

PCC for Thames Valley – Commissioning Update Oct 2016

Proposed Victims' Services Re-Design

Background

From 1st April 2015, the OPCC commissioned a range of services to assist victims to cope and recover from the consequences of crime. The majority of these services are commissioned for an initial 3 year term with the option to extend for a further 2 years.

The first round of commissioning resulted in a range of service providers contracted to deliver services across the Thames Valley. The largest value contract was awarded to Victim Support, in collaboration with Surrey and Sussex PCC's. This contract (the 'VS contract') included a 'referral mechanism' which was a requirement under the MoJ Victims Grant agreement. In Thames Valley, Surrey and Sussex, this essentially involved continuation of previous arrangements; daily Automatic Data Transfer (ADT) of victims' contact details from the police to the Victim, Assessment and Referral Centre (VARC) based in Sussex where initial contact with victims is made using an approved contact methodology (telephone call or written contact).

Based on learning from the first round of commissioning, improved data and knowledge of the service provided through the VS contract, as well as insights from other PCC areas, the purpose of this briefing note is to outline the intention of the PCC for Thames Valley to undertake a fundamental re-design of commissioned Victims' Services by 1st April 2018. The new model will include development of:-

- (i) a central co-located 'Victims First' Hub with the Thames Valley Police (TVP) Witness Care Unit (WCU),
- (ii) a number of actual or virtual satellite hubs, and
- (iii) a range of community 'touchpoints' or safe places where members of the public and other professionals can access information, obtain advice or initiate a referral to the Victims Hub.

The functions of the central Victims Hub are likely to involve a range of, largely, administrative and coordinating functions to support delivery of support services to victims, whether short-term or telephone support to those with less complex needs, or longer-term, holistic support (including specialist counselling) to those with more complex needs.

The way in which specialist services will be delivered across Thames Valley to those with more complex needs, and the most appropriate means of procuring those services, will also be considered. Several mechanisms for delivery of specialist services will be considered including fully integrated, 'satellite' hubs as well as more virtual arrangements between a range of providers of services. Whichever model is preferred and procured, the ambition will involve a multi-agency, or multi-specialism approach, to assessing and supporting clients with shared outcomes and expectations.

The third element of the new model will involve better promotion of services and increased access points through which members of the community, and other professionals, can receive information, advice or direct a referral for service to the Victims Hub.

Throughout the life of the project, it is anticipated that additional considerations will come into play. For instance, it has been indicated by central government that a number of other services currently commissioned at a national level through the MoJ are likely to be devolved to PCCs. As these plans develop and are communicated with PCCs, the desirability of basing those services within or outside of the Hub will be considered as part of the re-design work.

The overall aim of this proposal is to provide a better service to victims of crime through coordination of witness care (for those coming through the criminal justice system) with enhanced, wraparound, emotional, practical and psychotherapeutic support for all victims (including those who have chosen not to report a crime to the police but have been referred by a third party or self-referred for support). The outcome for victims of crime would be a better and more personalised service, with a single point of contact and coordinated care from point of report, throughout criminal justice proceedings, and beyond. An anticipated consequence of this is improved support by victims and witnesses for criminal proceedings and higher rates of satisfaction of the overall criminal justice system.

Key issues driving the re-design

1. The ADT process and contact methodology applied in the current VS contract leads to a consistently high attrition. Developments to support a move away from ADT to a consent-based model are in place and expected to be operational prior to the end of the current VS contract (including new police training – briefings and e-learning package, a referral toolkit or ‘app’ for mobile devices, an internet-based victim’s portal).
2. When the ADT is switched off, the need for a ‘VARC’ will be greatly diminished as only details of those who have positively requested a service will be forwarded, triggering contact.
3. As a result of the range of (different) service providers delivering PCC victims’ services, net accommodation costs of PCC victims’ services contracts are relatively high. Some co-location, however, has been achieved which has demonstrably improved joint working between those service providers.
4. Re-location of the TVP WCU from Reading Police Station is required by April 2018, coinciding with the conclusion of the initial 3 year term of the VS contract (as well as several other PCC victims’ contracts although, at this time, no decisions have been taken regarding extension, or not, of those contracts).

The current position

1. The PCC has indicated that the VS contract will be de-commissioned at the end of March 2018.

2. Co-location of the Victims First Hub with the TVP WCU has been agreed by both the PCC and the Chief Constable.
3. Victims' Services re-design work will take place between August 2016 and end Jun 2017. If the new model/service(s) are out-sourced, re-tendering will take place from Jul 2017, with the intention that a provider(s) would be selected and in place by 1st Apr 2018.
4. The commitment to re-design (and to influence better coordination of commissioning of non-PCC funded) Victims' Services across Thames Valley will be a priority within the new Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021.
5. Governance will take place via a project board and a number of delivery groups, which will include a service user panel.
6. A victims' needs assessment will be commissioned to help inform the project board, focussing on the voices and experiences of victims.
7. A series of market engagement events will be run to communicate and seek the views of service providers and other partners to help inform the project throughout.
8. Engagement with other commissioners will continue to explore opportunities for joint commissioning services.