

## Thames Valley Witness Care Unit Arrangements

- How have you chosen to deliver your core victim referral service in your PCC area?

We went out to tender for a referral mechanism, and onward local non-specialist support, together with Surrey and Sussex PCCs using an outcomes focussed specification. The contract was awarded to Victim Support in November 2014 who began delivery in April 2015.

- Has this changed how your Witness Care Units operates – if yes, please provide brief details?

The only change to the Witness Care Unit is that a joint Victim Support/RJ post is now seconded into the WCU in order to help bridge the gap between Witness Care and the offer of Victim Support. The seconded post serves as a point of contact for the police with regards victim's services, to assist in the smooth information exchange between agencies, and in the identification of RJ-suitable cases (including making contact and seeking consent of victims for RJ follow-up).

- How is your Witness Care Unit currently structured and how does it interrelate with your local victim arrangements?

The WCU sits within the Criminal Justice Department and is overseen by a Chief Inspector. The Unit has recently relocated from CPS offices into Reading Police Station (CPS staff have been withdrawn from the Unit). The Unit consists of a Manager and 19 police staff. Some staff are specially trained in domestic or sexual violence support. A telephone support service is provided, with staff linking closely with local services to make referrals for onward support. If needed, WCU staff will accompany victims to court. The Unit Manager and staff have been closely involved in the PCC's commissioning process and have been kept well-informed of new services as they have been commissioned and gone live.

- Do you have any plans to change the way your Witness Care Unit operates to integrate it more with your victim services arrangements and strengthen/streamline the overall service available to victims of crime?

This will be considered in the next round of commissioning when the PCCs have clearer understanding of the current delivery model, its strengths and weaknesses. There are options to integrate victim services arrangements into the WCU. Also, through market engagement, a more competitive supplier market is expected in the next round of commissioning.