

Police and Crime Commissioner Bi-Monthly Meeting July 2013
Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People

This paper has been requested by the Police and Crime Commissioner to demonstrate how Surrey Police are supporting vulnerable people such as survivors of domestic abuse, sexual assault, child abuse/exploitation, and those with mental health issues. This is a very complex area which is not easily summarised. The below represents a sample of examples.

Support for survivors of domestic abuse

Surrey Police are progressing new strategies such as an agreement with Outreach providers to take as a referral, all incidents where it is necessary to carry out an assessment using a Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and honour-based violence questionnaire (DASH). This represents a significant increase in volume for providers and they are currently assessing how they might manage that work load. The purpose of this is to increase the opportunity for survivors of domestic abuse to be offered greater support beyond that currently available from Victim Support Services.

Support for survivors of sexual assault

Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (RASAC) are providing the Surrey Police Public Protection Investigation Unit (PPIU) with awareness training on services available to them to raise maximum operational awareness of options for referral by frontline staff for survivors of rape and serious sexual assault.

Support for survivors of child abuse

Children's Services will be co-locating twelve staff within the Central Referral Unit imminently. The aim of this is to improve information sharing, risk assessing and fast-time decision making in responding to notifications of a child at risk.

College of Police peer review of Surrey Police's management of historic child abuse cases and their approach to victim care

Surrey Police approached the College of Policing in March 2013 to undertake a review of how the Force managed historic child sex abuse cases following a number of high profile cases. The remit was effectively to carry out a 'health check' on how the Force manages such cases and the quality of service afforded to victims and witnesses. The work was specifically not about examining the quality of investigations or the management of intelligence.

In July 2013 Surrey Police published the peer review and the Force action plan to progress the recommendations made by the College of Policing. ACC Stuart Cundy has established a new Public Protection Programme Board to oversee this action plan and the wider Force response in safeguarding children and vulnerable people. The board will ensure effective working with partners to deliver improved victim care, bringing offenders to justice and the management of offenders.

Child Sex Exploitation (CSE)

The Force chairs a multi-agency CSE Working Group that has developed a joint protocol on raising awareness and tackling CSE. There is a monthly Missing and Exploited Child Case Conference (MAECC) where Police and Children's Services review the top ten missing children. The purpose is to review and information share and set actions for prevention including identification of CSE signs. This is in addition to the obvious immediate response to concerns for missing children and

dealing with their return and debrief and intelligence gathering. Where appropriate, missing children are given a CSE risk assessment in conjunction with Children's Services.

The Diversity Crime Unit and PPIU are assessing information and reports of potentially exploited children and responding accordingly. The Missing Person Unit have a full time co-ordinator and researcher to review reports and intelligence relating to missing children, assessing potential links and proactive opportunities to identify incidents of CSE and CSE perpetrators and there are a number of active CSE investigations currently ongoing in Surrey.

A review is currently underway to assess Force compliance with the ACPO CSE Action Plan. The Force is also responding to the College of Police's consultation on its draft Guidance on CSE published on June 10th and assessing current practice against this draft.

A considerable amount of work has been done over the past few months to raise awareness of CSE across the Force and partner agencies including holding four half-day training sessions. The sessions were attended by over 400 officers, staff and members of partner agencies and included input from parents of victims of CSE from Derby who gave their story (supported by the counselling service) and a youth theatre group performing a production of 'Chelsea's Choice', a play aimed at awareness raising about CSE. Both were very impactful.

Trafficked Women

ACPO launched Operation Eagle, the tactical plan to deal with human trafficking in April 2013. Force guidance reflects Operation Eagle and PPIU is working with Corporate Communications to raise awareness of this. The Intelligence Operations Hub coordinates intelligence on human trafficking; staff in the Force Control Room and Call Handling Centre have been briefed on human trafficking in training days and the necessary flags have been created on Force crime recording systems such as ICAD and CIS.

The Force chairs a multi-agency Sexual Exploitation Working Group with specific focus on the sex industry and prostitution and associated criminality such as human trafficking. This is attended by partner agencies such as health and the United Kingdom Border Agency. The Working Group has introduced a common policy and approach to policing sex workers and identifying those who have been trafficked into prostitution and work is on-going to build relations with sex workers and gather intelligence on organised criminality.

New adult missing persons agreement

A new Missing Persons agreement between the Force and Surrey Care Providers and agencies came into effect on 17th June. The agreement relates to the management of missing adults who are receiving care services and expands upon and replaces the existing local response agreement relating to informal and detained missing patients using Surrey and Borders Partnership (SABP) services. The new agreement increases the onus of responsibility on the care providers and agencies and aims to provide a coordinated response which effectively uses the resources of all agencies when an adult is missing. It provides all parties with clear guidelines as to their agreed actions to be taken when an adult receiving care goes missing.

Care providers will be required to risk assess the individual and complete a hand-over pack. Where a patient is assessed as low risk they will not report the person as missing until 24 hours has passed, all reasonable enquiries have been made or the risk level changes. Medium and high risk patients will continue to be reported to the Police in the normal way. The return of the patient to the hospital or care home is the responsibility of the care provider – there will be a

discussion between the Police and care provider or agency to decide on the most appropriate method of return.

The agreement applies to informal and detained adults using care services who do not return from approved leave, or who go missing from or leave a ward, unit, residential care home, day centre or even from their own home. This approach complements the new missing and absent procedure which is due to be implemented later in the year.

Support for those with mental health issues

Work to support those with mental health issues or any other disability is guided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) report on disability harassment published in October 2012 called 'Out in the Open'. The report sets out recommendations which the Force is implementing via the Out in the Open Steering Group which is chaired by the head of Public Protection and attended by departments across the Force as well as Independent Advisory Group members and the chair of the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People.

Work flowing from this steering group includes the Opening Doors Strategy to improve the ability of disabled people to communicate with the Force in a way that suits them. This covers everything from engagement with disabled communities to assess access to services, to the reporting of hate crime and accessibility of the Surrey Police website and forms part of the wider Force engagement project. Another example is to extend the work with Surrey Appropriate Adult Volunteer Scheme to provide support victims of crime and witnesses that have disabilities including those with mental health issues.

Surrey Police also attended the AGM of the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People in November along with the Deputy PCC and participated in a table top exercise on understanding policing issues and how service could be improved. Topics discussed include access, communication, hate crime, victim support, customer care, engagement in appropriate places. The outputs from this were collated and have been fed back into the Opening Doors Strategy.

Surrey Police are also working with partners to trial fresh approaches to supporting those with mental health issues. A recent example of this is the change in tactic with a vulnerable woman who has repeatedly tried to take her own life by jumping off a bridge over the A30. Following multi-agency agreement, in June she was given an ASBO banning her from the crossing and from physically assaulting Surrey Police officers while she is under the influence of alcohol. If it transpires that the order only succeeds in moving her to carry out similar attempts at other bridges, then the Order can be altered. Whilst this may seem harsh on the face of it initial indications are that the Order is working and the woman has not made any attempt to jump off a bridge since.

Surrey Police is concerned that on many occasions police officers are responding to and dealing with those suffering from mental health issues, when such incidents could be better managed by mental health professionals from our partner agencies. Following a number of incidents Surrey Police has formally engaged the Health Service and other partners to improve and implement a 24hr response to those suffering from mental health issues.

Witness Care

As reported in the May Management Meeting, Surrey Police Witness Care Unit (WCU) supports vulnerable victims and witnesses in the Criminal Justice System, providing them with a designated point of contact, responding to enquiries regarding the progress of a case, and

keeping them updated through their preferred means of contact as specified by the minimum requirements of No Witness, No Justice and the victims code. The WCU works together with our partner agencies to ensure action is taken to overcome inhibitors to effective case progression and to promote effective and efficient integrated joint working.