. Media information

Work could be undertaken to highlight the new solution, including the benefits to high-risk victims as well as to potential offenders.

11. Background documents

TecSOS briefing document provided at demonstration in June 2013.

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