

Police and Crime Panel

Meeting to be held on 7 April 2014

Police and Crime Commissioner's Draft Victims and Witnesses Strategy and Delivery and Commissioning Intentions

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the Commissioner's draft Strategy for Victims and Witnesses and outlines the draft delivery and commissioning intentions currently being developed.

RECOMMENDATION

The Police and Crime Panel is asked to;

- Note the draft Strategy and is invited to comment on the attached Victims & Witnesses Strategy document as part of the Commissioner's consultation process;

Introduction

The Police and Crime Commissioner will take over responsibility for commissioning victim and witness services, including referral and assessment, from April 2015 with some additional services being commissioned from October 2014.

Background

A Victims and Witnesses Services Review was commissioned by the Commissioner last year. A summary of the findings are attached to this report at Appendix 1 and the final report will be published shortly.

The Commissioner held a Victims and Witnesses Consultation event on 31 January. The findings of the Victim Services Review were presented together with the Commissioner's Draft Victims and Witnesses Strategy and Delivery and Commissioning Intentions. Whilst the consultation closed at the end of March the Commissioner would still welcome comments from members of the Police and Crime Panel. A copy of the Victims and Witnesses Strategy, revised following the Consultation event in January is attached at Appendix 2.

The Commissioner will assume responsibility for commissioning new community victim services and some restorative justice services from October 2014. The current Victim Support funding, including referral and assessment, will be handed over by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) from April 2015 to enable the commissioning of community victims' services apart from services commissioned nationally. It is anticipated that this funding will be in the region of £1.5M. This will also include funding for the provision of restorative justice services, with the exception of restorative justice services being provided by the National Probation Service, Cumbria and

Lancashire Community Rehabilitation Company, the three Youth Justice Services and Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS).

A meeting has been held with senior representatives from criminal justice agencies including Police, Probation Trust, the three Youth Justice Service and HMPS. It was agreed that a Multi Agency Restorative Justice Strategy Steering Group would be established to develop a Pan-Lancashire Strategy and Delivery Plan including both pre and post court restorative justice provision. Restorative Justice Solutions and Victim Support are developing a Pre Sentence restorative justice pathfinder project based at Preston Crown Court.

The Commissioner is represented on the Project Board for the new Rape and Sexual Assault Support Centre for the pan Lancashire area. The MoJ has committed funding for 3 years to the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre for children and adults in Lancashire.

The Lancashire Criminal Justice Board accepted a proposal from the OPCC to establish a Victims and Witness Sub Group which is chaired by Saima Afzal, APCC. The work of this group includes:

- the implementation of the Revised Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (came into force on 10 December 2013)
- support the work of the Victim and Witnesses Review
- overseeing the work on proposals for new delivery model (including Referral and Assessment, CJ services and Victim Services) and commissioning of community victim services.

Victim Services Review

Background

Commissioned to undertake research to:

- Provide clear understanding of victim services
- Profile available victim data and benchmark satisfaction
- Ascertain requirements of a good 'support service'
- Identify gaps in current service provision
- Define what makes a 'top class' victim support service

Approach

Stage 1: Literature Review

Stage 2: Profiling and Benchmarking

Stage 3: Engaging with key stakeholders and service providers

Stage 4: Capturing the victims experience

What does a 'top class' victim service look like?

Communication and Information

- 24 hour access to information on their case = support if required
- Access to case info and updates as and when required
- Easy accessible portfolio of services available
- One stop shop for information/signposting
- Better lines of communication and joined up support readily available
- Better and more detailed information

Services and Support

- One point of contact throughout whole CJS journey
- Personal approach – empathy, understanding, practical and emotional support
- Consistent, high quality service provision meeting set 'standards' (via victim supported accreditation)
- Early offer of support (linked to prevention/ escalation)
- Acknowledge vulnerabilities and match setting/ process/ approach accordingly
- Access to specialist support as required
- Same level/quality of service across providers and localities
- Victim focussed court systems – communication, information, consideration
- Specialist support services for young victims/ witnesses
- Offer of victim-led support at any point
- Higher impact of victim influence

Delivery of a top class service

- Service provision driven by victim need over and above other factors
- Victims' advocates/case workers as 'one point of contact'
- Long term funding
- Joined up working
- Increased specialist support resources (e.g. IDVA/ISVA, counsellors)
- Quality standard measurement/accreditation scheme
- Early intervention/targeted support for vulnerable individuals
- Streamlined process around CPS
- Communication, information, scheduling, access, facilities, support services
- Third sector providers offering same services linking up
- Specialist service developed for young victims/witnesses
- 'Two way' referrals (can refer back into 'services')
- Cross-organisations support – shared facilities, joint funding, access to training, merged resources

Considerations for PCC

- Accreditation scheme/quality standard measurement
- Online service directories/information
- Investment in initiatives at either end of process - early intervention and restorative justice
- Conditional commissioning
- Collaborative consultation around outcome measurement
- Evaluation and monitoring of 'complete' victim journey
- Involvement end-users in service design

VICTIMS AND WITNESSES STRATEGY

This is a draft document and is subject to formal approval by the Commissioner.



VICTIMS AND WITNESSES STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

- PCC Priority for Victims
- Police and Crime Plan Priorities

OVERALL AIM

PRINCIPLES

- Consultative
- Evidence based
- Collaborative
- Governance and Delivery (Appendix A)

LOCAL CONTEXT (Appendix B)

- Domestic Abuse Services
- Early Intervention
- Restorative Justice

NATIONAL CONTEXT

- Getting it right for Victims
- Swift & Sure Justice
- Revised Code of Practice for Victims Services
- Revised Witness Charter
- EU Directive on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime
- Ministry Of Justice Commissioning Framework

REVISED CODE OF PRACTICE FOR VICTIMS / WITNESS CHARTER

OUTCOMES FOR VICTIMS AND WITNESSES

Key Aims and Outcomes of the Strategy

APPENDIX A: - LCJB Victims & Witness Group Terms of Reference

APPENDIX B: - Local Context

VICTIMS AND WITNESSES STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

This Strategy sets out my vision for an ambitious programme to transform victim and witnesses services in Lancashire. It sets out how I intend to deliver my manifesto commitment to 'Champion the Rights of Victims', as set out in my first Police and Crime Plan and the five Victim Pledges which I signed up to shortly after becoming Lancashire's first Police and Crime Commissioner. These were:

- Be open and accountable to victims and witnesses, seeking out and acting on their views;
- Ensure that victims and witnesses get the high quality help and support they need, when they need it;
- Make the police more victim-focused and more effective at meeting their needs;
- Give victims and witnesses an effective voice in the wider criminal justice system;
- Constantly work to develop new ways of delivering justice for victims.

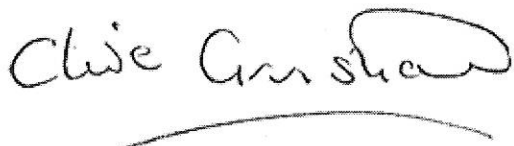
This Strategy is linked to the priorities I detailed in my Police and Crime Plan including:

Defending Front Line Policing

Protecting Vulnerable People

Targeted Initiatives to tackle Crime and Reoffending

My statutory duty to work with criminal justice partners to secure an effective and efficient criminal justice system, together with my duty to consult with victims means that I will have a key role in securing improvements in services for victims and witness and an exciting opportunity to explore the potential to work differently to achieve improved outcomes.



Clive Grunshaw - Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire

OVERALL AIM

The overarching aim of my strategy for Victims and Witnesses is to put the voice of victims and witnesses at the heart of the service, simplify and improve the victim and witness experience by developing the best possible provision for victims and witnesses in Lancashire to:

- Prevent re victimisation;
- Protect victims and witnesses from further harm;
- Support victims to cope and recover

STRATEGY PRINCIPLES

There are a number of key principles that have been adopted in developing this strategy:

Consultation – seeking views of victims and witnesses, service providers and partners to understand and improve victim and witness services.

Evidence based – building a picture of the current victim and witness experience, identifying what works, areas for improvement, gaps and duplication to inform recommendations for the future.

Collaborative – working with criminal justice agencies, the judiciary, voluntary and community sector providers and end users to develop a 'whole system' approach to victim care; recognising and developing the respective roles in improving services for victims.

Governance - working with the local Criminal Justice Board Victims and Witnesses Delivery Group, chaired by Saima Afzal, Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner. to establish an inclusive and transparent governance structure,

The Terms of Reference and Membership are attached at **Appendix A**.

LOCAL CONTEXT

The provision of services and support for victims and witnesses cannot be seen in isolation and will link to a number of other local and pan-Lancashire initiatives and programmes.

These will include services for victims and witnesses of specific crime types such as Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault and Rape as well as a wider range of activities that support vulnerable people. Other relevant initiative will contribute to reducing crime, making victims feel safer and offering alternative methods for reporting crimes and incidents.

Details of the key areas of work and relevant publications are in **Appendix B**.

As well as addressing local issues and concerns there are a number of publications and developments at a national level which influence this strategy:

Getting it Right for Victims and Witnesses (MoJ 2012) sets out the Government's strategy to improve services for victims.

Swift and Sure Justice White Paper (July 2012), sets out a range of reforms aimed at making the criminal justice system more efficient and effective.

Revised Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) (October 2013) details the rights and entitlements for victims at every stage of their journey, focusing support on victims of serious crime, those that are persistently targeted and those that are vulnerable or intimidated. This came into force on 10 December 2013.

Revised Witness Charter (December 2013) Standards of care for witnesses in the criminal justice system.

EU Directive on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Articles 8 and 9 (effective from November 2015) creates minimum standards for victim support services, and includes provisions for victims to be able to access services regardless of whether or not they have reported to the police.

The MoJ Commissioning Framework - published on 30 May 2013 (www.gov.uk/government/publications/victims-services-commissioning-framework).

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has confirmed that responsibility for commissioning services will pass to PCCs, with MoJ retaining responsibility for specific national services. These include: victims of trafficking; those bereaved by homicide; victims of sexual violence; the witness service; some national helplines.

All national services will be commissioned through a competitive process. In addition to rape support centres some other support services for victims of sexual and domestic violence will also be nationally commissioned. The MoJ will undertake further work, engaging with victims' groups and support providers, to determine which ones.

Indicative funding for local commissioning has been confirmed for a period of 18 months (1 Oct 2014 - 31 March 2016) and will be issued as a grant under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 to support '*victims, witnesses or other persons affected by offences*'.

OUTCOMES FOR VICTIM AND WITNESSES

I have identified a number of key Aims and Outcomes which this Strategy will seek to achieve:

1. Victims of all crime types, including Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Incidents have access to appropriate services and support.
2. Victims and witnesses are be treated with dignity and respect and feel valued and safe at all stages of the process;
3. Victims and witnesses receive accurate and timely information about their case and a better understanding of the criminal justice system, including what will be expected of them and what they can expect;
4. Victims and witnesses have access to appropriate advice, high quality practical and emotional support services and, when needed, specialist services tailored to their individual needs to help them to cope and recover from their experiences, including those victims who choose not to report to the police.
5. The impact that crimes and incidents can have on those people who are indirectly affected such as parents, siblings, children, partners, close friends and local community is both acknowledged and addressed;
6. The needs of children and young people as victims and witnesses are recognised and services designed and delivered in a way that best suits them;
7. Victims and witnesses have influenced the design and delivery of support services which better meet their needs;
8. The needs of victims and witness are recognised by the constabulary and criminal justice partners and addressed in a consistent and effective manner;
9. Victims and witnesses are able to report crimes via third parties and other public sector agencies;
10. There is a strong, sustainable and effective restorative justice service which is victim led and accessible to victims at a point in their journey that is most suitable for them.

Lancashire Criminal Justice Board

Victims and Witnesses Sub Group

1.0 Governance:

The Victims and Witnesses Sub Group will report to the Lancashire Criminal Justice Board Executive Group.

1.1 Structure:

The Victims and Witnesses Sub Group will meet as required to undertake its business. The meeting will be chaired by Saima Afzal, Assistant Commissioner (Victims)

1.2 Membership:

- Crown Prosecution Service
- HM Court and Tribunal Service
- HM Prison Service
- Lancashire Constabulary
- Lancashire County Council
- Lancashire Probation Trust
- Lancashire Youth Justice Service
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Victim Support

1.3 Terms of Reference:

- 1 Develop a pan Lancashire Strategy for victims and witnesses including joined up working model across the LCJB agencies.
- 2 Implementation of the revised Victims Code
- 3 Oversee victims and witnesses performance management and achievement of outcomes by LCJB organisations.
- 4 Provide performance/progress reports to the LCJB Executive Group as required.
- 5 Contribute a victims perspective to the Reducing Reoffending Strategy being developed by the Lancashire Reducing Reoffending Board and Lancashire Community Safety Strategy Group (LCSSG)
- 6 Promote a victim focus which contributes to increasing confidence and reducing fear of crime
- 7 Ensure that Equality, Diversity and Human Rights (EDHR) and vulnerable victims / diverse needs are addressed
- 8 Development of support for victims and witnesses involved in civil court proceedings
- 9 Support the work of the Victims Review
- 10 Contribute to the assessment of needs to inform the local commissioning of victims services from October 2014

LOCAL STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMMES

Commissioning of Domestic Abuse services by Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council.

- LCC services re-commissioned in 2014

Rape and Sexual Assault Services

- New Lancashire Centre opening in 2014 in Preston
- On-going work with other providers

Early Intervention Strategies and Programmes

- Police and Crime Commissioner awarded Early Intervention Place Status in 2013 for the whole of Lancashire
- Blackpool Council awarded Early Intervention Place Status 2013
- Blackburn with Darwen Council awarded Early Intervention Place Status 2013

Lancashire Restorative Justice Strategy

ASB Community Remedies

To be added to



WORKING WITH VICTIMS
in Lancashire