



RECOMMENDATION REPORT

DECISION: 87/2025	DATE: 12/03/2026
TITLE: SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND DOMESTIC ABUSE COUNSELLING GRANT	
AUTHOR: BETH WILLMOTT	
SPONSOR: REBECCA KEECH	
Executive Summary In 2024 the OPCC conducted an independent assessment of need for victims of crime, one area that was identified as requiring additional investment was therapeutic support for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. In December 2025 the Ministry of Justice confirmed an additional 2 year victims grant to the OPCC, and utilising this funding the OPCC went about developing grant guidance for a competitive grants procedure to distribute funding to therapeutic services. The OPCC opened applications for the Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse Counselling Grant on 2 February 2026 to increase capacity in services delivering specialist therapeutic services to victim survivors of sexual violence and / or domestic abuse. The opportunity was published on the OPCC website and shared via local DA & SV partnership networks. The Police and Crime Commissioner received 6 applications in February 2026, of which all met published eligibility criteria.	
Recommendation The Police and Crime Commissioner is asked to approve the grant allocation of £686,250.82 over 2 years to 3 successful projects; The Birchall Trust, Chorley Women's Centre and HARV Domestic Abuse Services.	

PART I

1. Background and Advice

In December 2025 the Ministry of Justice announced a 2-year funding commitment to PCC's including continuation of the additional grant funding to support victims of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence specifically. The MOJ also confirmed the continuation of the arrangements for RASASF paid direct to providers under previous arrangements.

In 2024 the OPCC supported an independent assessment of victims needs, and whilst the PCC had been funding counselling provision to victims of DA/SV for a number of years this identified further investment was recommended to meet increasing demand. As such the PCC made the decision to run a competitive grants round with ringfenced funding to DA and SV Counselling and Therapeutic Services for 2 year delivery of services.

Following the above objectives, the OPCC opened the fund on 2 February 2026 to support increased capacity in specialist counselling services for victims and survivors of sexual violence and domestic abuse.

Key objectives included:

- Complement not duplicate the delivery of the services under the RASASF (currently delivered by Birchall Trust in Lancashire)
- Increase availability of specialist, trauma-informed counselling for victims and survivors.
- Reduce waiting times for therapeutic support, particularly for those experiencing significant risk or complex trauma.
- Improve accessibility for underrepresented or marginalised groups.
- Support sustainable delivery models that complement statutory and voluntary sector provision.
- Accept referrals self-referrals as well as consent-based referrals from organisations commissioned by the OPCC including the domestic abuse IDVA and sexual violence ISVA Service providers and the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC).
- Counselling should be free at the point of access.

The applications were assessed internally using both the Grant Guidance (Appendix B) and the Scoring Matrix (Appendix C).

Following the assessment process, the applications received the following scores:

Application Number	Average Score
1	5
2	4
3	3
4	0
5	2
6	4

Those applications which scored 4 and above have been selected for recommendation to support.

The Birchall Trust £539,657, Chorley Women's Centre £65,000 and HARV Domestic Abuse Services £81,593.82 over a 2-year period.

An indicative budget was

2. Links to the Police and Crime Plan

Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls.

3. Consultations

Internal Policy lead, Ministry of Justice, Lancashire ICB.

4. Implications:

a. Legal

All projects will be delivered under grant agreements.

b. Financial

Applications approved through the fund utilise budget allocated by the Ministry of Justice.

	Year 1 Costs	Year 2 Costs	Total by provider
The Birchall Trust	£267,157	£272,500	£539,657
Chorley Womens Centre	£32,500	£32,500	£65,000
HARV Domestic Abuse Support services	£40,194	£41,399.82	£81,594
Total by year	£339,851	£346,400	

c. Equality Impact Assessment

Subject to the Equality Impact Assessment across all community funding.

d. Data Protection Assessment

There are no direct Data protection implications in the making of this decision

5 Risk Management

Subject to Risk Management matrix.

6. Background Papers

Appendix A – Overview of successful projects

Appendix B - Grant Guidance

Appendix C - Scoring Matrix

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.

Officer declaration	Date
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – As above	
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS – As above	
EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS – As above	
CONSULTATION – As above	
Author Signature Beth Willmott Date 12.03.2026	
Sponsor I have read the above report and confirm this is factually correct. Signature Rebecca Keech Date 12.03.2026	
Section 151 Officer for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner 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. Signature Steve Freeman Date 12.03.2026	
Chief Executive (Monitoring Officer) for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire 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. Signature Anna Hopkins Date 12.3.2026	