

How to write a successful bid for local domestic abuse tenders - for Women's Aid members

01 Prepare

To ensure your bid is ready in time, be sure to define clear roles and responsibilities for those involved e.g. who will be involved in drafting the application and who will review the draft and when?

Remember to develop your '**Case for support**' - this should outline the evidence of need, what your organisation does to meet that need, the difference you have made so far, the value your work adds, your track record, and any associated costs or budget.

Example: Make sure you have **all your policies and processes** up to date and available. If you are a National Quality Standards (NQS) holder, make sure your accreditation is up to date as meeting externally verified accreditations are a requirement for many commissioners. If you're not currently an NQS holder, and would be interested in applying, please contact us for more information.

Try to find out:

- When tenders might be released or renewed and when the previous contracts were out (we recommend asking local stakeholders)
- Who the key decision-makers are. This includes: Head of Community Safety, the Cabinet member for community safety, the housing team, and the violence against women and girls manager.

In addition:

- Assess whether there are opportunities to ask questions or find out more information.
- Ensure you understand the scoring approach & weightings for the assessment (if provided).

02 Market warming

It is good practice for commissioners to undertake pre-procurement market engagement ('market warming'). If you have not been approached by your local commissioner about this, we recommend that you:

- Ask your commissioner if they can undertake a market warming event
- Submit a request in writing for information about current service-providers and an update on the timeframe for commissioning
- Offer a visit to the service to show them why specialist services are so important for survivors
- Refer them to our Good practice guidance
- Offer relationship-building throughout the year by inviting them to events, activities and fundraising opportunities

03 Writing the bid

General tips:

- Read the specification and guidance in detail
- Keep sentences and paragraphs short and concise, think about your narrative and plan this with headings/sub-headings
- Don't assume prior knowledge and ensure key terms are defined and explained
- Reference social value throughout, and use language to demonstrate what the service gives back to the local community, as well as track record in delivery
- Use statistics about how many women and children have been supported and outcomes for survivors
- Think about your language - does it match the guidance language?
- Get creative! Weave in stories about your life-saving work to bring life and flare to your application.



04 Writing the bid: Content

Value for Money

Throughout the bid, try and demonstrate that you can deliver your service at a competitive cost. In addition, think about what your organisation can deliver that the funder and other potential bidders cannot provide e.g. quality, reliability, social value (see below).

Remember, always think about:

1. What is the **need**
2. What you **do as an organisation**
3. What your **impact** is

Social value

Whilst value for money is a key consideration for local authorities, commissioners are expected to look beyond the financial cost of a contract and consider the social value. This includes looking at how the services they commission and procure can improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of an area. Therefore, it is important to use the language of social value i.e. the social benefits of investing in specialist services, such as yours, as opposed to generic services. You can use our guidance on 'specialist services' here to assist you.

Track Record & Evidence

Remember, commissioners may have little to no knowledge of domestic abuse. Always explain how you are working with survivors, demonstrating the social value your service provides. This can be achieved by explaining the service you offer, including any achievements. Remember to include any data or statistics you have e.g. how many survivors you support, how many require refuge space etc.

Example: We are a local grassroots domestic abuse organisation in [local authority area] that has been supporting the local community for the last 40 years. Our outreach/floating support is accessible to survivors on a 24-hour basis and provides them with holistic 1-2-1 support from a trained domestic abuse specialist. We are needs-led and survivor-centred.

05 Before submitting your bid

Remember, proof-reading is more than checking grammar and spelling mistakes.

Always double-check:

- You have answered all parts of the questions;
- You have explained the proposition clearly;
- You have addressed any evaluation criteria;
- You have provided suitable evidence;
- Your response is logical and easy to read;
- You have saved all documentation and correspondence relating to the bid in case it may need to be challenged at a later date.

For further help and guidance, email us at:
domesticabuseact@womensaid.org.uk