

SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

REPORT ON COMMISSIONING VICTIMS' SERVICES IN SURREY

09 September 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.

This paper updates the Police and Crime Panel on the current work of the OPCC and responds to specific queries that members have raised.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Police and Crime Panel note the report.

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

Victims' services raise a range of equality and diversity implications. The OPCC is ensuring that commissioned services respond to diversity and equality requirements and comply with the Equality Act.

LEAD OFFICER: Katie Kempen, Senior Policy Officer, OPCC

**TELEPHONE
NUMBER:** 01483 630 200

E-MAIL: Katie.kempen@surrey.pnn.police.uk

Background

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. The Police and Crime Panel received a paper in April 2014 which outlined the OPCC's approach to commissioning. This paper follows on and responds to specific questions raised by the Panel.

Current progress

Victim referral, assessment and non-specialist support services

Victim Support currently provides a national service which delivers victim referral, assessment and non-specialist support services. 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.

The OPCC for Surrey will take responsibility for commissioning the services provided by Victim Support from 1 April 2015. The OPCC is collaborating with the OPCCs for Sussex and Thames Valley. It has developed a specification for services which was published and has involved an open, tender procedure under OJEU rules. The deadline for submissions has passed and the OPCCs involved are evaluating bids. The OPCCs expect to award a contract for this service at the end of October.

Specialist services

The OPCC for Surrey will take responsibility for commissioning specialist services in Surrey from October 2014 onwards. For some victims, more specialist support is needed to help them cope and recover. A local needs assessment, significant interaction by the OPCC with service providers, victims and partners as well as existing research has identified a number of early priorities which will be funded through grants. These include:

- Support for victims of domestic abuse – including specialist Outreach support and Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors.
- Support for victims of sexual assault and rape – including specialist Outreach support, including Independent Sexual Abuse Advisors.
- Support for young victims / witnesses at court.

Local charitable organisations and public sector partners have been invited to apply for grant funding to deliver specialist services. The OPCC has engaged with key service providers and partners in order to ensure that bids respond to

the needs identified. The grant application window has closed and grants will be assessed in September.

Budget

The Panel requested the budget for 2014/15 and how this will be proportioned across boroughs and districts.

The OPCC will receive £395,200 for the final two quarters of 2014/15. The Ministry of Justice has indicated that it would like the OPCC to spend at least £126,343 of this on restorative justice and at least £26,279 on domestic abuse services, although this is not formally ring-fenced.

The OPCC will not agree the allocation of grants until after the Police and Crime Panel meeting so it is not possible to give a breakdown of how the budget will be spent in this report. The grant application form asks applicants to specify which boroughs and districts will be covered and this will be used to assess bids.

Where the OPCC has engaged with providers on services to plug gaps in provision, it largely expects that these services will be available to the entire county. The services will be provided according to the number of victims that require support. For example, the OPCC anticipates that a bid to cover Independent Sexual Violence Advisors, who support victims of rape and sexual assault, will cover the entire county. The proportion of service which is provided to each borough and district will be dependent of the level of victimisation in each area. This mirrors current arrangements and has been discussed when engaging with local stakeholders.

The OPCC can provide a full breakdown of spending across boroughs and districts once bids have been assessed.

Additional funds provided by the Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice allocated a £12m pot of money for PCCs to compete for additional funds in their area. Surrey received a disproportionately high amount of funding, approximately £450,000, ensuring that victims in the area receive enhanced services in 2014/15.

The Panel has asked whether this is a one-off fund and, if so, what will happen to the provision of services after this point.

The competed fund is a one-off pot of money. It has provided a much needed boost to funds. All bids for funding were assessed by the Ministry of Justice and evaluated whether services were sustainable.

The OPCC was successful in a range of bids and therefore will see a range of responses to this challenge:

Some bids were for one-off projects that would not necessarily lead to on-going funding requirements. For example, the Rape and Sexual Assault Centre put forward a successful bid to reduce counselling waiting times from six to eight months to six to eight weeks. Another bid sought to provide Refuge clients with

essentials such as towels and bedding which can provide a one-off enhancement to services if the project does not continue to attract funding. Surrey County Council put forward another bid, a development programme for young victims of domestic abuse, which enabled a pilot of the service to take place.

Other bids sought for pump priming money which would get a project up and running. For example, a project by a refuge which seeks to set a bank of volunteers to assist clients and their dependent children when living in refuge and while settling in the community after their leave refuge. Whilst the project required a paid post for 2014/15, it is anticipated that the paid post will be replaced by a volunteer at the end of the funded period.

Other bids sought to increase the current service provided. For example, domestic abuse outreach services sought to increase their service provision in response to increased need as have the Rape and Sexual Assault Referral Centre. These providers are engaging with the OPCC regarding their on-going funding requirements. It should be noted that the OPCC will receive £395,200 for the final two quarters of 2014/15. In contrast, Surrey received just £86,280 in 2013/14 for all specialist support services from the Ministry of Justice, split across domestic abuse outreach providers and the Rape and Sexual Assault Referral Centre. Furthermore, the Rape and Sexual Assault Referral Centre has received approximately £60,000 additional funding from the Ministry of Justice. It is therefore likely that the new funding arrangements will allow for increased capacity to continue.

Borough and district input

The Panel asked what input the boroughs and districts have in how the money is allocated and spent.

The OPCC has engaged with partners throughout the development of specialist services and boroughs and districts have fed into these discussions. Boroughs and districts were interviewed as part of the needs assessment for the region and they have been asked to approach local providers of support services to place bids for funding.

The OPCC also sits on the Domestic Abuse Commissioning Group which seeks to bring a range of partners together to commission domestic abuse services across the county. This group includes representation from districts and borough and is a forum for discussion and deliberation.

Effect on established organisations

The Panel asked what the impact on commissioning will be on organisations like East Surrey Domestic Abuse Services (ESDAS). The OPCC has sought to build on good practice already in place. As such, the OPCC has worked with current providers to understand their needs and how to respond to them. The fruit of this engagement is already evident by Surrey's success in the Ministry of Justice competed funds where providers, such as ESDAS, attracted additional funding.

The Ministry of Justice previously funded ESDAs (on behalf of the four domestic abuse outreach providers in Surrey) and the Rape and Sexual Assault Support

Centre. The OPCC has engaged with both providers and is developing on-going plans for service provision for them. It is expected that the providers will put forward bids for specialist funding which cover local commissioning priorities. As previously noted, the OPCC will have additional money in contrast to previous commissioning arrangements and these providers may gain additional funds from the process.

The OPCC is a member of the Domestic Abuse Commissioning Group which brings together partners, such as local authorities, who commission domestic abuse support services. The OPCC recognises that it must work in partnership to get the best services and value for money for residents. The OPCC intends to work with this group in order to ensure that residents in the county continue to receive high quality outreach services.

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