

# **DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND INEQUALITIES**

**16<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

## **Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service (ODAS) Contract Extension**

### **Report by the Director of Public Health and Communities**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a) Approve the recommendation to extend the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service (ODAS) contract for 2 years until March 2028.**

#### **Executive Summary**

1. The ODAS contract commencing in April 2023 has been instrumental in providing critical safe accommodation support to victims of domestic abuse, fulfilling the statutory requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The current contract is due to end in March 2026. The service has consistently achieved its key performance indicators (KPIs), demonstrating its effectiveness and impact. There is opportunity to extend the contract by up to two years.
2. The cabinet member is recommended to agree to extending the ODAS contract for an additional two years, until March 2028. This extension will ensure the continued provision of essential services to those in need in Oxfordshire, ensuring access to the necessary resources to escape abusive situations and build a safer future.

#### **Background**

3. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires local authorities in England to ensure provision of safe accommodation and tailored support for victim-survivors of domestic abuse, including children. This includes assessing needs and developing inclusive, effective strategies.
4. In response, ODAS was commissioned and jointly funded by Oxfordshire County Council and each District Council in Oxfordshire in 2023. Delivered by A2Dominion, it supports the Council in meeting its legal duties by providing inclusive, accessible, trauma-informed support to help victim-survivors escape abuse and rebuild their lives.

5. The service submits annual reports to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to evidence local provision, and the services performance is monitored through regular contract monitoring.
6. Established on the 2024 Crime Survey, an estimated 29,553 people in Oxfordshire experience domestic abuse in 2023. ODAS addresses this through provision of:
  - a. Emergency refuge and dispersed housing
  - b. Outreach and helpline services
  - c. Specialist support for children and young people
  - d. Services for marginalise groups, including sex workers and those with insecure immigration status
7. The ODAS is fundamental to delivery of the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025-2028, ensuring a coordinated, responsive approach.

## **Key issues**

8. Compliance with statutory duties: There is a need to extend the ODAS contract to comply with the Councils duties to provide safe accommodation to victim-survivors of domestic abuse under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This act mandates local services to ensure victim-survivors can remain safe in their own homes or access alternative safe accommodation and specialist support.
9. Financial Partnering Agreement: Each District council has agreed to continue financial contributions for the contract extension duration ensuring all parties are committed to continuing their financial support for the services provided under the contract.
10. Domestic Abuse Grant: The Domestic Abuse grant is now provided within the core Council settlement annually. This financial stability is crucial for the continued services provided to victim-survivors.
11. Alignment with Strategies: Extending the ODAS service underpins the current Oxfordshire domestic abuse safe accommodation strategy 2025-2028 recommendations. The overarching Oxfordshire domestic abuse strategy and health needs assessment are being reviewed and updated in 2025. This provides an opportunity to add amendments to the existing ODAS contract or create additional contracts if necessary to meet the needs of the population.

## **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

12. The recommendation to extend the ODAS contract fit within the Council's strategic direction, values and principles as outlined in "Thriving Communities for Everyone in Oxfordshire." This includes a vision to help people live healthy lives and provide access to services that can enhance the quality of life in our communities.

13. Vision: The recommended contract extension supports the vision of a thriving, sustainable, and inclusive community by ensuring victim-survivors have access to safe accommodation, enhancing their quality of life.
14. Values: The recommended contract extension embodies the values of integrity, accountability, and collaboration by addressing statutory responsibilities to support victim-survivors of domestic abuse in Oxfordshire.
15. Objectives: The recommended contract extension contributes to improving public health, social welfare, and community safety by providing a secure environment for victim-survivors to recover and rebuild their lives and reduce immediate threats to safety.
16. Strategic Priorities: The recommended contract extension aligns with priorities of sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity by proposing sustainable temporary housing solutions to domestic abuse and ensuring support for the most vulnerable community members.

## **Financial Implications**

17. The cost of the recommended 2-year contract extension will continue to be funded jointly by the Council and each District Council in Oxfordshire.
18. The Councils contribution is £610,382 per annum. MHCLG Domestic Abuse grant funding will be used to deliver the Councils financial contribution.

Comments checked by:

Emma Percival, Assistant Finance Business Partner,  
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## **Procurement Implications**

19. The ODAS contract has the unilateral right for the Council to extend the agreement on the same terms and conditions, on a minimum of 6 months written notice. As the extension is built into the existing contract terms, there is no need to modify the agreement to enact the extension, provided the notice requirement is met.
20. Therefore, there are no procurement implications associated with extending this contract.

Comments checked by: Alex White (Procurement Category Manager – Public Health)  
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## **Legal Implications**

21. Under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 the council is required to provide safe accommodation and tailored support for victim-survivors of domestic abuse, including children. This includes assessing needs and developing inclusive, effective strategies.
22. The existing contract for ODAS was procured under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR) and any modifications to the contract are regulated by the PCR. The option to extend was clearly and unequivocally provided for in the procurement documents and it is therefore permissible for the council to extend the contract for up to 2 years.

Comments checked/added/amended by: Jayne Pringle, Head of Law and LBP – Contracts & Conveyancing  
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## **Staff Implications**

23. The recommendation to extend the existing contract for two years creates no new or additional implications.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

24. This is not a new service. The ECIA implications are the same as for the current service.

## **Sustainability Implications**

25. The recommendation to extend the existing contract for two years creates no new or additional implications.

## **Risk Management**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
1. Reduction to Domestic Abuse Grant funding received as part of settlement.	The Council's option to reduce or terminate services through written notice if funding is cut significantly mitigates any financial risk.
2. A two-year extension means The Council may not be able to take advantage of potentially better offers from other providers in the nearer term.	The Council received one tender in late 2022 for this service, meaning this risk is unlikely to materialise. The Council will conduct regular market assessments and benchmarking exercises to ensure the incumbent provider remains competitive. This can also inform future commissioning decisions.
3. Timelines for the service retender option do not align with the health	By extending the contract, the council can make recommendations and

needs assessment update and overarching strategy refresh taking place in 2025, meaning recommendations would not be included into a new specification before going to market.	enhance delivery based on the findings from the needs assessment and strategy within the current contract and financial scope available.
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## Consultations

26. This recommendation has not been publicly consulted on. District Councils have been consulted as joint commissioners of the service.

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Ansaf Azhar

Director of Public Health and Communities

September 2025