



**To:** Business Coordination Board

**From:** Acting Chief Executive

**Date:** 26 May 2020

## **POLICE & CRIME PLAN - VICTIMS THEME - OPCC WORK TO DELIVER BROADER PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT**

### **1. Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- update the Business Coordination Board (“the Board”) on Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) activity to deliver the ‘broader partnership support’ priorities set out in the Victims section of the Police and Crime Plan (“the Plan”).
- provide outcome monitoring information on the victim support services commissioned and contract monitored by the OPCC in 19/20.

### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 The Board is recommended to note the contents of the report.

### **3. Background**

3.1 Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Police and Crime Commissioner (“the Commissioner”) is required to produce a Police and Plan.

3.2 The Commissioner’s Plan became effective from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and is structured around four key strategic themes: Victims, Offenders, Communities, and Transformation. Each theme has its own aim and has a framework through a series of shared outcomes to enable all agencies with a part to play in community safety and criminal justice, to strategically direct the future delivery of services through these common goals. Each theme is supported by key objectives and priorities for action.

3.3 The Constabulary brought a set of refreshed priorities to the Board in April 2019 which they report against in a separate paper – see Agenda item 5.2. The OPCC has a wider statutory commissioning and partnership working role.

#### 4. Commissioning referral and universal support services

4.1 The responsibility for commissioning emotional and practical support for victims of crime sits with Police and Crime Commissioners. Cambridgeshire has a mature model of support services and works in partnership with the local authority and NHS England to deliver £3m worth of services annually. This includes a number of central government funded workstreams. This enables the county to confidently state that victims in Cambridgeshire ‘have access to clear pathways of support’. A list of all services being funded in 2020/21 is available on the website.

4.2 The OPCC acts as lead or co-commissioner for all services and ensures robust contract monitoring in line with national best practice. The core of the model is the **Victim and Witness Hub** (“the Hub”) which over the past year has **provided telephone-based support to 2,843 victims** (236 a month). These calls ranged from single incidents of support to multiple calls over several months. The staff were unable to contact a further 1,416 people (despite trying on three occasions at different times of the day) and 403 people declined support when offered it. The staff also sent letters or emails to every single victim of reported crime (where safe to do so) to inform them about the service. More than 170 people self-referred into the service and as a result 58 of those went on to report a crime to the police. Victims reported feeling better informed and better able to recover and cope with aspects of everyday life as a result of the service provided. The service also supported a rolling 4,500 witnesses to crime as part of the Constabulary-funded witness care element of the service.

4.3 Many more victims also received help from specialist services. The annual data set out:

- 219 victims assessed and supported by 1.8 **mental health nurses** with all victims reporting improved health and wellbeing – such calls can involve onward referral to several agencies.
- 427 victims from **17 nationalities** were provided with support as a result of modern day slavery or domestic abuse (this included 397 victims of violence) by two specialist migrant support officers. Referrals came through the Hub or as part of outreach work in the community by the staff who are Lithuanian and Romanian speakers.
- **246 young victims of crime** and their families were supported (154 as victims of violence) with 73 per cent reporting they were better able to cope with everyday life as a result of the support. This includes an increasing number of cases of child to parent violence.
- 50k enabled the Bobby Scheme to secure the homes of **983 elderly victims** of property-related crime and provide face to face reassurance, advice and guidance.

- **161 victims of stalking and harassment** accepted specialist support and advice and agreed they felt better informed and empowered to act as a result. This postholder was also instrumental in securing the force's first Stalking Protection Order.
- Less than a £1,000 enabled 11 young people to begin to recover from their experience of domestic abuse or sexual violence through practical changes to their environment or life; for example securing a gate or learning a new activity.
- The Restorative Justice Co-ordinator based in the Victim and Witness Hub explored restorative justice options with 104 victims of crime and facilitated conferences for a murder case and another for an assault on a police officer. Three victims decided to engage with their offender through shuttle mediation. Of those people engaging with the service 80 per cent agreed they were better informed and empowered and ten per cent agreed they could now better cope with aspects of everyday life.

## **5 Commissioning specialist victim support services – domestic abuse**

- 5.1 The OPCC works in partnership with the local authority who fund just short of £1m worth of domestic abuse support services. This includes IDVAs (Independent Domestic Violence Advocates) and MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) co-ordinators and refuges. The services work alongside the rest of system to ensure victims of domestic abuse can access the services they need.
- 5.2 In 19/20 a new Domestic Abuse Strategy developed a future model of support with a sustainable core and enhanced offer. However, Covid-19 brought with it additional short-term central government funding for the third-sector outreach provision delaying this cliff edge for another year. The risks to domestic abuse services are then even greater in 21/22 as new pressures on the local authority public health budget emerge threatening funding for both IDVAs and MARAC co-ordinators. The impact on the Constabulary's ability to safeguard vulnerable victims would be significant should this be realised.
- 5.3 The OPCC Head of Strategic Partnerships and Commissioning and Local Authority Domestic Abuse Partnership Manager are now looking again at how a sustainable model could be developed within a further reduced funding pot.
- 5.4 Over 19/20 IDVAs received just short of 2,000 referrals for high risk cases with 1,471 cases being heard at MARAC.
- 5.5 During lockdown the refuges have remained open, outreach support has moved into the virtual world and MARACs have continued with IDVAs working primarily from home. While the number of referrals hasn't increased beyond normal levels the intensity of support required has, along with the number of repeat referrals. The OPCC and Local Authority host weekly calls with the refuge managers and have been supporting local problem solving. In particular issues around move on housing have been raised.

## 6. Commissioning specialist support services – sexual violence

- 6.1 The contract for Cambridgeshire’s Countywide Sexual Violence Support Service changed on April 1 to become a ringfenced ISVA (Independent Sexual Violence Advisor) service and a separate emotional support service. This was commissioned by the OPCC using pooled budgets from the local authority, NHS England and the nationally devolved Rape Support Fund (Cambridgeshire is one of five areas piloting this devolution). **Cambridgeshire was also successful in securing an additional £160k from the Home Office over two years to bolster ISVA provision.**
- 6.2 During 19/20 the ISVA service supported 806 adult survivors (315 new referrals) and 267 young people and children (150 new referrals over the year). The time taken for cases to progress through the criminal justice system does mean cases are ‘held’ by ISVAs for many months.
- 6.3 The Countywide Support Service changed its entire method of support delivery within weeks of lockdown being announced. The service continues to provide ISVA support with staff working from home and is even running its helpline and email support service from volunteer’s homes. It has understandably incurred significant additional costs and the OPCC is supporting bids to central government to recover this.
- 6.4 Onward long-term recovery particularly through a counselling offer remains uncommissioned by health providers. During the past three years young survivors have been able to access trauma-informed 1-1 CBT counselling through a VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) funded project secured by the OPCC and local authority. The project secured impressive outcomes for young people during the three years. This funding ended on March 31, 2020. A small amount of funding has been secured to operate this work on a reduced scale with pathways into Embrace from the Hub.

## 7 Responding to the Covid-19 Pandemic

- 7.1 As this report is written the integrated model of support services for victims of crime has not experienced high levels of sickness or abstraction. In the first few weeks of the pandemic the OPCC provided full-time resources to both the Victim and Witness Hub and wider services to support their move to virtual ways of working. The OPCC provided weekly updates into the Multi Agency Incident Hub on how it was changing the pathways of service provision within the model. For example the reduction in the Victim and Witness Hub’s court workload enabled them to provide an interim solution to the Bobby Scheme’s inability to safely support elderly victims of crime. The OPCC also worked with Women’s Aid to change the pathway of support for medium risk victims of domestic abuse to the Hub.
- 7.2 Staff across the system have found working from home and providing emotional support to often highly anxious and traumatised victims a challenge. In fact nationally providers have highlighted this as an issue for staff. The OPCC worked with a clinical psychologist to develop hour-long **virtual training and support sessions for staff initially in the Victim and Witness Hub**. These sessions reinforced their knowledge on

trauma-informed practice but also enabled them to deal with their own welfare and put coping mechanisms in place. The feedback has been amazing with staff appreciating the investment in them professionally and personally. The training is now being rolled out to the ISVA service.

- 7.3 The OPCC is also responding to additional reporting requirements from the Home Office and Ministry of Justice during the pandemic with monthly reports required from all services and fortnightly returns from the Countywide Sexual Violence Support Service.
- 7.4 A new fund has just been released which will provide contingency funding for specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence support services based in the county. This money, which is coming from the Home Office and Ministry of Justice is being managed by the OPCC. Details on the process being used to allocate funds will be available on the OPCC website in due course.

## 8. Recommendations

- 8.1 The Board is recommended to note the contents of the report.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

<b>Source Document(s)</b>	<b>Police and Crime Plan</b> <a href="http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/police-crime-plan/">http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/police-crime-plan/</a>
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