

To: Joint Audit Committee
Date: 12th June 2014
By: Johanna Burne, Chief Executive
Title: Update on Commissioning Victims' Services

Purpose of Report/Issue: To update the Committee on the Commissioners' work on commissioning support services for victims.

Recommendation(s) - To note the report.

Equalities / Human Rights Implications – Equality and Human Rights Implications have been acknowledged and considered throughout the commissioning process. They are embedded in the specification for the replacement contract for Victim Support and will be considered throughout the commissioning of specialist services.

Risk- The OPCC has a risk register for the commissioning of the Victim Support replacement contract. This contract will meet a number of the Commissioner's legal requirements and therefore presents the most pressing risk for the office. All risks are being managed.

Background papers - N/A

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Background

The Ministry of Justice, in consultation with PCCs, is reforming the way that victims' support services are developed. If you are a victim of a designated crime at present, your contact details will be passed to Victim Support. Victim Support will contact you, assess your needs and provide some support services if required. If you are a victim of certain other crimes, notably domestic abuse or sexual violence, you may receive a specialist service from smaller, local agencies. These services are all currently commissioned by the Ministry of Justice, alongside local funding streams.

Police and Crime Commissioners will receive funding and responsibility for commissioning specialist services from October 2014. They will receive funding and responsibility for commissioning services provided by Victim Support from April 2015. Victim Support will no longer provide nationwide support and will need to bid for local contracts.

The Ministry of Justice will retain responsibility for commissioning and managing some key services. These notably include the Homicide and Witness Support Services, which they will be putting out to tender over the coming months.

The Surrey OPCC will receive approximately £1.2m to commission victims' services in its first full year 2015/16. It will receive £395,200 in 2014/15 to commission specialist services and restorative justice provision.

Commissioning approach and programme

The Police and Crime Plan for Surrey includes the People's Priority to "put victims at the centre of the Criminal Justice System". Kevin Hurley is committed to promoting the rights of victims and has taken a national lead on this area, chairing the PCCs' National Working Group for Victims. Victims' commissioning in Surrey will:

- Centre on the needs of the victims. Services will be accessible and will be tailored towards the needs of the individual. Surrey's communities will have confidence in the support services.
- Respond to the specific needs of Surrey's residents.
- Develop services which work hand-in-hand with Surrey Police, partners and the Criminal Justice System in order to improve victims' experiences.
- Respect and build on good practice already in place.
- Provide strong management of victims' services, ensuring that all funding is allocated fairly and transparently against need, that services are outcome focussed, provide good value for money and continuously improve.
- Invest in future victims' services by medium to long-term planning and building evidence of good practice.

Surrey will collaborate with Thames Valley and Sussex when commissioning the services currently provided by Victim Support. This will ensure that residents receive value for money through driving economies of scale. Surrey will collaborate with Sussex on some specialist services where it is sensible to do so

e.g. services for young people or in response to hate crime. Surrey will commission some very local services, such as domestic abuse or sexual violence services, locally. This mixed strategy helps to ensure that residents receive the best value for money whilst also respecting and building on the way that services have developed locally.

The OPCC is working in partnership with other public sector agencies where relevant. For example, the OPCC is a member of the Surrey Domestic Abuse Commissioning Group.

Preparation in Surrey

The OPCC is conducting research and preparation work to ensure that the correct services are commissioned for Surrey. This has included:

- Jointly commissioning a needs assessment with our regional colleagues (Hampshire, Kent, Sussex and Thames Valley). The University of Portsmouth are conducting the needs assessment which will map current needs and services and highlight gaps, overstretch or duplication of services. The needs assessment will include a literature review of key evidence and data analysis to predict victim need. Furthermore, it will include research with harder-to-reach groups to ensure that services meet the needs of all victims.
- Running mapping workshops with partner agencies to illustrate the victims' journey for different crime types and identify areas where victims' services could be improved or complement existing services.
- Conducting a large-scale piece of research with survivors of domestic abuse, including focus groups and interviews. The research explored their experiences of the Criminal Justice System and support services.
- Conducting focus groups with young survivors of domestic abuse.
- Commissioning focus groups with victims throughout Hampshire, Kent, Surrey and Sussex to explore their experiences of crime and their experience and views of victims' services.
- Conducting a large-scale survey of victims asking them to identify support services which may be of use to them.
- Reviewing relevant legislation and statutory guidance such as the Victims' Code.
- Working with current providers to understand their services and the needs of victims in Surrey.
- Research into outcome measures that articulate the needs of victims and provide a performance framework for future contracts is underway.
- A large-scale piece of research examining the experiences of survivors of sexual violence in Surrey is underway.
- Qualitative research exploring the views and experiences of ethnic minority residents is underway.
- An internal audit into commissioning the replacement for the Victim Support contract has taken place.

Key milestones ahead

The OPCCs for Surrey, Sussex and Thames Valley are developing a specification for the services that will replace Victim Support. The specification will go to full, open tender and that the process will begin in June 2014. The tender process should be completed by the end of 2014, allowing three months for any necessary handover of contract or preparation for service delivery.

The OPCC will review all research into specialist services in May and June. The research will be used to develop a Commissioning Strategy and a commissioning process will be put into place in preparation to distribute funds from October 2014.