

**Special Initiative:
Developing
Independent
Domestic Violence
Advocacy services
(IDVAs) in London**

Introduction

The Henry Smith Charity and the City Parochial Foundation have developed a special programme to strengthen and improve the quality of Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy services (IDVAs) in London. We already fund significantly in this sector but are keen to adopt a more strategic approach in light of recent developments in the field and a recognition that a good quality independent advocacy service can make a real difference to the safety and lives of victims of domestic violence.

Background

Tackling domestic violence has been a Government priority since 1997 and the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act in 2004 was the most significant legislation to be introduced on this issue for over 30 years. There is now a common definition of domestic violence which is:

Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

The Government has made it clear that this definition incorporates issues such as forced marriage and so called 'honour' killings, as well as elder abuse when committed within the family or by an intimate partner.

The Mayor's London Domestic Violence Strategy 2005 states that the Metropolitan Police Service attends around 300 domestic violence incidents every 24 hours; domestic violence is a feature in the lives of three-quarters of children on the child protection register; it is a significant factor in disputed child contact cases; and has a wider impact on a range of social issues. It has calculated the cost of domestic violence in London (based on government published research, 2004) as £435 million. This figure includes the costs to the criminal justice system, health services, housing and refuge services, civil legal costs, local economic output and human costs.

The Mayor's London Domestic Violence Strategy proposes a number of changes to current services, as well as the introduction of new services, which would have a positive effect on the quality of life for victims of domestic violence as well as make significant cost savings. The over-riding priority in the strategy is the development of Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy services (IDVAs).

Whilst we acknowledge that domestic violence occurs in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships we recognise that research shows that women are the majority of victims. Therefore, it is likely that work with women will be prioritised.

We are aware that there are two terms currently being used to describe the same service – advocacy and advisory. We have decided to use the term advocacy service as opposed to advisory service as this seems to be a more familiar term in the voluntary and community sector.

Definition of IDVAs

The nationally agreed definition of IDVAs is as follows:

An independent domestic violence advocacy service involves the professional provision of advice, information and support to survivors of intimate partner violence living in the community about the range, effectiveness and suitability of options to improve their safety and that of their children. This advice must be based on a thorough understanding and assessment of risk and its management, where possible as part of a multi-agency risk management strategy or MARAC process.

Advocates typically provide short to medium term casework, focussing on safety advice covering improved physical security as well as remedies available from the civil and criminal justice systems. An independent domestic violence advocate provides this service both at the point of crisis and in relation to medium-term safety and support. The work of these advocates has clear and measurable outcomes in terms of improved safety and a reduction in repeat offences. The service should be provided in such a way as to be sensitive to all cultural and other differences and needs. The advocate also helps to ensure that all agencies involved in an individual case fulfil their obligations.

This definition will be used as the basis by which we will assess applications.

Programme Aim

To strengthen and improve the quality of Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy services in order to improve the safety and lives of victims of domestic violence.

Programme Objectives

- 1) To create a more skilled domestic violence workforce
- 2) To prioritise work which identifies and supports high-risk victims
- 3) To develop models of best practice in developing independent advocacy at a local level in up to four London boroughs
- 4) To strengthen partnerships at a local level, particularly between established domestic violence organisations, statutory agencies and small black and minority ethnic women's groups
- 5) To contribute towards building an evidence base for assessing the cost-benefit analysis of IDVAs and to evaluate the merits of this model of provision
- 6) To inform the wider policy debate on support for victims of domestic violence by engaging with both local and national government, Crown Prosecution Service, Metropolitan Police and other statutory and voluntary sector providers.

Additional Criteria

You will need to demonstrate the following when submitting a proposal:

- a) You have a partnership through which to deliver services which includes strong links with local organisations (both statutory and voluntary) and an established local presence;

- b) The partnership is working towards the nationally recognised minimum service standards for IDVAs, is willing to undergo appropriate training, and has the track record and capacity to deliver IDVAs;
- c) That the partnership, where possible, has established positive operational links with small black and minority ethnic women's organisations and other groups undertaking advocacy work with survivors of domestic violence;
- d) That the work is new, developmental or an extension to current work;
- e) That you can lever in additional funds from statutory sources in order to achieve an IDVAs at level 2 of the Crime and Reduction Partnership (CDRP) Assessment Framework;
- f) Extensive knowledge and understanding of current issues and policies in the domestic violence field;
- g) A willingness to participate in the evaluation of this programme, share good practice, learn from others and to be involved in work to influence policy and make links with policy organisations as appropriate;
- h) Evidence of strong user involvement;
- i) That you have the capacity to communicate and engage with a wide variety of stakeholders;
- j) You are a registered charity, Industrial and Provident Society or Friendly Society and working in one of the 33 London boroughs.

Funding Available

We are keen to fund work over three years in up to four London boroughs. We would anticipate that you would be developing the service in one borough but we are open to applications for work in more than one borough. The budget for this programme is up to £900,000 and this will include the costs of the external evaluation, which will be managed centrally. The amount of funding awarded will be dependent on the current level of IDVAs in the borough; the financial commitment of the statutory partners towards achieving level two (three independent advocates) of the CDRP assessment framework; and the involvement of small voluntary sector partners. Please contact Sioned Churchill on 020 7606 6145 if you would like to discuss your application in more detail.

Application Process

There is no application form. Please submit a proposal outlining:

- How your work will meet the programme's aims and objectives;
- Evidence of how the work will meet the additional criteria;
- Background information about your organisation and your partners;
- A budget for the work;
- Job descriptions;
- A copy of your constitution, most recent audited accounts and annual report

A joint sub-committee of City Parochial Foundation and The Henry Smith Charity trustees has been established to make decisions on the grants awarded. Staff and trustees from both organisations will assess the grants.

Timetable

3 May 06	Funding Programme announced and publicised
15 May 06	Information Meeting with interested applicants (<i>see below</i>)
31 July 06	Closing date for applications
August/Sept 06	Assessment Visits for short-listed applicants
October 06	Sub-committee meets to consider applications
November 06	Successful candidates announced.

Please send your application to:

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CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS 31 JULY 2006

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FOUNDATION

Tackling poverty in London since 1891

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Charity Registration Number: 230102