

SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE ASSISTANT POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER (VICTIMS) 7 DECEMBER 2017

INTRODUCTION

Jane Anderson was appointed by the previous Police & Crime Commissioner to the role of Assistant Police & Crime Commissioner (Victims) in April 2013. Mrs Anderson's appointment to the PCC's staff followed a recruitment process initiated through the Local Criminal Justice Partnership Board. PCC David Munro renewed Mrs Anderson's short term contract in April 2017 for a further financial year. The role sees the Assistant PCC advise the PCC and partners on how services for victims could be improved and support the PCC in the allocation of grant funding for victims services. The report below sets out the objectives set for Mrs Anderson and the work she has undertaken to deliver them.

DETAIL

Outcome 1: The voice of the victim is championed and listened to at the highest level, within police and partner agencies

Working closely with voluntary service partners such as RASASC (Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre), Domestic Abuse Outreach and the Witness Service, and with specialist units in Surrey Police, I meet some of the most vulnerable victims of crime. It is only possible for me to do this because the agencies trust the OPCC to listen sensitively and to use what is said carefully. I turn these experiences, along with a commentary of what needs to change into succinct and frank reports that are used throughout the force and by partners. For example, since my report in December 2016:

- I have written a second (and critical) report on how young people experience the Criminal Justice System, based on interviews with them and/or their parents. This has been widely circulated amongst partner agencies and the police, and has been of particular interest to HM Courts Service
- I have reported on the experiences of victims of domestic slavery and honour based violence, based on interviews with members of the BME community
- I have been invited to three further group sessions run by RASASC for rape victims and heard the stories of 10 women which I have written up and circulated.

- I have completed a series of interviews with male victims of rape which is now the focus of a report. Its purpose is to ensure that an effective service is being delivered to both men and women and to the LGBT community.
- I have continued to talk to victims on my unannounced visits to court. I have visited Staines Magistrates Courts five times during the summer and autumn to see at first hand the effect of court closures on witnesses.

Outcome 2: Services across the Criminal Justice System (CJS) are informed about what needs to be improved on both practical and strategic level for both offender and victim

I attend the quarterly Victim and Witness Group, which gathers together police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) and others to look at experiences and where improvement is needed. I also attend the Out of Court Disposal meeting in order to ensure that the victim perspective is represented; and the Sexual Assault Management Board and Public Protection Executive Board to raise points of general concern and spread understanding of good practice. In addition:

- I have written to the presiding judge at Guildford about young and vulnerable witnesses and received a very constructive reply setting out plans for ensuring these victims are prioritised when cases are listed
- I have helped Surrey Police to understand better the importance of keeping victims informed and drawn their attention to cases where this has been a problem
- I have spoken at three conferences in London and Manchester, organised by Westminster Briefing and the Public Policy Exchange to look at whether victims of crime are effectively supported: I also subsequently spoke to OPCC officials from South Wales and Gloucestershire who attended the events and wanted to hear more about what we in Surrey are doing to ensure victims' voices are heard
- Prior to her recent visit to Surrey, I have twice shared a platform with the National Commissioner for Victims, Baroness Newlove. I also met separately with her Chief Executive to discuss the national agenda for victims and share ideas for improvement.

Outcome 3: The PCC is supported to influence, shape and drive positive change

I draw on my past experience, learning and current knowledge to inform new developments e.g.

- I have facilitated an all-day Surrey seminar to develop understanding of Coercive Control, introduced by the PCC and attended by over 400 from the police, other public and voluntary sectors

- Both in attendance at the Transforming Women's Justice programme board and outside it, I contribute to policy, scrutinise progress and value for money and ensure a victim focus in this project. I will apply the same scrutiny to new proposals on out of court disposals as these are developed by Surrey Police
- I have been asked by Surrey Police and Surrey CC to undertake a piece of work with missing children, to ensure their voices are heard, as this is an important objective in the CSE strategy
- I selectively read and assess Government policy papers or reports to see what is of relevance for our work

Outcome 4: Quality, value for money services are accessible for all victims to provide the support needed to prevent harm, intervene early and respond effectively

My principal concerns are that the PCC's Victims Fund is as well targeted as we can make it, that we are prioritising correctly, and that we see value for money. Most recently

- Having introduced an event for stakeholders interested in bidding for a service to support victims of anti-social behaviour, I helped to develop the specification for this service and sat on the panel which assessed bids
- I take soundings from those I meet at court to find out how and whether the Victim Support services we fund are being accessed
- I have regular discussions with OPCC officers on the relative benefit of the services we fund and, in particular their cost effectiveness. I am particularly interested in how low cost services with an element of self-support can complement more costly one to one professional support.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Panel notes this report.

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