

2022-25



Hidden Harm

Thematic Call for Proposals

26 January 2022



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**



VRU Violence
Reduction
Unit
Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire

Introduction

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Nottinghamshire (the PCC) and Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) wish to fund third sector organisations to provide projects and initiatives which improve the identification of and support available for victims of hidden harm across Nottinghamshire.

This includes a particular focus on issues such as slavery and exploitation, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation and county lines and specific issues such as 'honour'-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

To help deliver this objective, the PCC would like to invest in community led projects and initiatives which aim to raise public and professional awareness of hidden harm in Nottinghamshire, improve levels of reporting and the identification of hidden harm and/or improve the network of support services available to victims.

The objectives of this themed funding round are to:

- Fund community-led outreach and awareness raising activity to increase levels of community intelligence and hidden harm identified and referred to the police and existing commissioned victim support services; and
- Strengthen the network of services available to support victims of hidden harm across Nottinghamshire and improve their effectiveness in safeguarding vulnerable people from harm.

Multi-year funding is available, with up to £330,000 to be allocated between May 2022 and March 2025 to tackle Hidden Harm.

Context

We know that complex crimes such as child sexual abuse and exploitation, modern slavery and domestic abuse are taking place across Nottinghamshire, typically behind closed doors and hidden from view. These crimes are deeply damaging and can have a long-term physical and psychological impact on victims and survivors. Identifying these crimes and responding effectively is the first step towards tackling the problem.

Whilst only a small proportion of hidden harm is believed to be reported to the police and other statutory agencies, national research indicates that many of those affected go on to tell *someone* about their experiences; and will share information and seek support when the circumstances are right.

The PCC has set an ambition to increase the identification and support available to victims of hidden harm, with a particular focus on:-

- **Child sexual abuse and exploitation** - Child sexual abuse and exploitation involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, which may or may not involve physical contact, and is increasingly

facilitated online or through technology. Child Sexual Abuse¹ and the systematic grooming and sexual abuse of children is believed to be widespread² across English towns and cities, but remains a largely hidden issue within communities. Despite evidence from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) indicating that around 7.5% of adults in England and Wales are estimated to have experienced sexual abuse before they were 16 (approximately 3.5% of men and 11.5% of women)³, Nottinghamshire police only recorded around 470 offences in 2020/21.

- **Child criminal exploitation and ‘county lines’ drug distribution** – Criminal exploitation involves victims being forced or coerced into crimes such as drug trafficking and cannabis cultivation against their will - often being controlled and maltreated. County Lines remain a significant local concern, with the vulnerable young people involved often being at risk of extreme violence, gang recriminations and trafficking. Risk in this area is estimated to have increased since the Coronavirus lockdown as a result of fewer protective factors being in place to support vulnerable young people. Nottinghamshire Police referred 78 young people believed to be at risk of child criminal exploitation into the National Referral Mechanism in 2020/21.
- **Other forms of modern slavery and exploitation** - Modern slavery encompasses slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. A range of other forms of exploitation are known to be taking place across Nottinghamshire, which include, for example, the practice of ‘cuckooing’ in which vulnerable victims lose control of their home to exploiters. The number of potential victims of modern slavery referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) increased markedly in 2019 as a result of new legislation and improvements in understanding and awareness, however, referrals have plateaued since 2020 – in part affected by the COVID pandemic and associated restrictions.
- **Female genital mutilation (FGM)** is the dangerous and illegal practice of deliberately cutting, injuring or changing female genitals where there is no medical reason to do so. It is also known as female circumcision or cutting. FGM is believed to be in international decline, however GP practices, hospitals and healthcare providers in Nottinghamshire continue to identify around 80 each year⁴, predominantly via midwifery services during their pregnancy and involving procedures which were undertaken in their home country when they were under the age of 10. Known victims are predominantly from Northern, Eastern and Western African territories. Police in Nottinghamshire recorded 31 cases of FGM in 2019/20, of which 6 were Home Office notifiable FGM offences.
- **So called ‘honour’ based violence (HBV)**: HBV is the term used to refer to a collection of practices used predominantly to control the behaviour of women and girls within families or other social groups in order to protect supposed cultural and religious beliefs, values and social norms in the name of ‘honour’. Disclosure of HBV has been increasing in Nottinghamshire since 2018 supported, partly due to the appointment and proactivity of two dedicated Honour-Based Abuse Officers. Around crimes 73 crimes and 62 non-crime

¹ [Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse](#), March 2018

² [Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse \(IICSA\)](#), 2018

³ [\[footnote 46\]](#)

⁴ [The Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\) Enhanced Dataset](#) – NHS Digital, July 2019

referrals were recorded by police in 2019/20. Despite this activity, it is recognised that many offences still go unreported to the police.

- **Forced marriage:** A forced marriage is where one or both people do not, or in cases of people with learning difficulties or who are under-age, cannot, consent to the marriage and where duress is used to enforce the marriage. Cases of force marriage are rarely reported to Nottinghamshire Police, however, the profile of cases reported to the national Forced Marriage Unit indicates that identified victims are more commonly from Pakistan (41%) and aged between 18 and 21 (25%).

Scope

The PCC is looking to fund projects and initiatives that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Provide access to and relationships of trust with particular communities at risk of 'hidden harm' and are equipped to provide advice, information and details of referral pathways for support through targeted **outreach and engagement**
- Work pro-actively in partnership with commissioned victim support services to **enable victims and survivors of hidden harm to access trauma-informed help**. This should include objectives to address any gaps in current provision and strengthen engagement with public sector and commissioned third sector service providers
- Offer **education and awareness raising** for practitioners, professionals and communities in order to improve understanding and response to of issues of 'hidden harm'. This should be informed by the lived experience of victims where possible

The PCC and local authorities already co-commission specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence support services. This funding seeks to support organisations to deliver targeted projects designed to respond to the specific aspects of hidden harm in the categories outlined in the context section above.

Outcomes and evaluation

Outcomes

We are particularly interested in interventions which seek to impact some or all of the following outcomes for participants:

- Increased reporting and identification of hidden harm
- Increase in safeguarding opportunities and outcomes
- Improvements in victim care and proportion of victims recovering from hidden harm
- Improvements in the police and partnership response to victims

Evaluation

It is important to the PCC that we are able to add to the local evidence base around what works in this area and demonstrate impact against public spending. Therefore, any successful providers will be expected to work closely with a member of the OPCC to ensure you have the necessary tools in place to measure and evaluate success.

Other

Successful providers will be expected to comply with the following requirements and codes of practice where relevant to the interventions delivered:

- Revised Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales, which focuses on victims' rights and sets out the minimum standards that organisations must provide to victims of crime
- Cooperation with statutory partners within the existing frameworks such as Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) panels, Slavery and Exploitation Risk Assessment Conferences (SERAC), Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)
- Collaboration with commissioned specialist victims support services.