

SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE ASSISTANT POLICE AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER (VICTIMS)
28 NOVEMBER 2018****INTRODUCTION**

Jane Anderson was appointed by the previous Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) 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 2018 for a further financial year on the basis of one day a week rather than two, at Mrs Anderson's request. The role involves advising the PCC and partners on how services for victims could be improved and supporting 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

In order to focus my work now I have reduced my hours to one day a week, I have since 1 April 2018

- reduced my attendance at standing police boards (OPCC staff attend the Public Protection Board and the Sexual Assault Management Board while I continue to attend the Victim and Witness Group and the Out of Court Disposal Group)
- sought to hand over some established work while continuing to explore new areas (Johanna Burne has produced a report on rape victims after attending the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (RASASC) group of survivors)
- concentrated on high impact work such as ensuring the victims voice is heard in national as well as local fora

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, 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 2017:

- In February, I met 5 victims of serious sexual assault attending the RASASC group and wrote up their experiences of the criminal justice system so police and others can learn from this.
- I researched and wrote a paper outlining the technical and practical problems preventing witnesses from giving evidence by remote video link. This has been discussed by the Victim and Witness Group, read and welcomed by the presiding Judge at Guildford Crown Court, and will help to inform HMCTS and CPS actions in this area

- At the request of HM Court & Tribunal Service (HMCTS), I wrote a report on the expectations of witnesses at court, based on 7 visits to Staines Magistrates court over the first 8 months of the year. It will help HMCTS and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) understand better how to support witnesses and explain verdicts and sentences to victims of crime.
- I wrote a report for Surrey Police this summer on the impact of unauthorised traveller incursions on a small community, with quotes from the small businesses and shopkeepers affected as well as from local people. This has helped to inform the views of senior police leaders.
- Although I do not act as an Ombudsman for individual victims, I occasionally pick up a case if it seems to me poorly handled or where there is a broader point to be made from it (a recent complaint, for example, showed how police sick absence affects victims, and how the involvement of several forces makes it more difficult to deal effectively with a single offender)

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, CPS, HMCTS and others to look at experiences and where improvement is needed. I also attend the quarterly Out of Court Disposal meetings in order to ensure that the victim perspective is represented and that there is a focus on reducing reoffending. In addition:

- I have spoken at a further two conferences in London and Manchester, organised by Westminster Briefing and the Public Policy Exchange,
- I have shared a platform with Ministry of Justice officials and with the National Commissioner for Victims, Baroness Newlove at both of these conferences and taken the opportunity to discuss victims' experiences with them. Surrey is on the map as a place of good practice and innovation in victim services,
- I have taken various members of OPCC to visit the Witness Service and Magistrates courts so they understand more fully what victims experience at court.

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.

- Both in attendance at the Transforming 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 am applying 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 to undertake a piece of work with young victims of sexual assault, to ensure their voices are heard, and am currently scoping this work with RASASC.

- I selectively read and assess Government policy papers, such as the new Victims' Strategy, and reports such as Serious Case Reviews, to see what is of relevance for our work. I have contributed to work on the PCC's role in the Criminal Justice System and to the terms of reference for a Hate Crime Panel.

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.

- I take soundings from those I meet at court to find out how and whether the Victim Support services we currently fund are being accessed.
- I continue to contribute to the development of a new in house Victim Contact centre and explore ways in which it will plug existing gaps and support victims more effectively.
- I have regular discussions with OPCC officers on the relative benefit of the services we fund and, in particular their cost effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Panel notes this report.

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