



To: Business Co-ordination Board

From: Chief Constable and Chief Executive

Date: 4th June 2015

Delivering an integrated service for victims in Cambridgeshire

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To update the Business Coordination Board (“the Board”) on the development of the Victims’ Hub.
- 1.2. To update the Board on plans to streamline processes in order to enhance the service to victims and witnesses of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB).
- 1.3. To inform the Board of progress to develop a performance framework for the Victims’ Hub to enable effective evaluation of the service.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Board note:
 - the ongoing refinement of the service offered by the Victims’ Hub to support victims to cope and recover from the crime or incident they have experienced.
 - the continuing work to ensure the services available to victims are fully integrated and streamlined and enable the Constabulary to comply with the requirements set out in the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime 2013 EU Directive Article 8 and 9 (effective from November 2015).
 - the ongoing progress to develop a performance framework for the Victims’ Hub to enable effective evaluation of the service.

3. Background

- 3.1 An inter-agency victim strategy (A Strategic Vision of support for victims in Cambridgeshire) was agreed by Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board (CCJB) in January 2014. It advocated the creation of an “Integrated Victim Management Model” which:

- gives choices for victims – they need to have as much control over their own journey through the criminal justice system as possible and decide how they are to be contacted;
- clear referral pathways, including those for specialist support services and advocacy, to access other mainstream services if these are required, e.g. drug and alcohol services, housing support, mental health;
- true joined up working and effective handovers between services as the individual needs of the victim change;
- equitable support regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity;
- outcome-based performance measures to show how the support has enabled victims to cope and recover
- Resources to support, and assess the needs of, victims who choose not to report the crime to the police but still need additional help.

3.2 The Strategy laid out that any new service “must take into account the statutory obligations within The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime and the EU Directive on the Minimum Standards, Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime (specifically Articles 8 and 9)”.

3.3 The Victims’ Hub was designed and created in response to this strategy.

4. Victims’ Hub- The People

4.1. Ten Victim Care Co-ordinators (VCC) deliver emotional and practical support to victims over the telephone. The in-house training provided has developed our staff so they are able to be uniquely victim focussed with the skills needed to help victims to cope and recover.

4.2. A successful bid by the OPCC to the Ministry of Justice Victims’ Services Competed Fund secured funding for 12 months for two specialist Hub posts. The first, a Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) managed by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust (CPFT) provides expertise, support and a referral capability for victims with mental health issues identifying the available pathways into treatment. She has also worked with other professionals in problem solving meetings and has had 33 referrals. The second post is a Family and Young Person Worker, managed by the charity Family Action. She ensures the Hub is linked with the county’s ‘Troubled Families’ projects and has access to expertise on young victims.

4.3. Six months of service delivery by the Hub has proven that the demand has been accurately estimated resulting in a stretching but manageable workloads. However it is anticipated that demand will increase as victim awareness and confidence in the service improves, and support for Restorative Justice and vulnerable victims of ASB develops.

4 Victims' Hub- The Volunteers

- 4.1 A total of 11 Community Volunteers were recruited, trained and accredited in-house to work directly for the Hub in time for the 1st April 2015, which was when the grant to Victim Support for a similar service ended. The team of enthusiastic, passionate and highly motivated volunteers are already supporting 31 victims. Collectively they also provide the Constabulary with access to speakers in Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi, Russian, Lithuanian, German and conversational Slovak and French.
- 4.2 The volunteers are managed in-house which enables a more seamless and co-ordinated service for victims. This is also enhanced through the use of technology by providing laptops to volunteers which gives swift, safe and secure access to the Hub Case Management System (CMS). Positive feedback has already been received in the Hub about the support from the volunteers. Further recruitment and training is planned to bring the number of volunteers up to 15 to meet the anticipated levels of demand.

5 Victims' Hub- The Service

- 5.1 Officers and staff carry out Initial Victim Needs Assessments (IVNA) when people report crime and add 'markers' to the crime reports of those victims requiring needs which leads to an automated referral into the Hub. This has proved an effective way of working with more than **5,500** victims being identified with needs since 1st October 2014 which equates to around **25%** of all victim-based crime.
- 5.2 The Hub attempts to contact every victim identified with needs by phone. Where contact cannot be made, (the VCCs try three times at varying times of the day), a letter or email is sent to outline the services available. Those victims not identified as having needs are also contacted either by email or letter to inform them that if their situation changes the Hub staff are still available. Collectively more than **14,000** letters, or E-mails have been sent since October 1, 2014.
- 5.3 Only **seven per cent** of victims contacted decline a service. This means the Hub has an opportunity to engage with, and offer support to, significantly more victims than previous service providers. Such providers also had to rely on victims consenting for their data to be shared when they reported the crime.
- 5.4 The VCCs provide emotional support to victims before offering to work with them to identify any needs they might have using a Detailed Victim Needs Assessment (DVNA) which they will complete by way of a guided conversation. The Recovery Plan is 'case managed' by the VCC and, depending on the need of the victim, the support can continue seamlessly through their criminal justice journey to court and beyond, offering a single point of contact for the victim if needed. More than **1,000** victims have received significant support from the Hub, which is around **30%** of those contacted, with the remaining receiving varying degrees help, guidance, emotional and practical support.

6 Self-Referrals

- 6.1 The Hub is able to receive and support 'self-referrals' from victims of crime who want help but don't want to report the crime to the police as required by the EU Directive and the strategic vision. An information handling statement on the website promises a confidential service except where there are risks to the victim, to any other person, or of a miscarriage of justice. There are implications for the Constabulary in regard to the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) when a crime is not recorded. This has been referred to the National Crime Registrar for advice. **90 people** have self-referred to the Hub for support, **eight** of which were victims of domestic violence.

7 Domestic Violence

- 7.1 Since January 2015 the Hub has been supporting victims of Domestic Violence (DV) assessed as being standard or medium risk. This is reducing work for officers and staff in the Public Protection Department (PPD) and provides an opportunity to help manage demand on other services, such as Women's Aid. A countywide Task and Finish Group is being set up to ensure this is done in a co-ordinated and efficient way.
- 7.2 More than **1,000** victims of DV identified as needing support have been received by the Hub since January. When contact is made support is declined more often than other crime, **13%** compared to **11%**. However many more then go on to receive support from the Hub when compared with other crime, **38%** to **31%**.

8 Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA)

- 8.1 Information, advice and support to seek compensation through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA), including help to complete the application form is also available through the Victims' Hub.

9 Victims' Hub and the Courts

- 9.1 Working closely with the Witness Care Unit and having access to court computer systems enables the Hub to support a vulnerable victim through the criminal justice system, offering a single point of contact when necessary. It has also enabled the Hub to take responsibility for updating victims, and witnesses, on the results of Early Hearings at court within a much shorter timescale. This relates to around **80 cases** per week with varying numbers of victims/witnesses per case. The Hub also updates victims on the outcomes of any cases dealt with by Saturday courts on the same day.
- 9.2 Further opportunities to integrate the work of the Witness Care Unit with the Victims' Hub have been identified. This will reduce hand off points from six to two, resulting in improved service, efficient and effective processes and will drive improvements in victim confidence to support

prosecutions. This will reduce discontinuance rates at court where victims and/or witnesses withdraw their support, which equates to **20%** of the failed prosecutions.

- 9.3 The Witness Care Unit is part of the Criminal Justice Unit (CJU) collaboration however, the intended timescale for change is mid-2017 and opportunities exist now, to improve service and reduce overall victim care costs @ £100k + in year one.

10 Governance

- 10.1 Internally operational effectiveness and scrutiny is delivered through the Investigations Directorate, externally the Victims and Witnesses Sub-Group reporting to the Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board (CCJB) ensures a consistent focus on achieving the inter-agency agreed Strategic Vision of Support for Victims in Cambridgeshire.
- 10.2 The Business Co-ordination Board (BCB) is used by the PCC to hold the Chief Constable to account for the service delivered by the Hub.

11 Performance Framework

- 11.1 A performance framework is being developed that will be outcome focussed and adopt a balanced approach between qualitative and quantitative measures. It will provide a holistic view of performance that can help the Hub manage risk, customer service, operational efficiency and learning. The Corporate Performance Department (CPD) is providing help in terms of the question and the technical means to obtain all the detail needed. This work is ongoing.
- 11.2 Qualitative feedback from victims is obtained in two ways. The Constabulary's Victim Satisfaction Survey (VSAT) of over 150 (non-vulnerable) victims a month now includes additional questions to obtain the victim's view on support they have received. This allows the Hub an opportunity for service recovery by following up any victim surveyed whose needs were not met. The second means of feedback is via an Online User Survey which a victim can access through the website and answer questions about the service they have received and how it has supported them to cope and recover. Both these means have captured some very positive comments from victims about the service they received from the Hub.

12 Finance

- 12.1 A budget of £466,682 has been agreed for 2015/16. However increasing efficiency and reducing costs whilst maintaining the levels of service required by the strategy continues to be a priority. Examples include the effort of Hub staff to promote the obtaining of a victim e-mail addresses on the crime so they can receive a quicker and more efficient service by e-mail and avoid the cost of a letter, which currently cost around £7000 a year.

12.2 Recruiting in-house Victim Hub Community Support Volunteers has saved a significant amount of money compared to cost of an external service, and is providing an opportunity to reduce interpreter costs through access to volunteers with language skills.

12.3 As referred to in 9.2 and 9.3 overarching plans to improve the whole victim journey through the criminal justice system have the potential to release savings within the wider department and improve the existing service.

13 In development

13.1 The Hub involvement in Restorative Justice is the subject of a separate BCB paper.

13.2 The Hub will evolve its service to streamline victim support across the Criminal Justice System (CJS) reducing the number of hand off points which currently exist and strengthening the role of the Hub as the advocate for victims.

13.3 The Victims' Hub will extend its service to include the offer of support to vulnerable or persistently targeted victims of ASB. Change to the Constabulary I.T systems is required to enable this to happen. This work has been supported by the Change Management Board and a timescale for the work is being agreed with ICT.

13.4 The Victim's Hub has an online presence through the Cambridgeshire Constabulary website providing information about the service and access to Service Directory that enables victims to locate services that may be able to support them which they can contact directly. However there is a need to create a more victim-focussed portal to access the Hub.

13.5 Work will continue to identify areas of expertise for VCCs which will reduce the need for externally commissioned nationally based services.

14 Conclusion

14.1 There is good evidence to demonstrate that service being delivered by the Victims' Hub meets most of the key features outlined at 3.1 above.

14.2 The Constabulary, through the Victims' Hub project and as an 'early adopter' has contributed significantly to the national development of improved support to victims, including involvement in helping to create the National Victim Information Service project. There continues to be high levels of interest nationally in the victim service model adopted in Cambridgeshire.

14.3 There are still opportunities to improve the service further to meet original strategic vision.

- Whilst the Constabulary capture victim satisfaction data through the survey outlined at para 11.2 it would be useful to have a more cohesive overarching, rather than agency specific, approach to measuring victim satisfaction.
- Supported signposting provides scalable support from the Hub to help the victim access the help required depending on their need. However this could benefit from

further work to clarify referral pathways to specialist support and effective handovers between services.

- The degree of self-service envisioned to enable a victim to report a crime and track its progress has not yet materialised. This is the subject of a separate project which is moving forward and will be implemented in due course.

15. Recommendations

15.1 That the Board note:

- the ongoing refinement of the service offered by the Victims’ Hub to support victims to cope and recover from the crime or incident they have experienced.
- the continuing work to ensure the services available to victims are fully integrated and streamlined and enable the Constabulary to comply with the requirements set out in the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime 2013 EU Directive Article 8 and 9 (effective from November 2015).
- the ongoing progress to develop a performance framework for the Victims’ Hub to enable effective evaluation of the service.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source documents	A Strategic Vision of support for victims in Cambridgeshire http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/police-crime-plan/victims-witnesses/?cookie_dismiss=true
Contact Officers	TDCI Dominic Human, Cambridgeshire Constabulary Nicky Phillipson, Strategic Advisor, OPCC