



To: Business Coordination Board

From: Chief Executive

Date: 25 February 2020

POLICE & CRIME PLAN - VICTIMS THEME - OPCC WORK TO DELIVER BROADER PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- update the Business Coordination Board (“the Board”) on Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) activity to deliver the ‘broader partnership support’ priorities set out in the Victims section of the Police and Crime Plan (“the Plan”).

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Board is recommended to note the contents of the report.

3. Background

3.1 Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Police and Crime Commissioner (“the Commissioner”) is required to produce a Police and Plan.

3.2 The Commissioner’s Plan became effective from the 1st April 2017 and is structured around four key strategic themes: Victims, Offenders, Communities, and Transformation. Each theme has its own aim and has a framework through a series of shared outcomes to enable all agencies with a part to play in community safety and criminal justice, to strategically direct the future delivery of services through these common goals. Each theme is supported by key objectives and priorities for action.

3.3 The Constabulary have a key role in delivering the Plan and on April 4, 2019 brought a set of refreshed comprehensive Constabulary priorities to this Board. These allow the OPCC to concentrate on their wider commissioning and partnership working role.

3.4 The progress around these Constabulary priorities is reported in a separate paper – see Agenda item 9.1

4. Commissioning referral and universal support services

4.1 The victims element of the Plan seeks to put victims and witnesses at the heart of the criminal justice system and ensure they have access to clear pathways of support. The responsibility for commissioning emotional and practical support sits with Police and Crime Commissioners. A list of all services being funded in 2020/21 is attached at Appendix 1. A single Victim Services Outcome Framework has been adopted across the system and is attached at Appendix 2.

4.2 The OPCC is responsible for contract monitoring and reviewing all these services in line with the commissioning cycle, and compiling data for a six monthly outcome monitoring return to the Ministry of Justice. This enables the Commissioner to truly understand the pathways between local services and play an active part in ensuring these support the onward journey of recovery. Over the past six months there has been a slow but steady increase in the percentage of victim-based crime referred to the Victim and Witness Hub. The Hub acts as the central referral service and triaged 2,348 referrals providing 1-1 telephone-based support to 1,273 people (including 551 cases of violence; 276 victims of domestic abuse; 143 victims of theft; 68 victims of fraud). Hub Community Volunteers donated 143 hours and visited 42 victims in their community. Hub staff also sent 5,353 letters and 4,186 emails to victims informing them of the service. Victims reported feeling better informed and safer as a result of the service provided.

4.3 Many more victims also received help from specialist services. The headline six month data (April – September 2019) is detailed below:

- 95 victims assessed and supported by 1.8 mental health nurses with all victims reporting improved health and wellbeing
- £33k enabled 215 victims from 15 nationalities to be provided with support as a result of modern day slavery or domestic abuse
- 96 young victims of crime and their families supported (66 as victims of violence) with more than 75 per cent reporting they were better able to cope with everyday life as a result of the support
- Less than £1,000 enabled 11 young people to begin to recover from their experience of domestic abuse or sexual violence through practical changes to their environment or life; for example securing a gate or learning a new activity
- £50k enabled the Bobby Scheme to secure the homes of 519 elderly victims of crime with 94.34 per cent reporting increased feelings of safety
- 69 victims of stalking and harassment accepted specialist support and advice and agreed they felt better informed and empowered to act as a result.

4.4 An small inflationary increase to the Victim Services grant of approximately £18k is being invested into additional support for young victims of crime. This contract is currently held by Family Action but will be put to tender in 20/21 in line with Procurement Regulations. This work ties in with a current review of Early Help and Vulnerable Adolescent Services (part funded by the OPCC through and Crime and Disorder Reduction Grant) and a move to streamline the support available to young people; particularly those most vulnerable to becoming victims or perpetrators of crime.

5 Commissioning specialist victim support services – domestic abuse

5.1 The OPCC has supported the development of a new Domestic Abuse Strategy. It focuses on the provision of a sustainable core offer of support and an enhanced offer to guide future bids for funding. Work is ongoing to scope and plan the implementation of the core offer and the OPCC is playing a significant role in this. The local authority has just discovered it has been successful in securing ongoing funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for domestic abuse outreach workers.

5.2 The Constabulary are currently exploring the feasibility of a domestic abuse perpetrator programme called Drive. This would be part of an enhanced offer. However gaps still remain within therapeutic long term recovery; for example trauma-focused counselling for young victims and witnesses of domestic abuse and sexual violence. Collectively the partnership need to decide the priority for the work detailed in the enhanced offer element of the strategy and the interdependencies with other agency's interventions for vulnerable people.

5.3 In Cambridgeshire domestic abuse cases are clustered and heard at the Specialist Domestic Abuse Court (SDAC) to provide a victim-centered multi-agency response. Despite a significant increase in the number of reports of domestic abuse and live investigations the SDAC has seen a decline in work. As a result HMCTS has reduced SDAC court sitting time and cancelled ten scheduled courts in the past four months with risks of further reductions.

5.4 Work commissioned by the Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board ("CCJB") to establish the reason for the decline in cases has suggested the revised CPS direct charging arrangements could have had an impact. This raises the threshold for charging defendants and has led to an increase in the use of 'released under investigation' without conditions and subsequent postal requisition to court many months later. This in itself goes against the principles of the SDAC court which was set up to ensure a swift criminal justice response and in turn fast and effective protection of victims. It has also been reported that this has made it difficult for magistrates to impose restraining orders when defendants have been free in the community for months since the incident without restriction.

6. Commissioning specialist support services – sexual violence

- 6.1 The contract for Cambridgeshire’s Countywide Sexual Violence Support Service has now been awarded. The OPCC act as lead commissioner for this service which is funded through a pooled budget of partnership contributions and the Ministry of Justice Victims’ services grant. Cambridgeshire is also one of five areas to take part in a three-year pilot for the devolution of the Rape Support Fund which is wholly invested in this contract. This is not new money but enables greater local influence over the funds. The contract contains a fully funded ISVA service and an emotional support service and was informed by a significant period of consultation and engagement. The OPCC has just submitted a bid to the Home Office for additional child and young person ISVAs to increase support to young victims and survivors of rape and sexual violence.
- 6.2 The OPCC has also played a key role in the recommissioning of the 24/7 Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). The contract will be awarded within the next couple of weeks in a joint arrangement with Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. The OPCC has drafted a Memorandum of Understanding between the forces to set out the terms of collaboration which the Constabulary will be asked to sign in the coming weeks. The Constabulary will also be required to engage with the implementation of new Forensic Regulator Guidelines which will govern its SARC. This could result in additional shared costs with NHS England; the extent of the impact is not yet understood.
- 6.3 The previous events involving elected Police and Commissioners has the potential to create challenges in this area of work. Through the transparent commissioning process and strong partnership working arrangements the OPCC continues to ensure victims and survivors have access to high quality services delivered by experienced and committed staff.

7 Code of Practice for Victims of Crime – Compliance

- 7.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner has a statutory responsibility to monitor how all agencies comply with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime locally and provide an annual return to the Ministry of Justice. This requires the Constabulary and other agencies to audit their compliance against five key entitlements on a three-monthly basis.
- 7.2 An internal audit into the force’s preparedness to monitor compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime is ongoing. Initial feedback is positive however work is ongoing to standardise contact with victims of crime informing them what their crime has been recorded as and directing them to local victim support services. Staff in the demand hub send victims some of this information via text or email where they have received the report (also this is not recorded on Athena), but this is not replicated for those victims reporting through officers. Work has been done across the seven Athena force to develop a standard letter – this will be looked at alongside the review of the demand hub.

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Board is recommended to note the contents of the report.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document(s)	Police and Crime Plan http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/police-crime-plan/
Contact Officer(s)	Nicky Phillipson, Head of Strategic Partnerships and Commissioning