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Commissioning of 'By and For' services as part of a comprehensive domestic abuse system

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Questions to consider



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- Does your area commission local, specialist organisations?
- Is all victim support covered by one/a few organisations?
- How does your area currently engage with 'By and For' organisations?
- Does your area currently have any commissioning relationships with 'By and For' organisations?
- What are some of the challenges that you face with commissioning 'By and For' organisations and how do you propose addressing these in the future



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History of OPCC

The Domestic Violence Crime and Disorder Act 2004 transferred responsibility for commissioning support services for victims to PCC offices in 2015 following the Government consultation [Getting it Right for Victims and Witnesses](#).

The PCC has engaged in a program of consultation events with victims, criminal justice practitioners and service providers, resulting in the creation of innovative partnerships and networks to better support victims across the region. This synergy has paved the way in creating vibrant networks and relationships, created new ways of working, extended existing services and inspired new services across the West Midlands.

Victims voice has been a consistent priority throughout any consultation process. E.G, responses to aid the Ministry of Justice Race Disparity Team.

Victims Commission



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The Victims Commission launched in 2015 and is a key strategic partnership that evolved from an eighteen-month consultation process with victims, the voluntary and community sector, statutory agencies and partners organisations.

The role of the Victims Commission is to ensure that services have a positive impact on victims, improving the circumstances of individuals affected by crime, to cope with the effects of their experiences and recover from the harm they have experienced.

The Victims Commission has succeeded in building a culture of collaboration and ownership for victim care through the voluntary and community sector so that victims experience quality support from the first point of contact.

Governance structures



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- West Midlands domestic abuse board
- Domestic abuse Independent Advisory Group (IAG)
- Domestic abuse and sexual assault and abuse commissioning sub-group

Victims Commissioner appointment



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Councilor Nicky Brennan was appointed as the first West Midlands Victims Commissioner in May 2021.

The Victims Commissioner has been an advocate for the need to commission local, specialist and by and for services. Through her annual 'Victims Fund', the OPCC have commissioned the following specialist, by and for organisations:

- Dorcas – FGM support service
- Panaghar
- Sikh Women's Aid
- Birmingham Irish Association
- Kairos Women Working Together (Kairos WWT)
- Go Girl
- Street Teams
- Phase Trust
- Gilgal
- WE:Are



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What does by and for mean?

Should 'by and for' be extended to include a wider definition (E.G, by women, for women services, women's centres)

Regionally commissioned 'by and for' services



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- Roshni – FM & HBA Hub
- Panaghar – HBA/FM IDVA
- Birmingham LGBT – IDVA
- Sikh Women's Aid - IDVA
- Coventry Consortium (Coventry Haven, Relate, Panaghar)

Challenges facing Commissioner's



- Not having any local 'by and for' organisations
- Demand not being 'high enough' for specialist services
- 'Tried and tested' organisations
- Due diligence and infrastructure of applications
- Expectations on specialist, by and for organisations (E.g, not imposing regional requirements)
- Barriers that 'by and for' services face
- Challenges embedding services within the wider region
- Domination of bigger services and referral pathways
- Sustainability of 'by and for' organisations

Ways to overcome challenges



- Lobby for longer term funding so that organisations can be sustainable
- Ringfence money through existing funding streams for an 'annual small grant' opportunity which encourages smaller, grassroots organisations to bid.
- Ensure that bidding processes are simple to provide equal opportunities for all organisations
- Commissioner's to support bid writing and put on provider engagement events (this can be through providing guidance, best practice examples, proof reading, letters of support e.t.c)
- Commissioner's to communicate alternative funding opportunities to by and for organisations if own organisation cannot support through internal funding streams
- Work with neighbouring areas to co-commission and co-deliver services if there is a lack of existing provision in own area (encouraging consortiums)
- Ensure that by and for organisations are included in consultation work for your organisation
- Larger organisations being a 'lead' partner that works with smaller organisation

Our journey through the commissioning



Invited all 'by and for' services to a meeting

Encouraged and supported organisations to form a consortium

Ongoing support provided to set up the consortium

Invited to apply for funding

Straightforward application process

Someone always available to answer questions

Understanding the challenges faced by smaller providers

Regular review meetings to discuss ongoing progress & challenges

Final comments

- Commissioning local, specialist and 'by and for' organisations is a goal that **ALL** Commissioner's should be working towards.
- Local, specialist and 'by and for' organisations provide victims with tailored and bespoke support from people who understand their needs.
- Lobby for longer term funding so that organisations can be sustainable