

## Runnymede Local Committee 26 November 2012

### Additional information – Young Witness Service

#### YOUNG WITNESS SERVICE IN SURREY

Surrey Police crime statistics show that violent crime, vehicle crime, burglary and robbery are comparatively low in Surrey. However they do show that the two major crime groups are anti-social behaviour and other crime which make up around three quarters of reported offences in the county.

#### **Crime Behind Closed Doors**

Anti-Social Behaviour  
Domestic Abuse  
Sexual Abuse

Home should be a place of safety and especially so for children. Unfortunately this is not always the case and home can be the very centre of crime. Domestic and Sexual Abuse can go unnoticed and unreported for years. It can take place in any home in any neighbourhood. The offenders are usually family members and children most often do not have a person of trust in whom they can confide. They may witness constant physical and verbal abuse by one parent against another or they may be the victim of sexual abuse by a family member or close family friend.

Fear and coercion can prevent a child from disclosing for a considerable amount of time. When a disclosure has been made a child is likely to feel that this is the end and that the perpetrator will be punished. A child is very unlikely to have an understanding that this will lead to a lengthy police interview followed by a trial which can take up to two years before coming to court.

***A young boy was abused by his father from the age of two to four years. When he was six he was expected to tell the court what had happened to him.***

A Young Witness Service volunteer was assigned to the family and it was identified that it would be appropriate for him to have an intermediary at court to help him understand the questions and make sure the court understood his answers. The volunteer gave the little boy pre-trial preparation and working closely with the intermediary gave emotional support at court.

***A girl of nine witnessed her father and his new girlfriend being verbally abusive to her elder sister in the street outside their home. The incident was reported to the police and the father rejected any further contact with her and her four sisters and continued to be verbally abusive to them all. Subsequently the child was put on the 'at risk' register by children's services.***

***A girl of fourteen could no longer leave the house to go to school. She had had an altercation with her best friend and had subsequently received threats from family members whenever she walked down the road.***

Anti-social behaviour is committed in a community setting. It can set some members of the community against others making the home environment a tense and unsafe place to be. It turns friendly neighbours into neighbours from hell. Young Witness Service volunteers can empower children with the confidence to give evidence.

These are three examples of real cases in which volunteers from the Young Witness Service have been involved. The service was set up in June 2010 to address the very special needs of children and young people under eighteen years in Surrey who have to give evidence at court either as a victim or a witness for either the prosecution of the defence. Each volunteer has been especially interviewed for suitability to take on the role and has received Victim Support core training plus an enhanced young witness training including safeguarding.

Each volunteer is equipped with a wide range of visual aids to suit the age and learning ability of the child. The first contact is usually made in a safe environment away from the court. In cases of serious crime this can often be in a foster home or care home or at the school of the child. A tailor-made court preparation package is designed for the child to give both practical and emotional support. We introduce the concept of cross examination by means of role play, not by discussing the evidence which is not allowed but by using an account of a day trip, holiday or favourite film etc. There may be two or three of these visits until the child feels comfortable to visit the court. The volunteer will make this a positive experience arranging for the child to meet court staff. All children and young people are eligible to a range of special measures to help them achieve best evidence. These include giving evidence from a live television link in a small room near the courtroom. If the child does not want to be seen by the defendant then the child is shown what it is like to stand in the witness box behind a screen. Both these measures are demonstrated to the child. Seeing the defendant at court is a huge concern. The volunteer will show the family that on the day of trial they can access the court building through a side door and wait in a private, secure room with refreshments. The volunteer can then either sit in the TV Link room or the courtroom with the child whilst giving evidence.

Coming to terms with a verdict can be difficult for a child. **Not Guilty** can leave a child feeling not believed and fearful of getting into trouble for lying. **Guilty** can mean a close family member gets sent to prison. That person may well be the breadwinner resulting in a complete change of dynamics within the family setting.

During a post-trial visit a special jigsaw puzzle can be used which helps to explain the criteria of how a Jury or a Bench reach a verdict. We explain to witnesses that their evidence is just a small part of a jigsaw puzzle and the pieces must be put together to make a clear picture to reach a guilty verdict. If the picture is a bit fuzzy then a not guilty verdict must be delivered.

Over three hundred children have received our support in Surrey since we started as the service is offered to each and everyone. Victim Support, from its funding from the Ministry of Justice, provides a Witness Service in every criminal court in England and Wales. Trained volunteers are on duty each day to lend support to witnesses on day of trial. Young Witness Service recognises that children and young people need our enhanced support service but Victim Support is unable to fund this. We received the sum of £10.698 from the Ministry of Justice to start up the service and since then we owe our existence to funding from both the public and private sector and cannot rest on our laurels in order to ensure the service can be maintained for as long as possible.

We cannot expect children to be sick with worry for months about coming to court and then to just simply turn up on the day of trial and be expected to give their best evidence. Our volunteers are giving control back to the children which in many cases has been stripped away from them and they do all they can to make giving evidence a positive experience and one they can pass onto their peers.

#### **Breakdown of children supported in each borough.**

<b>BOROUGH</b>	4 – 9 yrs	10 – 13 yrs	14 – 17 yrs
Elmbridge	1	3	23
Epsom and Ewell	0	0	12
Guildford	5	11	56
Mole Valley	4	4	11

Reigate and Banstead	1	15	56
Runnymede	0	7	22
Spelthorne	2	7	31
Surrey Heath	1	8	14
Tandridge	1	2	10
Waverley	2	9	22
Woking	3	5	32
<b>Total for Surrey</b>	16	71	289

June 2010 saw the start-up of the Young Witness Service from a one-off grant from the Ministry of Justice of **£10.698** specifically for this purpose.

## FUNDING TABLE

**£80.015** has subsequently been awarded from other sources.

Gatwick Airport Fund	1500
Guildford Borough Council	2350
GlaxoSmithKline	5000
Woking Youth Award	275
Fashion Show	798
Surrey Youth Crime Prevention Panel	10000
St Faiths	10000
St Faiths – a further two years funding awarded of 10.000 per annum but not yet received.	20000
High Sheriff Youth Award	1000
Guildford Borough Council	4667
Waverley Borough Council	2538
Runnymede Local Committee	2500
Elmbridge Local Committee	1500
Epsom and Ewell Local Committee	2000
Collection tin	180
Volunteer	164
Woking Borough Councillor	128
Guildford Safer Partnership	2000
Surrey Heath Safer Partnership	2000
Waverley Borough Council	970
Yorkshire Building Society	100
Woodward Charitable Trust	1500
Allianz	1000
RASASC	225
Reigate and Banstead Borough Council	5000
A further 2 years funding being considered	10000
Elmbridge Borough Council	300
Woking Borough Council	1500
Runnymede Borough Council	1000
<b>Total</b>	<b>90.893</b>



# Young Witness Service in Surrey

Business Plan

August 2012

## Summary

**Victim Support Witness Service in Surrey** started in 1995 providing support to all victims and witnesses attending the Crown Court. 1997 saw the start of providing support to victims and witnesses attending Courts-Martial in Germany, Then in 2001 it extended its provision of services to all Magistrates' courts in Surrey and in 2004, the service was awarded the **Queen's Award for Voluntary Service**.

### How does the project complement Victim Support's priorities to be the?

- **National leader** in sourcing best quality services to victims and witnesses?
- **Young Witness Service** is the only service which provides practical and emotional support to children and young people who are victims and witnesses of crime who have to give evidence at court.
- **National voice** for victims and witnesses – a force for change?
- **Young Witness Service volunteers** put the needs of the children first, advocating for special measures and intermediaries to help children give best evidence.

### How does the project complement regional and national strategy?

**Support** for the most vulnerable in society ie Children and Young People.

**Support** for victims of serious abuse.

**Support** for witnesses to domestic violence and homicide.

**Support** for victims and witnesses of harassment and assault in local communities.

**Support** in the home environment and at court.

### How will the project incorporate Victim Support's values of?

- **Strong** – We give strong help to victims and witnesses, helping them find their inner strength to give best evidence.
- **Welcoming** – We are friendly and easy to approach and provide dedicated volunteers to each family.
- **Straightforward** – We mean what we say and are completely trustworthy. We tell the truth about what to expect at court so children are best prepared.
- **Respectful** – We understand that everyone is different and deserves to be valued for who they are. We are a confidential service.
- **Diverse** – We know that diversity makes us stronger. We offer a tailor-made service to suit the needs of the individual.
- **Ambitious** – We stay ahead of the game.

**Victims' Services** provides trained volunteers to support victims of crime in the community in an emotional form but also provides practical help such as organising and financing the repair of locks and windows to make victims feel more secure after a crime has been committed.

**The Witness Service** provides trained volunteers who support victims and witnesses of crime who attend court. A visit to the court prior to trial is strongly recommended.

However Victim Support has long been aware that children and young people need a combination of both the above services but this could not be financed by the 80% funding from the Ministry of Justice as this is just for the provision of Core Services.

**The Young Witness Service** started in June 2010 from a one-off grant from the Ministry of Justice of **£10.698** specifically for this purpose.

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Woodward Charitable Trust	1500
Allianz	1000
RASASC	225
Reigate and Banstead Borough Council	5000
Waverley Local Committee	275
Elmbridge Borough Council	300
Woking Borough Council	1500
Runnymede Borough Council	1000
Total	90.713

**A Friends of Young Witness Service** has been launched to encourage corporate bodies to donate £1000 or private individuals to donate £100.

Corporate Friends will receive a wooden plaque made by young offenders in Surrey inset with a brass inscription designed and made by prisoners at Coldingley. Private Friends will receive a certificate.

**Corporate Friend** - Allianz

**Private Friend** - Four

## **Financial Requirements**

- Salary for the Young Witness Service Manager
- Administration
- Volunteer training, support and supervision
- Volunteer and Staff expenses

### **Salary**

This is set at an annual rate of £25,000. The manager is currently employed for 37.5 hours per week. The Manager is the only salaried staff member of the Young Witness Service in Surrey.

### **Office Running Costs Per Annum**

The only Young Witness Service office is based at Guildford Crown Court and is provided free of charge, including electricity, by Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service.

Phone line rental and calls  
Stationary and Stamps  
Printing  
Printing Leaflets

### **Training Course**

Manager and 6 Volunteers over four days: Three days specialised Young Witness training and a half day Safeguarding training to volunteers. They would have already received six days Witness Service Core Training provided by Victim Support.

### **Support and Supervision**

Six Team Meetings per year for an average of 15 volunteers.  
Three one to one sessions.  
One annual review.

### **Manager's meetings with other agencies**

Assumes one visit per month.

### **Salary**

One full-time Service Delivery Manager at £25,000 per annum.

### **Office**

Provided free of charge by courtesy of Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service.

### **Victim Support Management Fee 15%**

Young Witness Service is a project within Victim Support and funds raised are allocated to a project code. Salary, office running costs, senior management costs and volunteer expenses are administered by Victim Support and a 15% transaction charge is taken from the expenditure of the project.

### **Breakdown Cost of a Young Witness Service Volunteer Supporting a Young Witness.**

Assumes 35 miles return for home visit and 45 miles return for court visit.

<b>Phone call to parent</b> 10 mins	Landline day 7.6p Landline evening 1.5p Mobile day 25p Mobile evening 20p	Approx 2.00
<b>Home Visit No 1</b>	30 miles return at 0.41p per mile	12.30
<b>2 Phone calls to Victim Care Unit</b>	Mobile	0.50
<b>Home Visit No 2</b>	30 miles return at 0.41p per mile	12.30
<b>2 Phone calls to Victim Care Unit</b>	Mobile	0.50
<b>Pre Trial Visit to Court</b>	45 miles return	18.45
<b>Trial Day 1</b>	45 miles return	18.45
<b>Lunch</b>	Allowance 4.50 per day	4.50
<b>Trial Day 2</b>	45 miles return	18.45
<b>Lunch</b>	Allowance 4.50 per day	4.50
<b>Phone Call to parent</b>		2.00
<b>Post Trial Home Visit</b>	30 miles return	12.30
<b>2 phone calls to Victim Care Unit</b>		0.50
<b>Total</b>		106.75

## **Funding Strategy**

To secure funding from Borough and County Councils and Private and Corporate Funders.  
Fundraising events.



**Predicted Budget****2012 -2016**

If crime figures stay static we are looking at supporting up to 200 children per annum. The budget assumes that all the children will receive the optimum level of support.

Costs assume a 4.0% increase per annum and are based on all children receiving the full service.

	2012 - 2013	2013 – 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016
<b>Salary</b>	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
<b>Office Running Costs</b>				
Phone line and rental	2.600	2.704	2.812	2.924
Stationary and Stamps	625	650	676	703
Information leaflets		250		270
<b>Volunteer Training</b>	800	2.000	864	2.160
<b>Volunteer Supervision</b>	625	650	676	703
<b>Volunteer Expenses</b>	21.200	22.048	22.929	23.846
<b>Staff expenses</b>	800	832	865	899
<b>Promotional events</b>	100	104	108	112
<b>Total</b>	51.75	54.238	53.930	56.617
<b>Management Fee 15% to Victim Support on administration and expenditure transactions</b>	7.762	8.135	8.089	8.492

**Shortfall**

Two home visits, a visit to the court prior to trial, support on day of trial and a post-trial home visit are offered to all children in the county who are called to give evidence at court.

The Business Plan is based on the premise that all families will accept the full level of support. However not all families request the complete service, being content with just a pre-trial visit and support on day of trial. Alternatively some families refuse all pre-trial support but a Young Witness Service volunteer will always be at court to support the child on day of trial. Young Witness Service volunteers are the only adults trained to support the child giving evidence from the remote TV Link room.

Consequently we have not to date seen a shortfall in our funds.

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