



To: Business Coordination Board

From: Acting Chief Executive

Date: 03 September 2020

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

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”).
- provide an update on the provision of victim support services commissioned or co-commissioned by the OPCC.

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 Acting Police and Crime Commissioner (the “Acting Commissioner”) is required to produce a 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 Within the victims theme the OPCC has a wider statutory commissioning and partnership working role taking the lead for a wide range of agendas with permission and on behalf of the county’s delivery groups.

4. Commissioning and contract managing support services

- 4.1 The paper brought to the May 2020 Board meeting provided a detailed overview of the commissioning arrangements, services available and current performance in Cambridgeshire of victim support services. Therefore, this paper does not seek to repeat that detail. The six-monthly outcome monitoring information (March to September 2020) will be reported through the next scheduled victims update after October 2020.
- 4.2 All commissioned services are reporting an increase in the number of victims of crime accessing support and the average call length. The majority of services are now developing risk assessments to enable staff to return to office-working environments for at least part of the working week. New ways of working continue to be developed in response to victims' needs and emerging national best practice. In particular the Restorative Justice service is looking at ways for victims and offenders to safely engage with restorative approaches.
- 4.3 Domestic abuse services are now reporting the expected increase in demand for support. With resources stretched the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Board discussed the option of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) ceasing to send details of victims involved in domestic abuse 'incidents' to third sector agencies for a proactive offer of support. Calls to these victims translate into support in less than 1 in 5 cases. This would allow the limited resources to focus on the medium risk crime cases. Staff in the MASH would still be able to use professional judgement where there is concern about support being required. This change in approach would mirror many other policing areas and ensures a victim-led approach is taken. Victims of standard risk crimes will continue to be offered support from staff in the Victim and Witness Hub and the Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate (IDVA) service are responsible for all high-risk crimes.
- 4.4 The OPCC continues to respond to a significant number of reporting requirements set by central Government to provide a national picture of demand and availability of victim support services. The Head of Strategic Partnerships and Commissioning also sits on the national Association of Police and Crime Commissioners Victim Portfolio Group to ensure the voice of Cambridgeshire victims is heard.

5. Accessing additional resources for the county

- 5.1 The OPCC has led successful partnership bids for additional funding worth for more than £600k since January including:
- Three **additional Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVAs)** funded for two years – worth £220k
 - **Extraordinary Covid-19 Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence** funding – worth £279k
 - Additional Rape Support Fund monies – worth £123k
- 5.2 The OPCC has just submitted a bid to the Home Office's Child Abuse Transformation Fund for £280k on behalf of the county. If successful this two-year award would enable up to 200 young victims of child sexual abuse to access bespoke counselling interventions through the Cambridge and Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership.

- 5.3 The county is currently considering a bid to the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Fund. This would again be led by the OPCC however would only provide six months of funding and require match funding to allow the work to continue for a full 12 months.
- 5.4 The **Extraordinary Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence** funding (referenced in 5.1) provided much needed additional resources to respond to the increase in victim referrals. The time providers have to spend this money has now been extended until March 2021 leading to many reprofiling money into staffing. The fund has allowed new partnerships to be developed with many grass roots support services through the 1-1 contract meetings with the OPCC and will inform future commissioning decisions.
- 5.5 The OPCC is in the process of recruiting a Commissioning Support Officer (Scale 6) to provide additional support to this growing area of work.

6 Supporting victims accessing the criminal justice pathways

- 6.1 The Senior Criminal Justice Policy Manager, based in the OPCC, continues to drive partnership working which puts victims and witnesses at the heart of all policy decisions. An enhanced programme of multi-agency meetings has been running to address barriers to victims seeking justice. It is expected that the backlog in the Magistrates Court will be addressed by the end of September. Positively the Specialist Domestic Abuse Court (SDAC) which has been closed since March is expected to start scheduling cases twice a week from November.
- 6.2 The Crown Court estate has prevented more than two trials running at once (one in Cambridge and another in Peterborough) which has resulted in a growing backlog of cases. Victim support providers are working hard to keep victims engaged and the force is once again focusing on officers’ compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime. This Code is currently being revised, with a new version realistically expected in early 2021. As a result the Ministry of Justice has temporarily withdrawn the requirement for PCCs to monitor local Criminal Justice agencies’ compliance with the Code.
- 6.3 Criminal justice agencies are reporting greater challenges in ensuring victims are effectively supported when they are required to attend court. The OPCC is looking at whether additional mobile technology, paid for from the Victims’ Grant, could alleviate some of the communication barriers and improve the experience for victims and witnesses.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 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/
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