

**London Borough of Southwark**

**Violence Against Women and Girls Service**

**Soft Market Testing Questionnaire**

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**Market Testing Questionnaire**

# Introduction

*What is this market testing seeking to achieve?*

This document is intended for use by organisations interested in participating in a procurement process to deliver Southwark’s Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Services. This soft market testing exercise will be used to assess market interest and to inform future commissioning decisions regarding the provision of these services.

*What is this market testing not about?*

This exercise is not a formal tendering process. Participation in this exercise is completely voluntary and submitting or not submitting a response would not preclude, prejudice or favour you regarding any future procurement activities.

*How does this process work?*

Information is provided in this document about the London Borough of Southwark and current provision of the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Service.

We are seeking written responses to the questions set out in the Questionnaire on page 6. Providers should note that all answers are for information purposes only and no scoring will take place.

During this soft marketing exercise there will be an opportunity to attend an event to meet virtually with commissioning officers, hear a short presentation about current provision and to ask questions.

Attendance at this event is not mandatory; however it will assist the council in exploring various commissioning and service delivery options to frame the councils’ tender requirements.

Details about this event are included at the end of this document.

All submissions will be treated as commercial in confidence.

# Background

Southwark is a central London borough, covering 28.9km2, with the 9th highest population density in England and Wales. Southwark is an extremely ethnically diverse borough; and becoming ever more so with 46% of Southwark’s population from an ethnic minority in 2011, compared to 37% in 2001.

Southwark has a relatively high level of recorded domestic abuse offences with a total of 3,369 recorded offences in the 12 months to 31st December 2020. This equates to 10.8 offences per 100,000 population and is equal to our neighbouring borough of Lambeth but less than other neighbours: Lewisham (12.8) and Tower Hamlets (13.1).

Southwark’s current domestic abuse and sexual violence community service was launched in July 2015. The current service is fully integrated and provides advice, support and interventions for survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence, perpetrators of domestic abuse, and children. Delivery of training and awareness raising activities is also integral to the current service model. Referrals to the existing service have increased year on year and in the 12 months to 31st December 2020, completed a total of 1,729 agreed safety plans.

Southwark’s existing domestic abuse refuge has been operating since 2010 and provides 26 units for women and children fleeing domestic abuse, currently across 3 sites.

A new Southwark VAWG Strategy (2019-2024) was launched in July 2019. This set out the partnership priorities for tackling all forms of gender based violence. These are:

* Supporting survivors
* Tackling perpetrators
* Prevention and early intervention
* Partnership

We are now seeking to build on the success of our existing service provision by considering ways in which support and interventions can be delivered across a continuum from prevention and early intervention, at all levels of risk and through to longer-term aftercare and support. In addition, how support can be targeted to survivors of other forms of VAWG such as Female Genital Mutilation and other harmful practices, as well as to certain groups who are currently under-represented such as younger people and older people.

# Outline Service Description and Objectives

**VAWG Service (Community)**

The Southwark VAWG service will support the objectives of Southwark’s VAWG Strategy by delivering support and interventions across a continuum of need to VAWG survivors, perpetrators, children and families. Working in partnership with Southwark Council, Metropolitan Police, South East London Clinical Commissioning Group (Southwark), NHS Trusts and the community and voluntary sectors, to support prevention and early intervention activities, deliver comprehensive and targeted support to VAWG survivors at all risk levels, provide interventions to perpetrators, children and families and provide some longer term aftercare and support.

**VAWG Service (Refuge)**

The Southwark VAWG Refuge service will provide 26 units of safe, supported accommodation for women and children fleeing domestic abuse.

# Description of activities for the Southwark VAWG Service

**VAWG Community Service**

**The anticipated annual budget for the Community service is £525,000, the aim of the VAWG service is to:**

* Provide comprehensive and targeted support and advocacy to survivors of domestic abuse, taking in to consideration their individual needs and circumstances and delivering interventions as appropriate dependent on their level of risk.
* Support the prevention and early identification of domestic abuse by delivering awareness raising activities to children, young people, community groups and professionals across the borough.
* Work in conjunction with Southwark Family Early Help and Children’s Social Care to provide appropriate support and interventions to families experiencing domestic abuse.
* Work in partnership with Southwark Housing Solutions and Resident Services to provide appropriate housing advice and support to VAWG survivors including the Sanctuary scheme, and referral to refuge and temporary accommodation.
* Work in partnership with Metropolitan Police, Children’s Social Care and other agencies to identify perpetrators of abuse and provide targeted behaviour change interventions as appropriate at the earliest possible stage to minimise harm to survivors and children.
* Provide longer term aftercare and support (up to 12 months) to survivors of domestic abuse.

**VAWG Refuge Service**

**The anticipated annual budget for the Refuge service is £125,000. The aim of the service is to:**

* Provide safe and supported emergency accommodation to women and children fleeing domestic abuse
* Develop and implement individual support plans for all residents
* Support residents to secure longer term accommodation within 6 months of arrival (where possible)
* Provide support to children at the Refuge in the form of individual and group play, equipment and structured activities

# Required competencies of service

**VAWG Community Service**

* Have experience of providing support and advocacy to survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence and other forms of VAWG.
* Have staff trained to appropriate levels of competency including Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) and counsellors.
* Have experience of delivering interventions to perpetrators of domestic abuse
* Have experience of working in conjunction with children’s social care and family support services to provide domestic abuse support and interventions, including child therapeutic interventions.
* Have experience of delivering VAWG awareness raising and training

**VAWG Refuge Service**

* Have experience of delivering accommodation based services to VAWG survivors
* Have experience of providing support and advocacy to survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence and other forms of VAWG.
* Have staff trained to appropriate levels of competency
* Have experience of working in conjunction with children’s social care and family support services to provide domestic abuse support and interventions, including child therapeutic interventions.
* Have experience of delivering VAWG awareness raising and training

# Objective of the soft market testing exercise

* To gauge the market interest in the provision of the Southwark VAWG Service(s)
* To assess the best way to tender these services within the council’s budget and understand the key perceived challenges identified by providers.

# Procurement information and freedom of information

Southwark council are implementing an on-line approach to commissioning. After consideration of this soft marketing exercise should the decision be made that commissioning is necessary this tender will be undertaken utilising the London Tenders Portal. Organisations intending to bid for e-procurement tenders in Southwark will need to register at the London Tenders Portal at <https://www.londontenders.org/>

Contributors to the soft marketing exercise need to be aware that we are subject to the disclosure requirements of the Freedom of Information Act (FoIA) and that potentially any information we hold is liable to disclosure under that Act. For this reason, we would strongly advise that any information you consider to be confidential is labelled as such. In the event that a request is subsequently made for disclosure under the FoIA the request will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant legislation.

# Soft Market Testing Questionnaire

Please provide in as much detail as possible your answers to the following questions. All questions are optional and your answers will not be marked or scored as a bid, as this is for information purposes only.

Organisation(s) Name(s):

Contact Name(s) and Role(s):

Address (including postcode):

Telephone:

Email:

***VAWG Community Service***

1. We anticipate advertising the tender in early summer 2021. Do you believe your organisation has the capacity to tender for this service at the current time? If yes, are there any restrictions we need to know about
2. What do you consider to be the key priorities in delivering services to survivors of VAWG?
3. What would you expect the challenges to be in delivering this service? Where possible please provide your thoughts on how these challenges can be overcome.
4. What do you believe are the key factors influencing the cost of these services? Please suggest any options you believe could be undertaken to reduce costs and improve the quality of VAWG Services.
5. What outcomes would you seek to deliver and how would you ensure a good return on investment?
6. What innovative approaches could be used in the delivery model for the service?
7. What length of time would you think is appropriate for a contract of this nature and why?
8. Please specify minimum number of years:
9. Please specify maximum number of years:
10. Explain your answer here.
11. If you successfully won a tender to deliver this contract how long do you estimate it would take for you to mobilise and be ready to deliver services?
12. Would you be interested in tendering for this service? If no why

***VAWG Refuge Service***

1. We anticipate advertising the tender in early summer 2021. Do you believe your organisation has the capacity to tender for this service at the current time? If yes, are there any restrictions we need to know about?
2. What do you consider to be the key priorities in delivering safe accommodation to survivors of VAWG?
3. What would you expect the challenges to be in delivering this service? Where possible please provide your thoughts on how these challenges can be overcome.
4. What do you believe are the key factors influencing the cost of these services? Please suggest any options you believe could be undertaken to reduce costs and improve the quality of VAWG Services.
5. What outcomes would you seek to deliver and how would you ensure a good return on investment?
6. What innovative approaches could be used in the delivery model for the service?
7. What length of time would you think is appropriate for a contract of this nature and why?
8. Please specify minimum number of years:
9. Please specify maximum number of years:
10. Explain your answer here.
11. If you successfully won a tender to deliver this contract how long do you estimate it would take for you to mobilise and be ready to deliver services?
12. Would you be interested in tendering for this service? If no why

# What to do next

Please return completed questionnaires to lisa.negi@southwark.gov.uk no later than 12pm Friday 5th March 2021. If you have any questions about this questionnaire you can also send these questions to lisa.negi@southwark.gov.uk and they will be answered as soon as possible.

The event to meet commissioning officers will take place from 10am – 12pm on Tuesday 23rd February 2021 via Zoom. To reserve space at this event please reply to lisa.negi@southwark.gov.uk providing no more than two names per organisation. We will need advance notice if you are intending to attend the event.

Thank you for your consideration.