

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

Decision Record Number: **11/2023**

Title: Increasing capacity: Humberside's Stalking and Domestic Abuse Victim Care Advocacy Service

**Executive Summary:**

This paper outlines the case for providing additional resources for Humberside's Stalking and Domestic Abuse Victim Care Advocate (Stalking and DA VCA)

The paper proposes to increase the resources to pilot additional interventions and to provide additional capacity that is required to meet increasing demand over the forthcoming for 12 months (March 2023 to April 2024). This will be funded directly from the MOJ grant at a total cost of £39,487.

**Decision:** That the request for commissioning additional resource at a total cost of £39,487 be approved.

**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 06/03/2023**

**POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER  
FOR HUMBERSIDE**

**SUBMISSION FOR: DECISION**

**OPEN**

**Title: Increasing capacity:** Humberside's Stalking and Domestic Abuse Victim Care Advocacy Service

**Date: 06/03/2023**

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**1. Executive Summary**

This paper outlines the case for providing additional resources for Humberside's Stalking and Domestic Abuse Victim Care Advocate (Stalking and DA VCA). The paper proposes to increase the resources to pilot additional interventions and to provide additional capacity that is required to meet increasing demand over the forthcoming for 12 months (March 2023 to April 2024). This will be funded directly from the MOJ grant at a total cost of £39,487.

**2. Recommendation(s)**

That the request for commissioning additional resource at a total cost of £39,487 be approved.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 In 2012, shortly after new legislation was put in place, the National Stalking Helpline published figures showing that of calls to their helpline, as many were reporting acquaintance, neighbour, colleague and friend stalking as were reporting family or partner related stalking.
- 3.2 A six-month study by the University of Gloucestershire in 2017 found that stalking was present in 94% of the 358 cases of criminal homicide cases they looked at. Surveillance activity, including covert watching, was recorded 63% of the time.
- 3.3 ONS data for the year ending 2022, shows that over 10,000 people between the ages of 16 and 59 reported stalking incidents to the police, with 72% of those victims reporting as being female.
- 3.4 A government-commissioned study including an analysis of data from HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS), the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) in January 2023 found that Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs), introduced in 2019, were effective and understood to be effective, yet still underused in police forces across the country, (including Humberside)

3.5 There have been only 294 successful applications for the stalking protection orders, meaning they are only used in response to around 2% of stalking arrests.”

3.6 Humberside Police have now been successful in gaining 4 SPOs for victims across the region, one of which VS were instrumental in advocating for with the officer.

3.7 The Victim Support Humberside Stalking and Domestic Abuse Victim Care Advocate (Stalking and DA VCA) has made significant progress in working more effectively with Humberside Police in its response to stalking victims and incidents:

- Between May and October 2022 the Stalking and DA VCA service received 11 non-DA related stalking cases, an average of just under 2 per month. From November 2022 to February 2023, 31 cases were referred, an average of just under 8 cases per month.
- In October 2022, Victim Support Humberside received funding to proactively encourage non-DA related stalking cases, and as a result the DA VCA’s remit broadened to include and prioritise these support needs.
- The Stalking and DA VCA accepts DA referrals with or without a stalking element, referred by either Humberside Police or other DA services, primarily Hull Domestic Abuse Partnership.
- This role has worked with 1154 cases (domestic abuse, DA and non-DA related stalking) since July 2020, an average of 36 cases per month.
- Victim Support worked closely with the previous Stalking Lead at Humberside Police, and are now building an excellent relationship with the new Lead. Following promotion of this new specialism, VS has seen an increase in the number of referrals and has begun to carry out proactive social media and publicity work to encourage other agency and self-referral routes.
- VS staff are professionally trained to carry out this work and the Domestic Abuse and Stalking Advocates and Manager are IDVA and ISAS qualified, bringing together their experience and knowledge base in a complicated area.

3.8 The continuation of the Stalking and DA VCA pilot project would allow it to build on the work started and support VS to shape a robust Humberside wide response to victims of stalking. The service would continue to:

- provide a direct support service to victims of non-domestic abuse related stalking
- work with Humberside Police through the Stalking Lead and Victims and Witnesses Group to look at effective outcomes for stalking victims
- provide training, insight and anecdotal input into policing around stalking and the responses required
- proactively promote the stalking service to other agencies and within the general public, to raise awareness of the issues as well as the support available

- build on and promote existing online and physical resources and toolkits including safety planning and reflective tools, to address coping strategies and ways to cope and recover
- Increase referral numbers across the life of the project, being aware of managed exits from service where required.

**4. Options:** Option 1 is preferred:

1) Provide additional resources to provide capacity in the Stalking Advocacy team to pilot additional interventions and to provide additional capacity that is required to meet increasing demand over the forthcoming for 12 months :

- The OPCC are well placed to undertake the future commissioning and contract management in line with existing portfolio, as demonstrated within this report these interventions are aligned to the aims of the Police and Crime Plan, and the OPCC statutory obligations within the MOJ Victims Grant.
- There is an identified gap in provision in response to stalking
- Current Victim service response for stalking is improved and is delivering well, however the prevalence is much greater than current engaged caseloads. This opportunity offers an enhancement of service for an additional annual period, providing additional resilience and improved victim support.
- Enables enhanced service in light of VAWG and contributes towards the VAWG plan for Humberside, supporting Humberside Police in their approach to supporting victims and safeguarding in context of stalking.
- Optimises the use of Hollie Guard Extra App and provides additional resilience to vulnerable victims, reducing likelihood of domestic homicide.
- Enables OPCC to pilot interventions for inclusion within Victims Hub commissioning 2023, evidence for effective delivery and evaluation.

2) Do Nothing:

- Does not represent any added value the PCC's Police and Crime Plan priorities as detailed within this report.
- Does not optimise the PCC's statutory obligations to provide quality victim services within context of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) grant.
- Reputation risk to the OPCC and Humberside Police s by not meeting obligations/Police and Crime Plan Priorities and meeting identified gaps for victims of stalking;
- The above representing a risk in terms of stakeholder expectations and positive impact of the current service.

## 5. Financial Implications

<b>Humberside Stalking and Domestic Abuse VCA</b>	£
Apr 23- Mar 24	
Employed staff payroll costs	30,960
Indirect staff costs (Travel, Mobile, Training, Clinical Support & Supervision)	1,790
Office Costs (Printing, stationery, photocopying, postage, Skype for Business, Systems/Service Access & NGCMS Licences)	1,910
Commissioned Services (Interpreter/Accessibility)	300
Central Support Costs	4,528
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,487</b>

## 6. Legal Implications

Nil

## 7. Driver for Change/Contribution to Delivery of the Police and Crime Plan

7.1 The non-domestic abuse related stalking pilot project aims to drive for change by working closely with Humberside Police and, in particular, the Stalking Lead to provide a joined up service for those affected, improve public perception and increase awareness of the response to stalking, and as a result increase the likelihood of reporting of stalking incidents.

7.2 As women are disproportionately represented in stalking statistics, this post also fits into the wider Violence against Women and Girls agenda with reference to gendered crime types and the criminal justice response. The project would aim to put in place a legacy of culture change and understanding which would underpin the criminal justice response to victims of crime, not only by providing a support service to existing victims, but by passing on knowledge and learning to criminal justice system staff, other agencies and the wider public.

7.3 The project would fit with the Police and Crime Plan by working to build:

- **Engaged, resilient and inclusive communities:** Part of the ongoing legacy of the project should be to ensure the wider communities are confident that

they understand stalking and what it is, know when and how to report stalking incidents and are confident that, in doing so, they would receive a proportionate, speedy and effective outcome and sense of justice.

- **Safer Communities:** Whilst it is acknowledged that the blame for any crime lies firmly with the perpetrator, there is scope in the post for an element of non-victim-blaming safety planning with a perpetrator of stalking. Safety in stalking cases is intricately linked to the type of and behaviours of the perpetrator. For example, whilst advice in harassment cases may routinely be to block phone numbers and ignore contact, it is widely acknowledged that in stalking cases this kind of action can lead to an increased risk from the perpetrator. They may feel that their 'route' to the victim has been cut off leading them to take more risky and direct methods of contact, leading to an increased risk for the victim. The project would continue to provide specific safety information to service users, whilst also raising awareness within the criminal justice system about the safety options and risks facing victims.
- **Effective organisations:** By liaising and advocating with a range of criminal justice system agencies, an aim of the post is to make the system work better for local communities. The aim is to enhance the criminal justice system and in particular the police response to victims of stalking by raising awareness, working together and providing a multi-agency approach to the support and communication with victims.

## 8. Equalities Implications

Positive impact on gender specific issues in light of VAWG.

## 9. Consultation

### Service User Feedback:

The stalking referral pathway has proved very successful, we have continually requested service user feedback, receiving excellent feedback from service users who describe the service as "the only one that helped" and a "godsend". Of 51 service user responses received for the post between November and February, 100% of them returned a score of 5 out of 5 or 'yes' when asked for their rating on the service received.

- *"I am well despite the many challenges in life. I wish to extend my gratitude to one [DA VCA] who has been outstanding in her role. I was referred to her by [worker] in Scunthorpe. She is thoughtful, caring and very professional. I have*

*been down many times when sometimes I have felt lifeless & depressed with what [perpetrator] put me through together with my young family. [DA VCA] has really been reassuring and supportive during all these. Her follow ups and regular phone calls just to check on me have been amazing! It has made me feel human again because I was in the verge of losing my sanity.*

**Feedback has also been received from stakeholders:**

- *“The support that Victim Support has given to our service is invaluable, they have taken 290 referrals from us over the past 6 months. Without this support we would have struggled to be able to offer a tailored safety and support package to each individual” (Hull DAP Dec 2022).*
- *“I’ll be telling [my manager] as we have a catch up this morning but could not wait to tell someone I’ve just been notified that one of the stalking cases that I took to [the new stalking lead], suspect was arrested last week and given an SPO!! Let’s hope this is the 1st of many to come!” (Humberside Police)*

**10. Media information**

Opportunity for some positive comms in relation to VAWG  
Combined with a Hollie Guard re launch in 2023.

**11. Background documents**

N/A

**12. Publication**

Open

**13. DPIA considered**

**Yes, covered under existing DPIA**

This matrix provides a simple check list for the things you need to have considered within your report. If there are no implications please state

I have informed and sought advice from HR, Legal, Finance, OPCC officer(s) etc. prior to submitting this report for official comments	Yes
Is this report proposing an amendment to the budget?	No
Value for money considerations have been accounted for within the report	Yes

The report is approved by the relevant Chief Officer	
I have included any procurement/commercial issues/implications within the report	Yes
I have liaised with Corporate Communications on any communications issues	Yes
I have completed an Equalities Impact Assessment and the outcomes are included within the report	Yes
I have included any equalities, diversity and or human rights implications within the report	Yes
Any Health and Safety implications are included within the report	Yes
I have included information about how this report contributes to the delivery of the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan	Yes