

SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERNAL VICTIM CARE UNIT****28 June 2018****1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Chief Constable have agreed to create an internal Victim Care Unit (VCU) that will provide wraparound, quality care and support for victims of crime in Surrey. This new model will see the cessation of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (OPCC) existing contract which has been in place since 2014.
- 1.2 Due to launch in April 2019, the new VCU will help victims of crime to cope and recover from their experience. It will coordinate the initial response and any subsequent referrals for specialist support, according to a care plan that is tailored to the needs of the individual. Referrals to the Unit will mostly be received via police crime reports, although the Unit will also allow individuals to self-refer in instances where they do not wish to formally report their crime to the police. The Unit is to be resourced with fully trained staff and co-located with the existing Surrey Police Witness Care Unit which will enable more integrated working with Criminal Justice Partners. A network of volunteers will provide face-to-face community services to victims.
- 1.3 This change is part of a wider ambition to ensure that services commissioned by the OPCC are better placed to support the complex needs of victims, that they reflect the changing face of policing and are able to adapt to future demand and needs. This new model is the shared vision of both the OPCC and Surrey Police, with agreement in principle reached at a Chief Officer Group meeting on 2 January 2018 and subsequently agreed for progression at the Joint Surrey / Sussex Change Board on 12 March.

2. Background

- 2.1 In October 2014, Police and Crime Commissioners in England and Wales took on responsibility for the commissioning of support services for victims and witnesses of crime. This followed the Government consultation 'Getting it Right for Victims and Witnesses' and recognised that local services must have flexibility to meet the different and changing needs of the population and are therefore best commissioned at a local level.
- 2.1 Under the current arrangements, funding is provided to PCCs on an annual basis by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). For 2018/19 Surrey's devolved grant was £1,370,103 and it is anticipated that future grants will remain broadly in line with this sum.
- 2.3 In Surrey, the OPCC allocates MoJ funding to two distinct areas of delivery:

- Generalist Assessment and Support Service:** In the lead up to taking on these new responsibilities, the PCCs for Surrey, Thames Valley and Sussex worked together in a consortium to commission a Generalist Assessment and Support Service for the three areas. Launched in 2014 this contract was subsequently extended in 2017 and is due to end on 31 March 2019. The main function of this service is to receive referrals from individuals, police forces and other organisations and make contact with the victim and assess their needs. Through a mixed team of experienced case workers and volunteers, the current provider works with individuals to help them make sense of their experiences, improve perceptions of safety and wellbeing, and ultimately recover from their experience. In instances where more complex support is required, individuals are referred onwards to local specialist services or other relevant agencies.

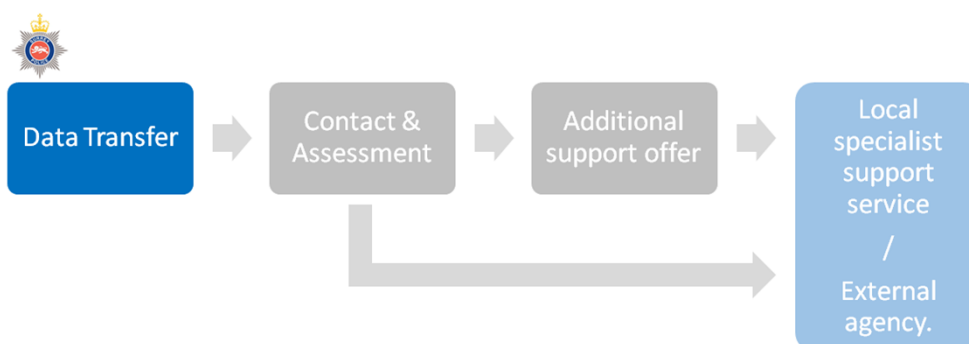


Fig 1. Basic referral pathway

- Specialist Support Services:** The PCC is also responsible for commissioning local specialist services that meet the specific needs of the people of Surrey. Key services include Domestic Abuse Outreach, Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advisors and specific services for young people. These services are delivered by a range of local providers. More information concerning these services can be found on the PCC's Funding Hub: <http://funding.surrey-pcc.gov.uk>

2.4 The Police and Crime Panel should note that it is the Generalist Assessment and Support Service that the OPCC is looking to re-commission and to which this report pertains.

3. Business Need

3.1 Whilst the OPCC has been reasonably satisfied with the performance of the current Generalist Assessment and Support Service, a number of issues have become apparent during the course of the contract that the PCC hopes to address as part of the re-commissioning process. These include:

- 3.1.1 **Service attrition rates:** At present Surrey Police operate an 'opt out' system of consent for referrals, whereby an individual has to explicitly decline further support. As detailed in the graphic below, this has contributed to a situation where only a small minority of victims referred into the service ultimately take up the offer of more intensive support.

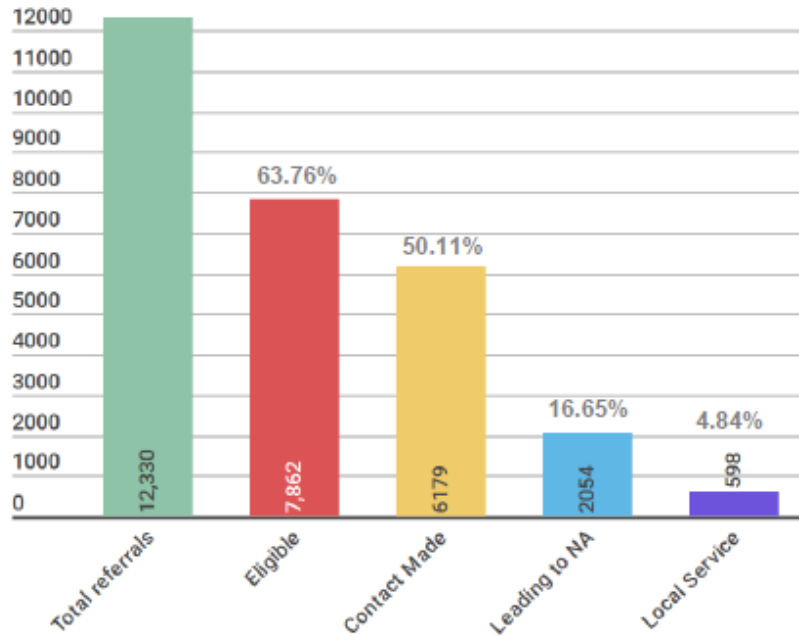


Fig 2. Quarterly referral data (Q1, Year 2)

- 3.1.2 The OPCC is increasingly of the view that service provision needs to be directed to those with the greatest need, with less emphasis on the crime type (as per the current contract) and more on the needs of the victim. The current approach is out of step with current developments within the Police, which supports professional discretion via the use of the THRIVE (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability, Engagement) model, allowing more appropriate targeting of resources to the areas of greatest need/demand.
- 3.1.2 **Contractual inflexibility:** The OPCC and Surrey Police have been working with the current provider for approaching four years and whilst the organisation has modernised and responded positively to feedback, the contractual method of delivery naturally creates a certain degree of inflexibility. A real benefit of bringing the service in-house is that it will allow Surrey Police and the OPCC to better respond to the needs of our victims.
- 3.1.3 **Rising costs:** The cost of the current contract is increasing. Surrey Police initially entered into a joint contract with Sussex and Thames Valley Police (TVP) OPCC. TVP previously made a decision to end their contract with the current provider and bring the majority of the service in-house. As such, the tri-Force contract ended on March 2018 with only Surrey and Sussex retaining services for a further 12 months. From March 2018 the costs for Surrey and Sussex to continue with the agreed contract have increased to account for the loss of TVP's contribution. Ultimately, with many forces breaking away from the shared contract model, Surrey OPCC is not confident it would be able to achieve the same economies of scale should it go back to the market and externally commission the service.

3.1.4 **Increasing number of force areas moving in-house:** There are a growing number PCCs and forces agreeing to work together to move to a fully or partial in-house model. Areas that we have knowledge of include:

- Thames Valley
- Devon and Cornwall
- Avon and Somerset
- Cambridgeshire
- Cheshire
- Merseyside
- North Yorkshire
- Dorset
- Gwent
- West Yorkshire
- Wiltshire
- Bedfordshire
- Staffordshire
- Nottingham
- Dyfed Powys
- Hertfordshire

3.1.5 **Victim Satisfaction levels:** Victim satisfaction levels are a Force risk in Surrey and a significant amount of work has been undertaken to improve force compliance with the Victims Code of Practice and raise performance. Developing an internal Victim Care Unit is central to this improvement drive.

3.1.6 **Awareness:** Being an external provider, the current service is both culturally and geographically remote from Surrey Police, and officers and staff are not sufficiently aware of the range of services available to support victims of crime. Bringing the service in-house presents a real opportunity to raise the understanding and status of the service in the minds of staff and officers, embedding it as a core area of business.

3.1.7 **Access to case information:** At present, victim information is provided to the current provider via a daily automatic data transfer, with staff subsequently contacting individuals. However, staff only have access to a limited dataset and not the wider records held by Surrey Police. As a result, the current model requires the OPCC to pay for a Case Information Officer (CIO) to act as a conduit between the provider and Surrey and Sussex Police to do the following:

- Access the Officer in Charge (OIC) through Police computer systems to make contact and ensure that explicit consent has been obtained from victims of priority crimes and update the system so that the victim may then be contacted by the provider;

- Access OICs through Police systems to make contact and obtain missing data (telephone numbers/addresses) from the OIC so that they can update the system and contact may be made with victims by the provider.
- 3.1.8 An internal VCU will eliminate the need to fund this post as both these roles will be achieved as part of day-to-day business as usual. There would also be the added ability for VCU staff to task Officers directly through Niche, which the CIO post currently does not have capacity to do.
- 3.1.9 **GDPR:** The European Parliament adopted the GDPR in April 2016, replacing the previous data protection directive from 1995. It carries provisions that require organisations to protect the personal data and privacy of EU citizens for transactions that occur within EU member states.
- 3.1.10 As controllers and processors of information, the implementation of GDPR will mean a tightening around the sharing of personal information, which poses a challenge under the current contract where data is passed back and forth between Surrey Police and the provider. By bringing the service in-house this will provide much greater assurance around compliance with GDPR.
- 3.2 As a result of the above, the PCC instructed OPCC staff to explore the possibility of developing an in-house service, to be delivered by Surrey Police as opposed to an external commercial or third sector provider.
- 3.3 This initial scoping was informed by the following pieces of work:
- 3.3.1 **Force Visits:** To understand what such a model might look like and to assess the viability for Surrey, OPCC staff undertook a number of visits to Police Forces operating an internal VCU. These included Devon & Cornwall, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire and Thames Valley Police.
- 3.3.2 **Stakeholder Workshop:** Surrey OPCC held a workshop with key force stakeholders to gain feedback on Surrey's model of victim referral and assessment, and to seek views of alternative models of delivery. Attendees provided representation from key areas of the business, including Customer Service, Occurrence Management, Public Protection, ASB and Witness Care.
- 3.3.3 Whilst no critical failings with the current model were identified, concerns about fragmentation, responsiveness and user attrition were raised. There was ultimately a unanimous preference amongst those in attendance to explore the feasibility of establishing an end-to-end internal service, delivered by Surrey Police.

3.3.4 **Formal research:** An internally delivered VCU had been considered by the OPCC during the initial commissioning process in 2013, following an independent needs assessment by Portsmouth University and subsequent recommendations made by its researcher Dr Jacki Tapley. At the time it was not felt that an internally delivered service was viable, but now with the benefit of having overseen the service currently provided, the support of Surrey Police and having witnessed the successful delivery of internal models by other forces, the OPCC feels confident to explore and take forward this option.

4. **Intended benefits:**

4.1 The anticipated benefits of an internally delivered VCU to the victim, OPCC, Surrey Police and other statutory partners are inextricably linked and are summarised as follows:

- The overarching benefit of an effective support service for victims of crime is that individuals will be better able to return to their employment, remain in their home, improve their health and rebuild relationships, all of which will have numerous benefits for the rest of society.
- By remodelling this service to an internally delivered VCU, it puts us in a better position to respond to emerging and evolving victim needs and crime types.
- An internal VCU allows a truly end-to-end service for victims of crime, from initial contact through to court process, reducing the risk of service fragmentation and minimising management costs. Surrey Police and OPCC will be clear on the service's remit for supporting victims, ensuring that any internal unit will not be absorbing any of the responsibilities of an OIC. The onus will remain with the OIC to comply with all their legal obligations as per the Victims' Code of Practice as is currently required.
- There is a real opportunity to build a team around the victim by bringing together key professionals under one roof, providing wraparound quality care and support. As a first step we would aim to co-locate the proposed VCU with the existing Surrey Police Witness Care Unit. Going forward we would look to integrate other professionals, such as mental health advisors whilst offering hot-desking opportunities for our specialist service providers. This is following best practice and advice given by those Forces who have already set up internal teams.
- An internally delivered VCU negates the need for any data transfer from force to provider, avoiding the risk of IT failure or of non-compliance with GDPR.

- A Surrey Police delivered service would have complete case information on the crime and victim, allowing staff to better tailor support and minimise the risk of danger to the victim.
- Other Forces that have implemented an internally delivered VCU have reported increased frontline understanding of the support available to victims. With the organisational barriers of an externally commissioned provider removed, the victim centred culture of the VCU was able to cascade through the wider culture of the Force.
- The provision of timely and accurate information, in parallel with support services if required, reduces anxiety, improves confidence and encourages victims to remain engaged with the criminal justice process. This will likely increase co-operation with police investigation and evidence, and reduce rates of non-attendance at court, enabling witnesses to give their best evidence in court (if required) resulting in greater efficiencies throughout the process and achieving justice by enabling the court process to proceed.
- The collaboration and transparency of the service between Surrey Police and OPCC will allow greater agility of service provision to meet priorities and changing needs, as well as opportunities to develop and build upon work already underway to embed specialists support within operational teams e.g. Domestic Abuse Advocate on North Division and WiSE workers within CSE teams.
- Potential for closer joint working with other local statutory service providers such as adult social care, children's services and SABP.
- The internal unit will also provide a proactive function to contact victims of crime where concerns may be raised and offers multiple opportunities for victims to access support which is not currently available.

5. Current Position

- 5.1 Following agreement of the PCC, Surrey Police Chief Officer Group and the Joint Change Management Board to proceed with the new model, a dedicated VCU Programme Manager was appointed to lead the project. Chief Superintendent Alison Barlow is overseeing delivery as SRO and additional project management support and administrative support has been made available from central resources.
- 5.2 With regards to project governance, a VCU Project Board has been established to support the design, development and implementation of the Unit, providing overall direction and management for the project. The Board is responsible for monitoring the status and progress of the project against the agreed project plan and budget, ensuring that work streams remain on track. The Board also ensures that wider organisational governance is adhered to and that the direction of the

project remains consistent with the values of Surrey Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey.

- 5.3 A proposed model has been put forward and is currently being considered by the force's change management board to consider wider organisational impact.
- 5.3 The new service will launch in late March 2019.

6. Budget

- 6.1 The current annual cost of the OPCC's external contract is £446,990. This is an increase from previous years due to Thames Valley OPCC having ceased calling-off the contract as of 31 March 2018.
- 6.2 The PCC is eager to ensure that the new internal VCU can be delivered more cost effectively with any savings reinvested.
- 6.3 As detailed previously, funding for the unit will be provided by the OPCC via the MoJ's devolved Victim Fund. The Unit will therefore not be subject to the same Force saving requirements, or cost-saving reviews, although the OPCC will retain full financial oversight to ensure ongoing value for money.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Police and Crime Panel notes the content of this report.

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