

**SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL****REPORT ON COMMISSIONING VICTIMS' SERVICES IN SURREY****29<sup>th</sup> April 2014****SUMMARY**

All Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) will take responsibility for commissioning support services for victims, some services from October 2014 and some from April 2015. The services will help victims to cope and recover from their experience of crime. PCCs' remits will include commissioning specialist services, such as domestic abuse services, from October 2014. PCCs will also take over management of the services currently provided by Victim Support in April 2015. Some services, such as the Homicide Service and Witness Service will continue to be commissioned by the Ministry of Justice. This paper outlines the changes to victims' services, the commissioning approach and programme, the preparation that is taking place in Surrey and key milestones ahead.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members of the Police and Crime Panel note the report.

**EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

The OPCC understands that different communities may have different needs from victims' services or may access the services in different ways. The research that is informing the development of the support services is engaging with harder-to-reach groups in order to understand the needs of all members of Surrey's communities and meet these in future services.

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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. Funding has been received by the Ministry of Justice in 2014/15 to build capacity and to developing commissioning.

## 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 with young victims of crime is underway.
- Qualitative research exploring the views and experiences of ethnic minority residents is underway.

**Key milestones ahead**

The OPCCs for Surrey, Sussex and Thames Valley are developing a specification for the services that will replace Victim Support. It is likely that this specification will go to full, open tender and that the process will begin in early 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.

7