



## RECOMMENDATION REPORT

<b>DECISION: 76/2025</b>	<b>DATE: 03/02/2026</b>
<b>TITLE:</b> <b>AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR RESEARCH IN TO DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SUICIDE</b>	
<b>AUTHOR:</b> Rebecca Keech – Senior Policy and Partnerships Manager – Commissioning and Procurement	
<b>SPONSOR:</b> Anna Hopkins – Chief Executive OPCC	
<b>Executive Summary</b> <p>This report asks the Police and Crime Commissioner to waive contract standing orders to make a direct award for a six month research project into Domestic Abuse related suicide.</p>	
<b>Recommendation</b> <p>The Police and Crime Commissioner is recommended to waive contract standing orders to make a direct award for the provision of research into Domestic Abuse related suicide.</p>	

## **PART I**

### **1. Background and Advice**

1.1 Victim survivor suicide following domestic abuse is a major but largely hidden problem. It now represents the most frequent form of domestic abuse related death in England and Wales, surpassing intimate partner homicide, and even these figures are likely to be underestimates because many cases go unidentified.

1.2 Despite growing recognition of the issue, most existing research looks backwards, examining completed suicides to identify patterns after the fact. There remains a critical gap in understanding how to identify risks earlier and intervene before a death occurs.

1.3 Within Lancashire, there have been emerging pockets of good practice, such as improved police training, greater attention to suicide within domestic abuse reviews, and work with national experts. However, these efforts have not yet been brought together into a coordinated, multi-agency approach. As in the national picture, Lancashire lacks systematic data, shared understanding across agencies, and evidence-informed processes for early detection and prevention.

1.4 Locally the OPCC and partners have been exploring options to review service provision in the effort to improve identification of those at most risk and respond affectively to support victim survivors.

1.5 This recommendation report supports a 6 month research project. This project seeks to understand and prevent victim-survivor suicide following domestic abuse in Lancashire. It aims to bring together key agencies, such as police, health, mental health, domestic abuse services and local authorities, to build a shared picture of how domestic abuse and suicide are connected, and how risks can be identified earlier.

1.6 The work will investigate current awareness, policies, data, screening tools and interventions used across Lancashire to identify victims most at risk of suicide, and assess whether existing approaches are effective or need adapting.

1.7 Through evidence review, multi-agency engagement, interviews and consultation with victim-survivor representatives, the study aims to highlight gaps, identify promising practice, and make recommendations for improving early detection, information-sharing and coordinated prevention activity across the county.

1.8 Overall, the project's goal is to strengthen Lancashire's ability to prevent domestic abuse related suicides by ensuring victims at highest risk are recognised sooner and offered effective, joined-up support.

## **2. Links to the Police and Crime Plan**

Prevent Violence against Women and Girls

## **3. Consultations**

The PCC has previously been briefed.

## **4. Implications:**

### **a. Legal**

The Chief Finance Officer can authorise for contract standing orders to be waived in this instance.

A direct award is justified because the proposed research team, including Dr Lis Bates, hold unique national expertise in domestic abuse related suicides, deep local knowledge of Lancashire's systems, established multi-agency relationships, and required vetting levels with Lancashire Constabulary.

Their prior work in leading the national Domestic Homicides and Suicides Project for the NPCC & Home Office, positions them as the only realistically capable provider able to deliver this project effectively.

The lead institution has committed to delivering the work at cost only, explicitly removing overheads. This presents excellent value for money and further supports the case for a direct award, as running an open competition would be unlikely to produce a comparably cost-efficient bid with equivalent expertise.

The Service will be subject to a contract – see appendix a.

### **b. Financial**

The cost is £29,777.91 for 6 month project, this funding has been allocated utilising the Proceeds of Crime Act.

### **c. Equality Impact Assessment**

There are no direct Equality implications in the making of this decision.

### **d. Data Protection Impact Assessment**

Not Applicable

## **5 Risk Management**

The Chief Finance Officer has approved the waiving of Contract Standing Orders

## **6. Background Papers**

Appendix A – Contract

Appendix B – Terms of Reference

## **7. Public access to information**

*Information in this form is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and other legislation. Part 1 of this form will be made available on the PCC website within 3 working days of approval. Any facts/advice/recommendations that should not be made available on request should not be included in Part 1 but instead on the separate Part 2 form.*

<b>Officer declaration</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – As above</b>	
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS – As above</b>	
<b>EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS – As above</b>	
<b>CONSULTATION – As above</b>	
<p><b>Author</b></p> <p>Signature: Rebecca Keech <span style="float: right;">Date: 03/02/26</span></p>	
<p><b>Sponsor</b></p> <p>I have read the above report and confirm this is factually correct.</p> <p>Signature: Anna Hopkins <span style="float: right;">Date: 19/02/26</span></p>	
<p><b>Section 151 Officer for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner</b></p> <p>I have read the above report and have considered the financial implications. I am satisfied that this is an appropriate (financial) request to be submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire.</p> <p>Signature: Steve Freeman <span style="float: right;">Date: 19/02/26</span></p>	
<p><b>Chief Executive (Monitoring Officer) for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire</b></p> <p>I have been informed about the proposal and confirm that financial, legal and equalities advice has been taken into account in the preparation of this report. I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire.</p> <p>Signature: Anna Hopkins <span style="float: right;">Date: 19/02/26</span></p>	