

## Record of operational decision

<b>Decision title:</b>	Decision to extend, by means of a variation, contracts for domestic abuse support services in Herefordshire.
<b>Date of decision:</b>	24 March 2026
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Corporate Director Community Wellbeing
<b>Authority for delegated decision:</b>	<p>The chief executive's scheme of delegation: CW08; Commissioning, quality assurance and contract management relating to all ages.</p> <p>Along with delegated authority given to the Corporate Director Community Wellbeing through the Domestic Abuse Commissioning 2024 Cabinet Member decision approved in July 2023.</p> <p><a href="https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=9548">https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=9548</a>;</p>
<b>Ward:</b>	Countywide
<b>Consultation:</b>	Existing providers, Public Health and finance colleagues have been consulted with and their advice has informed this decision.
<b>Decision made:</b>	<p>To extend, by means of a variation, contracts for domestic abuse support services in Herefordshire:</p> <p>The refuge, extended refuge and domestic abuse support service delivered by West Mercia Women's Aid. The value of this extension is £599,720.34.</p> <p>The Safe Accommodation and Floating Support service delivered by Stonewater Ltd. The value of this extension is: £145,743.17.</p> <p>The Floating Support for Men and Boys service delivered by Cranstoun. The value of this extension is: £51,310.</p> <p>All above contract extended for 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027.</p>
<b>Reasons for decision:</b>	<p>The Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Grant supports delivery of Herefordshire's Domestic Abuse Strategy and fulfils the council's statutory duties under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. While the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Grant has been merged with homelessness funding and is now known as the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant within the Local Government Finance Settlement, the Domestic Abuse element is presented as a distinct line item.</p> <p>The grant forms part of the approved strategic approach to commissioning domestic abuse services and is aligned with the delegated authority granted through the Domestic Abuse Commissioning 2024 Cabinet</p>

	<p>Member decision.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places strong emphasis on meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics, including individuals with disabilities, minority ethnic or faith communities, the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community, LGBTQ+ victims, older victims, and those with complex needs such as mental health issues or drug and alcohol dependency.</p> <p>Commissioning support for victims of domestic abuse and their children aligns with the County Plan commitments to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Strengthen communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together.</li> <li>b) Ensure all children are healthy, safe, and inspired to achieve.</li> <li>c) Protect and improve the lives of vulnerable people</li> </ul>
<b>Equality Considerations</b>	<p>An equalities impact assessment was prepared as part of the initial commissioning process.</p> <p>Domestic abuse support is available to victim/survivors regardless of gender, and support for children and young people, recognised as victims in their own right, is embedded within all commissioned contracts.</p> <p>Local data indicates that the highest level of DA was prevalent among White and Mixed ethnic groups, this could be that DA is a hidden crime among ethnic minority communities. The crime Survey for England and Wales data shows that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) people are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse. More is being done to promote services to people with protected characteristics through the new services in line with the aims of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.</p>
<b>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</b>	<p>The financial risks arising from this decision are considered low. Finance colleagues have been consulted with to ensure the cost of providing these services can be met by funding from the Public Health Grant and the Domestic Abuse Grant from MHCLG. In addition, Children’s Services fund the two ECHO roles that form part of the refuge and extended refuge and DA support service.</p> <p>The legal risk associated with this approach is low. The original contracts commenced on 1 April 2024 for an initial 12-month period, with the option to extend for up to a further 48 months. A first 12-month extension was applied from 1 April 2025, reflecting the fact that only one year of funding had been confirmed at that time. Although funding has now been secured for an additional three-year period, the Council is committed to ensuring that future commissioning is shaped by a clear and planned approach that aligns with both funding parameters and our long-term strategic intentions.</p> <p>To support this, we are taking a more deliberate view of how services should be structured going forward and are exploring a range of options to ensure that future provision across the domestic abuse portfolio is coherent, sustainable, and strategically aligned. This phased approach</p>

	<p>maintains continuity and service stability while enabling the Council to undertake a structured review of delivery arrangements.</p> <p>This extension process is fully in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.</p>
<p><b>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</b></p>	<p><b>Not to deliver support services for victims of domestic abuse.</b></p> <p>This is not recommended for the following reasons:</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Grant directly supports delivery of Herefordshire's Domestic Abuse Strategy and fulfils the council's statutory duties under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.</p> <p>The benefits of these services on victim/survivors are wide ranging and include but is not exhaustive to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The risk of harm from domestic abuse on people and their children is reduced through the delivery of tailored support.</li> <li>• Quality of life and opportunities for people and their families who have experienced domestic abuse are improved.</li> <li>• The prevalence of domestic abuse is reduced through education and increased awareness of domestic abuse.</li> <li>• The voices of survivors in Herefordshire and Worcestershire are amplified and used to inform commissioning and delivery of services, improving outcomes for victim survivors.</li> </ul> <p><b>To recommission all domestic abuse contracts</b></p> <p>This option is not recommended. Although MHCLG confirmed continued funding for domestic abuse safe accommodation in January 2026, the timing does not allow for a compliant and meaningful procurement process to be completed ahead of 1 April 2026 without risking gaps in provision.</p>
<p><b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b></p>	<p>None</p>

Signed... Date: 24/03/2026