



To: Business Co-ordination Board

From: Chief Constable and Chief Executive

Date: 27 February 2014

Local Commissioning of Victim Referral Mechanisms via a Victims' Hub

1. Purpose

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to update the board on:

- work to move out of Ministry of Justice funding arrangements for the provision of victim referral mechanisms to local commissioning from October 2015 in an 'early adopter' capacity; and
- early work to develop a police-led Victims' Hub to deliver the victim referral mechanism and provide a gateway for the integrated management of victims of crime.

The contents of this paper will also form the basis of the detailed submission to the Ministry of Justice which is required by early March (later than initially expected).

2. Recommendation

2.1. The Board agree the paper as a basis of the submission to the Ministry of Justice confirming Cambridgeshire's intention to move out of Ministry of Justice funding from October 1, 2014 to become an 'early adopter' providing Victim Referral Mechanisms through a Victims' Hub.

3. Background

3.1. Following the launch of a revised Victims' Code of Practice and an EU Directive in November 2013 the Ministry Of Justice (MoJ) agreed to the transition of the commissioning of support services for victims to Police & Crime Commissioners. This will take place nationally over an extended period to April 2015. At the same time the Code includes an expanded definition of victims entitled to a free support service; a requirement for a needs assessment by the police; and a requirement that victims must be able to access support services regardless of whether they have reported to the police.

- 3.2. In order to develop the most effective approach a small number of commissioners and forces have indicated their wish to become 'early adopters'. Cambridgeshire has taken on this role on behalf of, and supported by the Eastern Region – colleagues from which hope to learn from our experiences. The Ministry of Justice will provide the funding required for this early adoption.

4. Outline of the Victims' Hub Model

- 4.1. The vision is for the Victims' Hub to become the centre of excellence for the provision of victims support services. It will provide an integrated victim referral capability, co-ordinating the effective and proportionate response based on needs of the individual victim. It will receive referrals predominantly based on police reports of crime, but also from third parties and will have provision for self-referrals by people not wishing to report their crime to the police. However self-referral is an area which Cambridgeshire wants to continue its dialogue with Victim Support, either locally or nationally, to ensure these people are supported.
- 4.2 The Hub would be staffed by trained police staff and potentially Victim Support staff.
- 4.3 The Hub will triage victim's needs through the dynamic assessment of biographical and geographical information provided by the victim, repeat offending and other impact factors based on police datasets rather than simply the type of offence they have been the victim of. This will occur at the point of report rather than the current arrangement where such assessment is conducted several days after the offence by Victim Support.
- 4.4 It is this predictive analysis of the victim's needs that will underpin, inform and support the operational response provided to the victim to enable them to cope and recover. Those who are considered to be most vulnerable will attract a response that reflects the threat, harm and risk posed. They will be supported and referred to the most appropriate support services. Those who are least vulnerable can be signposted to support or self-help facilities and online information sources
- 4.5 It is expected that the Hub will also be responsible for co-ordinating the information flow to victims in line with our obligations under the Victims' Code; keeping victims informed of the progress of their case from the initial investigation through to conclusion of any court proceedings. This would be done where possible through a single point of contact. This would be an important enhancement on existing services and a positive response to feedback from victims.

5 Key Features of the Victims' Hub Model

- 5.1 A crucial aspect of this whole approach is that in developing and adopting this model, we work with the constabulary and criminal justice agencies to ensure that victims are at the heart of the criminal justice service. We will also seek to provide:
- Self Service – Access to online crime reporting / What to Expect / Roles and Responsibilities / Practical Advice / Directory of Services. This will meet the needs of a significant proportion of victims who are not vulnerable or require enhanced support.

- Initial dynamic triage/assessment of victim and community vulnerability at the point of report based on both the information provided and that which is already held by the constabulary. This will extend far beyond the current inputs used to assess victim needs.
- Automated services to all victims of crime:
 - Online access to keep up to date with progress of the investigation.
 - Progress updates 'pushed' to victims throughout.
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities in victim care:
 - Establish a victim care role (**Victim Care Co-ordinator**) to act as the responsible and single point of contact, providing end to end support to victims from initial report through to conclusion of criminal justice process.
 - Victim Care Co-ordinators (VCCs) will work alongside contact management teams to support and inform the initial assessment of risk/identification of priority groups and victim need.
 - VCCs will provide victim advocacy, championing the needs of the victim, providing and identifying appropriate support. Advocacy service would focus on vulnerable/persistently targeted victims. Victims of the most serious crime would continue to be supported primarily through specialist teams.
 - VCCs will facilitate liaison between agencies and service providers to develop bespoke 'victim care packages'.
 - Distinct from, yet accessible and complementary to the roles of OIC, investigative functions, and specialist teams.
 - Support the development and provision of restorative justice disposals, representing the needs and wishes of the victim.
- The model must include victim care in relation to ASB even if this involves a separate line of funding.
- Systems and process improvements to enable end-to-end victim care and ensure that information flows with victim through their journey.
- Commissioned services to:
 - Meet the self-referral requirement under the EU Directive
 - Specialist support services
 - Directory of Services for use by police-led service, commissioned services and publicly available online
 - Support the desire to increase reporting and confidence to report.
- Data Processing Agreements, secure email systems, vetting, 3rd party access to systems as appropriate.
- Agreed common multi-agency risk and needs assessment tools, training and standards.
- Service user feedback / complaints handling arrangements.

6 Governance and Funding of Victims' Hub

- 6.1 This will be a police-led program overseen by T/Detective Superintendent Kevin Vanterpool and supported by colleagues within the OPCC. Progress against the program will be reported through this board on a regular basis.
- 6.2 In order to minimise the operational impact of the program there is a need to fund and appoint an Implementation Manager initially for a period of three months to drive forward and develop the detailed implementation plan. An initial role profile has been developed and a post holder appointed with effect from the 3rd March 2014.
- 6.3 Funding for this program has been provided by the Ministry of Justice. There are a range of grant conditions which will be met by this program outline, in particular the legal requirements under EU Directives and the Victims' Code. In total it is anticipated that funding of approximately £183,000 will be available to the constabulary to develop this concept, establish and deliver the Hub between now and April 2015.

7 Transition Issues and Risks

- 7.1 The Constabulary will deploy the Victims' Hub from 1st October 2014 however there are several transition issues that the program must be cognisant of and develop strategies to mitigate any risks that may emerge.

Continuity and Quality of Victims' Services – There cannot be any gap in service to victims between the commissioning of services and the conclusion of the current arrangements. There are specific legal requirements reflected in EU Directive 2012/29 and the recently launched Victims' Code that must be met. Early discussions have taken place with Victim Support to understand and consider the transitional arrangements to ensure no gaps arise and the requirements are met. This will need to be developed further however early indications are that this risk will be effectively managed.

Inter-operability – The issue of inter-operability is one which we acknowledge is an issue. We see two areas of concern:

- The data transfer between the **local Hub and Victim Support**. It is recognised that existing secure channels exist between Victim Support and Cambridgeshire Constabulary which allow information flows to support the needs of victims. We have raised a number of questions with the Ministry of Justice on data transit and they are addressing this issue nationally with Victim Support on our behalf, to ensure any calls to Victims Support are appropriately responded to or redirected to local services.
- The data transfer between the **local Hub and other areas** who are working outside of the Victim Support model (in sense other early adopter areas). We acknowledge this is an issue for hubs which are planning to operate outside the existing "pnn" network or Victims Support information networks and will be looking to those pilots to have appropriate arrangements in place. It is

anticipated this will be highlighted and addressed at the early adopter meetings hosted by the Ministry of Justice

National and Self-Referral Issues – Currently British Transport Police and Action Fraud are two agencies who refer victims of crime who reside in Cambridgeshire to Victim Support using a national framework and service agreements. These will have to remain in the medium term. The MoJ has been asked to work with Victim Support to ensure that this arrangement is not affected by the transition to locally commissioned victim services, it is acknowledged this could reduce the funding available from the MoJ to Cambridgeshire. In addition there are victims of crime who for a variety of reasons do not wish to report the matter to Police but do seek support from services. The Hub will seek to enhance the level of confidence that victims have in the constabulary however there must remain the ability for a victim to access services without contacting the police. It is envisaged that Victim Support will, in line with their charter, have a key role in maintaining this provision.

Local Commissioning - The OPCC has published its commissioning intentions for services that will support the Hub. This is based on current and forecasted needs stemming from the 2012 Victim and Offender Needs Assessment. Some services are already in place, some will need to be developed further over time. It is right to anticipate that there will be gaps in service provision that will only be identified as a consequence of the enhanced assessment of need that the Hub will provide. Such gaps will need to be evaluated and separately commissioned / co-commissioned by the OPCC and partners through the Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board Victim and Witnesses Sub-Group. It is also anticipated that some services may be commissioned across OPCC boundaries through the Eastern Region Victims' Commissioning Group.

Regional Transition: As outlined in our original pilot application, Cambridgeshire are working proactively with their regional colleagues to ensure shared learning and sustainability of Victims Support services for the rest of the region.

8 Recommendation

8.1 The Board agree the paper as a basis of the submission to the Ministry of Justice confirming Cambridgeshire's intention to move out of Ministry of Justice Victim Support contract from October 1, 2014 to become an 'early adopter' providing Victim Referral Mechanisms through a Victims' Hub. It is recognised that to make this move support is required from the MoJ to:

- Ensure any calls to Victims Support are appropriately responded to or redirected to local services.
- Maintain existing arrangements with Victims Support to meet the needs of Action Fraud and BTP victims who reside in Cambridgeshire.
- Work with other hubs to ensure secure communication mechanisms either through Victims Support or existing Police networks
- Promote negotiations between Victims Support and Cambridgeshire OPCC to enable existing Victim Support volunteers to integrate with the hub.