

**DECISION NOTICE**

**Decision author and proposer: Antony Edkins – VRU Education Lead  
James Carrick, VRU Project & Policy Officer**

<b>Subject: Alison Cope – Violence Prevention presentations throughout Jan – Apr 2025.</b>			
<b>Type of decision: Budget/financial</b>			
<b>Deputy Mayor’s decision</b>		<b>Chief Officer’s decision</b>	<b>x</b>

**In all cases this will need to be approved by the Director Police, Crime, Criminal Justice and Fire.**

<p><b>The decision is that:</b> The programme director agrees a 2024/25 budget allocation of £20,000 from the VRU Education 24/25 budget to commission Alison Cope to deliver a series of sessions in schools across GM between January and May 2024. Our intention is that schools in every borough of GM partake in this offer.</p> <p><i>To date, the VRU has spent £10,000 with Alison Cope via her previous CIC, the Joshua Ribera Foundation in financial year 2022-23, and a further £22,500 to Alison Cope herself as a sole trader, as she no longer operates via her CIC (Joshua Ribera Foundation). All relevant IR35 procedures were followed in adherence with GMCA Commercial Services. The total value that the VRU will have spent with Alison Cope through her previous CIC &amp; current sole trader status by the end of financial year 2024-25 will be £52,500.</i></p>
<p><b>The reasons for the decision are:</b> Alison Cope has lived experience of losing her son Josh when he was stabbed in 2013. Alison devotes her time to campaigning for violence reduction, much of which involves 2–3-hour presentations to secondary school audiences across the UK. Alison previously presented at the Greater Manchester Hope Hack in Oct 2022, where her presentation was extremely engaging across an audience of over 100 young people. Following this, our commission with Alison in 2022-23 (which led her to speak at 12 schools across GM) was met with universal praise. Alison’s message is one of awareness of the dangers of carrying a weapon, but also considering the impact of violence on individuals, family and friends, and looking out for signs amongst peer groups where early intervention may be required. Alison’s presentation has been endorsed by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.</p> <p>It is important that the VRU considers additional support to schools where the presentations take place in order that disclosures or concerns can be</p>

addressed beyond the presentations, so each school will be offered the services of GMP School Engagement Officers and Youth Navigators. (This support will not replace the existing statutory safeguarding arrangements in each school). Feedback from sessions in 2023 and 2024 was incredibly positive, hence the VRU wishes to maintain its working relationship with Alison and recommission her in 2024/25.

The VRU's Education Lead & Project & Policy Officer are in the process of identifying the schools wishing to participate and commit to longer term approaches to violence prevention.

**This decision will contribute to priorities of the Greater Manchester strategy in the following ways:**

This programme of work will impact the following GM Strategies

- All four priorities in the [Standing Together plan](#)
- All 5 strategic principles of the [Greater Than Violence Strategy](#).
- The [GM Integrated Health And Justice Strategy](#)

**Financial comments:**

The award will be funded from the VRU 24/25 Core Home Office grant (Education budget line) and will be paid upon receipt of an invoice from the Alison Cope.

**Legal comments:** No contract requirement, however, the programme will be subject to a Service Level Agreement and will be monitored by the VRU.

**Procurement comments:** Alison Cope is a sole supplier for this requirement.

There is no existing contract in place, but GMCA standard terms & conditions would apply, and a delivery plan will be drafted to reflect the agreed number of presentations.

The current total spend for this provision is £52,500 under EU Threshold.

IR35 Checks have been undertaken.

Procurement to be engaged for advice should there be an ongoing requirement for any further provision of services from Alison Cope.

**Risk Assessment:**

The VRU has conducted due diligence to ensure the provider complies with high level safeguarding requirements. The schools involved have their own safeguarding policies. School engagement officers and / or Navigators will be present and provide ongoing support if required. Parents / Carers will be notified of the content of the presentation in advance and will have the option of withdrawing their child.

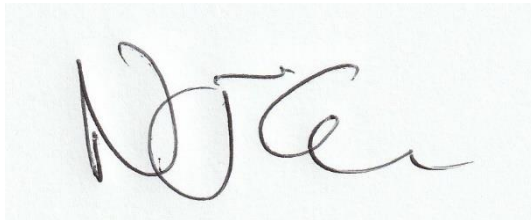
**Is safeguarding of children relevant and has this been considered:**

The programme engages with ages 11-16. VRU has conducted due diligence to ensure the provider complies with high level safeguarding requirements. (Documents provided by supplier). The schools involved have their own safeguarding policies in place. All activity takes place on school premises with teaching staff present.

**Is safeguarding of vulnerable adults relevant and has this been considered:**

Whilst this programme is aimed at 11-16, and it is not anticipated that vulnerable adults will engage with this project, we will ensure that Dr Antony Edkins advises the provider and those assisting on the protocols required as set out in [government guidance](#) about empowerment, prevention and protection.

**Agreed by Director – Police, Crime, Criminal Justice and Fire**



**Signed:**

**Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024**

**Agreed by GMCA Treasurer**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Agreed by Deputy Mayor**

**Only required for a Deputy Mayor Decision on amounts of £50,000+**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Contact Officer:**

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