



Request for a Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner Decision

SECTION 1

Please identify who is requesting the decision:			
OPFCC Decision	Y	Decision Number:	PF 013/2026
CCFRA Decision		Decision Number:	
Constabulary Decision		Decision Number:	

(Please indicate whether this is a PART 1 or PART 2 decision (For Part 2 decisions, only the Section 1 is to be published))

PART 1 Decision:		PART 2 Decision:	X
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DECISION TITLE: Award of Contract for the Delivery of the Child Focused Courts Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) Support Service

Executive Summary: (no more than 100 words)

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Cumbria has secured funding from the Ministry of Justice to implement the Child Focused Courts programme within the Carlisle Designated Family Judge (DFJ) area from 17 November 2026.

Following completion of a compliant competitive procurement exercise, approval is sought from the CEO under delegated authority in the Commissioner's absence to award a contract to the preferred bidder for the delivery of the specialist Child Focused Courts Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) Support Service for the contract for the period 17 November 2026 to 31 March 2028, with the option to extend for up to a further 12 months, subject to funding and performance requirements

Recommendation:

The Commissioner is asked to:

- Approve the award of the contract for the delivery of the Child Focused Courts Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) Support Service to the preferred bidder for the initial contract period from 17 November 2026 to 31 March 2028, with an option to extend the contract for up to a further 12 months until 31 March 2029, subject to continued Ministry of Justice funding, satisfactory performance and ongoing strategic need.

NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE FOR THE PFCC

1. Introduction & Background

1.1 The Ministry of Justice has selected Carlisle as one of the national expansion sites for the Child Focused Courts programme. The programme aims to improve outcomes for children and families involved in private law proceedings where domestic abuse is identified or alleged by providing specialist domestic abuse support, risk assessment and advocacy throughout the family court process.

As part of the programme, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Cumbria was required to procure a specialist provider capable of delivering an Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) support service across the Carlisle DFJ area. The service will provide specialist risk assessment, safety planning, advocacy and court support to adult and child victim-survivors, undertake DASH assessments, prepare professional risk summaries for Child Impact Reports and work in partnership with Cafcass, local authorities, HMCTS and other relevant agencies.

A Procurement Act 2023 compliant regulated below-threshold competitive tender exercise was undertaken. The procurement was advertised through Find a Tender and the In-Tend e-tendering portal, with evaluation undertaken by representatives from the OPFCC, Ministry of Justice and Cafcass. Following evaluation and moderation of submissions, the preferred bidder was identified as have achieved the required standard.

2. Issues for Consideration

2.1 The Child Focused Courts model represents a significant reform of private family law proceedings and places specialist domestic abuse support at the centre of the court process. Delivery of this service is a mandatory component of the national programme and is required for implementation within the Carlisle DFJ area.

The submission from preferred bidder demonstrated the ability to meet the service specification and the requirements of the Child Focused Courts model.

The preferred provider has demonstrated relevant experience in delivering domestic abuse and victim support services and has evidenced appropriate governance, service management and accreditation arrangements.

Contract mobilisation is scheduled to take place between 29 September and 16 November 2026 to enable service delivery to commence on 17 November 2026 in accordance with Ministry of Justice programme requirements.

3. Implications

(List and include views of all those consulted, whether they agree or disagree and why. Must be completed prior to submission).

3.1. Financial

The contract is fully funded through a dedicated Ministry of Justice grant allocation for the Child Focused Courts programme and does not require any contribution from existing OPFCC budgets.

Any extension beyond 31 March 2028 will be subject to confirmation of further Ministry of Justice funding and satisfactory service performance.

3.2. Legal

The procurement exercise has been conducted in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 under the regulated below-threshold special regime (Light Touch). The process included publication of a Planned Procurement Notice and Tender Notice, competitive tendering, conflict of interest management, evaluation and moderation.

Legal Services and Procurement colleagues have been consulted throughout the process.

Contract award remains subject to completion of all contractual documentation and governance approvals.

3.3. Risk

The identified risks are confidential.

Appropriate contract management arrangements will be established to monitor performance, referral volumes, service quality and achievement of contractual outcomes throughout the contract period.

3.4. HR / Equality

There are no direct HR implications for the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner or Cumbria Constabulary.

3.5. I.T.

There are no direct ICT implications arising from the contract award.

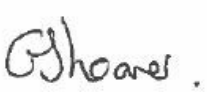
3.6. Procurement

A compliant Procurement Act 2023 regulated below-threshold tender process was undertaken to secure delivery of the service. The opportunity was advertised openly, evaluated by a multi-agency evaluation panel and moderated in accordance with the published award criteria.

Following completion of the procurement process, the successful bidder and is recommended for contract award.

3.7. Reputation

Approval of the contract award will enable Cumbria to participate fully in a nationally significant Ministry of Justice programme, improve support available to victims of domestic abuse and children involved in family court proceedings, and demonstrate the Commissioner's commitment to improving outcomes for vulnerable victims.

Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner I confirm that I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for Cumbria Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner. Any such interests are recorded below.		
I hereby:	approve	the recommendations as set out above.
	~~do not approve~~	
Delete as appropriate:		
~~Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner / Chief Executive (delete as appropriate)~~  Signature: Date: 25/09/2026		

For OPFCC Office Use only:

Date of publication of decision:	
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Each section below must be completed prior to submission to the Commissioner for decision.

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

I confirm that this report has been considered by the ~~Chief Officer Group~~ / OPFCC Executive Team / ~~CCFRA Executive Team~~ and that relevant financial, legal and equalities advice has been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

Signed: C J Laverack

Date: 24.09.2026

CHIEF OFFICER APPROVAL (where applicable)

~~Chief Constable~~ / ~~Chief Fire Officer~~ (delete as appropriate)

I have been consulted about the proposal and confirm that I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

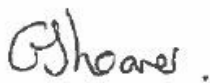
Signature:

Date:

OPFCC CHIEF OFFICER APPROVAL

Chief Executive (Monitoring Officer) / ~~Chief Finance Officer (Deputy Chief Executive)~~
(delete as appropriate)

I have been consulted 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, Fire and Crime Commissioner / Chief Executive (delete as appropriate).



Signature:

Date: 25/09/2026

Media Strategy

The decision taken by the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner may require a press announcement or media strategy.

Will a press release be required following the decision being considered?

YES

If yes, has a media strategy been formulated?

NO

Is the media strategy attached?

NO

What is the proposed date of the press release:	Guided by MOJ.
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Public Access to Information Information in this form is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and other legislation. Part 1 of this form will be made available on the PFCC website within 5 working days of approval. Any facts/advice/recommendations that should not be made automatically available on request should not be included in Part 1 but instead in the Part 2 section of the form. Deferment is only applicable where release before that date would not compromise the implementation of the decision being approved.	
Is the publication of this form to be deferred?	NO
Until what date (if known):	
If yes, for what reason:	
If this is a Part 2 Decision , has the Part 2 element of this form been completed	YES