

FOI 14661 Commissioning of services for victims of sexual violence and abuse

**Request:**

The request relates to the Police and Crime Commissioner's (or equivalent) duties to commission local services for victims, specifically for victim/survivors of sexual violence and abuse. We define sexual violence and abuse as any sexual activity that has happened without consent, and includes rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse (including child sexual exploitation), adult sexual exploitation, and sexual harassment.

Please provide the following information:

1. The amount of funding to be provided to organisations supporting sexual violence and abuse victim-survivors in your force area, for the 25/26 financial year. Please break this down by organisation funded, providing information about the nature of the funding arrangement, and the services to be provided by the organisation supporting victim-survivors of sexual violence and abuse, **using the attached spreadsheet template**. If you lead a Violence Reduction Unit, please also include the funding awarded to organisations supporting sexual violence victim-survivors by the VRU.
2. The total amount of funding to be provided to organisations supporting victim-survivors of domestic abuse in your force area, for the 25/26 financial year.

**Schedule of Response Information:**

Following receipt of your request, I can confirm the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) holds information relevant to your request.

I have decided to disclose the requested information to you in part. In accordance with the Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice for the following parts of your request:

- **Number of FTE roles funded/sessions funded**
- **Number of survivors expect to be supported with funding per financial year**

The exemption applied to the information requested is Section 43(2). This exemption is engaged because disclosure of the information would indicate the pricing structures of the providers listed, which would be likely to prejudice their commercial interests and the commercial interests of the OPCC. The information could be used by their competitors to gain an advantage. Disclosure would be likely to disadvantage the provider in the marketplace both now and in the future.



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However the release of this information is considered particularly prejudicial at the current time as the OPCC's sexual violence victim support contract is out for tender.

This exemption requires the application of the public interest test. The arguments for and against disclosure are laid out below.

### **For**

The information, if disclosed, would allow the public to see that the 'best value' option was being taken by the OPCC. It would allow for proper informed debate on the cost of such services and show that public money is appropriately used. It may also enable the OPCC to be more aggressive in their negotiations with providers and obtain a better price in the future.

### **Against**

Providers tender with the OPCC to provide a range of victim services, and it is in both those providers' and the OPCC's commercial interest to ensure that tenders can be detailed, substantial, and uninhibited. This will allow the OPCC to make reasoned and informed decisions about which provider will be awarded the contract. If disclosures under the Freedom of Information Act were to cause commercial harm to such providers, it would then discourage providers from taking part in tenders with the OPCC. This would then be detrimental to the commissioning processes that are used by the OPCC and could lead to the OPCC having to pay higher amounts for services or not having the opportunity to choose the most appropriate provider best suited to its requirements and the needs of victims. Damage to this process would therefore not only be commercially harmful to the provider and the OPCC itself, but also subsequently to those who receive these services (largely victims of sexual violence), and the wider community who subsidise it through council tax.

### **Balance test**

After weighing up the competing interests I have determined that the disclosure would not be in the public interest. I recognise that there is some public interest in disclosing this information. However, I consider that the benefit that would result from the information being disclosed does not outweigh disclosing information that would prejudice the commercial interests of the OPCC by harming any future tendering processes and by prejudicing the commercial interests of the providers listed.



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