

**AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
21 MARCH 2014**

REPORT OF THE AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONING VICTIM SERVICES

Purpose

This report provides an update to Panel Members on progress in delivering the Integrated Victims Strategy and outlines commissioning intentions for support services for victims.

Background

From October 2014, Police and Crime Commissioners will be responsible for commissioning services for victims. This change is part of the Government's strategy set out in *Getting it Right for Victims and Witnesses* (Ministry of Justice, January 2012) to improve services for victims with the aim to put victims at the heart of the criminal justice system.

The Commissioner has set a clear vision to join up services for victims at every stage of their journey, and ensure that victims have access to high quality support according to their needs.

Avon and Somerset Approach

The Avon and Somerset Integrated Victims Strategy (attached at Appendix 1) describes the ambitious programme of work to transform victim services in Avon and Somerset, based on the aim to simplify and improve the experience of victims. A multi-agency Integrated Victims Board has been established, including representatives of criminal justice agencies, Community Safety Partnerships, a Director of Public Health, voluntary sector infrastructure organisations. Cllr Lisa Brett is a member of the Board in her capacity as PCP Link Member.

The approach comprises two significant areas of work:

- **Integrated Victim Care** - Avon and Somerset Constabulary have been working closely with partner agencies locally towards the implementation of Integrated Victim Care teams by October 2014. This will provide coordinated care for victims from first point of contact with the police, through the investigation and criminal justice process and referral to appropriate support. Features of the proposed model are detailed in the Commissioning Intentions document attached at Appendix 2.
- **Commissioning of Victim Services** - Progress in preparatory work for the Commissioner's role in commissioning local services for victims is outlined below.

Commissioning Victim Services

The *Ministry of Justice Victim Services Commissioning Framework* (May 2013) confirmed that PCCs will be responsible for commissioning local services to help victims to cope with the immediate impacts of crime and recover from the harm experienced. Services are expected to be targeted at victims of serious crime, those that are persistently targeted and those that are vulnerable or intimidated. The emphasis is on identifying and responding to individual need – rather than focusing on crime type. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) will commission a number of national services¹.

Funding

Funding available through the MoJ Victim Services Grant is issued under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, for use to support ‘victims, witnesses or other persons affected by offences’. The MoJ Commissioning Framework states that PCCs may wish to make funding available from other sources to support victims of antisocial behaviour (ASB). The Commissioner is clear that victims of ASB should receive support and it is proposed to use part of the PCC’s other commissioning budget (historically the ‘Community Safety Grant’) for this purpose. Funding has been allocated to PCCs as follows:

Funding Period	Purpose
2013 - Oct 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparatory work for victims commissioning • Voluntary and Community Sector capacity building • Capacity building and delivery of restorative justice
Oct 2014 – End-March 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim Services • Capacity building and delivery of restorative justice

Preparatory Work:

Significant work has been carried out with the Constabulary, partners and existing providers on service mapping, completion of the Victim Experience Survey and Focus Groups, needs assessment and preparatory work to inform proposals for commissioning victim services.

The OPCC has since developed a commissioning intentions document for support services for victims (attached at Appendix 2) which was published on 28 February 2014 for a 3 month consultation period.

Commissioning Intentions: Summary

The proposal under consultation is to formally commission the following services from April 2015:

- A baseline **emotional support** service for victims of crime and ASB;
- **Specialist support services** where there is a clear rationale, and to align provision within the current landscape.

The proposal is based on recognition that there is a vast and complex range of support services for victims in Avon and Somerset ranging from informal community support through to high intensity services. The proposed approach is based on the principle that commissioning by the PCC should be seen as part of a wide range of commissioners who provide support for different care pathways, and seek to work with partners to join up

• ¹ National Services include: Human Trafficking; Homicide; Rape Support Centres; Support for Witnesses at Court; some Sexual and Domestic Violence

services, providing clear care pathways for victims. The OPCC will engage with current MoJ funding recipients to ensure appropriate transitional arrangements are in place for the October 2014-April 2015 period.

Feedback on the commissioning intentions can be given online at the following link:
<http://www.consultation.avonandsomerset.police.uk/pcc/victim-services-commissioning-intentions>

To complement proposals for victim services, the OPCC will be running a separate process in relation to the commissioning of restorative justice, with the aim to develop access to victim-led restorative justice across Avon and Somerset. Details of the proposed approach can be accessed at the following link:

<http://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Document-Library/Commissioning/RJ-Draft-Commissioning-Intentions-February-2014.pdf>

A programme of meetings and visits is in development during the consultation period to brief partners and providers and open discussion on the proposed approach. In addition a number of specific events have been arranged for voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations including:

- MoJ VCSE Capacity Building Workshop, Tuesday 25 March, Bristol
 - Regional PCCs VCSE Victims Commissioning Workshop, Tuesday 18 March, Taunton
- Work is being undertaken with voluntary sector infrastructure organisations (for example councils for voluntary service) to ascertain any appetite for further local VCS events.

Further information on victims commissioning can be found at the following link:
<http://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Partnerships/Victim-Commissioning.aspx>

Recommendations

Members are asked to provide feedback on the proposed commissioning intentions for support services for victims in Avon and Somerset.

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Appendices

1	Avon and Somerset Integrated Victim Strategy http://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Document-Library/Victims/AS-Integrated-Victim-Strategy-Feb-2014.pdf
2	Avon and Somerset Victim Services Commissioning Intentions http://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Document-Library/Victims/Victim-Services-Commissioning-Intentions-Feb-2014-FINAL.pdf



AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE (OPCC)

VICTIM SERVICES COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS: FEBRUARY 2014

VISION

Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Sue Mountstevens has set out a clear vision for victims which is articulated in the Police and Crime Plan:

"I want to improve victim's satisfaction with and influence over the services they receive. I will do this by supporting the development of a joined-up approach to victim services that has the voice of victims at its heart. I will be a fierce advocate for all victims, particularly victims of targeted offences such as hate crime and young people who are more likely to be victims of crime than any other group."

This vision drives the approach to commissioning victims' services in Avon and Somerset.

The OPCC welcomes feedback on these proposals during the consultation period which will remain open until 31st May 2014.

Feedback is welcomed via the joint Avon and Somerset Consultation hub:
<http://www.consultation.avonandsomerset.police.uk/pcc/victim-services-commissioning-intentions>

The OPCC will also seek to inform partners at key meetings and events. Should you want the OPCC to brief you please contact
PCC@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the OPCC's intentions with regard to the commissioning of support services for victims in Avon and Somerset. It provides context for the OPCC's proposals and seeks views on the commissioning of support services for victims in Avon and Somerset.

Following a Government consultation in 2012, *Getting it Right for Victims and Witnesses*, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) has confirmed the introduction of a mixed model of national and local commissioning of support services for victims.

The Ministry of Justice will commission services which provide support for:

- Victims of trafficking
- Those bereaved by homicide
- Victims of rape (through Rape Support Centres)
- Witnesses at Court

The nationally commissioned services may also include national helplines and some specialist services for victims of sexual and domestic violence.

Funding will be issued to PCCs as a grant under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 to support '*victims, witnesses or other persons affected by offences*'. The MoJ Commissioning Framework states that PCCs may wish to make funding available from other sources to support victims of antisocial behaviour (ASB). The PCC is clear that victims of ASB should receive support and this is a key part of this commissioning intentions document. It is proposed to use part of the PCC's other commissioning budget (historically the 'Community Safety Grant') for this purpose in Avon and Somerset.

The Avon and Somerset approach to victim care is described at a high level in the Avon and Somerset Integrated Victim Strategy, which can be found on the PCC website along with other relevant documents. This strategy is overseen by a Multi-Agency Integrated Victims Programme Board.

An initial commissioning intentions document outlining the proposed overall approach in Avon and Somerset was developed and widely shared in December 2013. This second document seeks to build on this, and provide further detail on current proposals. This document is being published alongside a victims' needs assessment, which draws on evidence gathered on what victims want and need from the Police, Criminal Justice partners and support services and provides the evidence base for our proposed approach.

The previous commissioning intentions document outlined proposals for operating the referral service, which will come into operation in October 2014. A summary of that service is outlined below in order to provide appropriate context.

THE AVON AND SOMERSET INTEGRATED VICTIM CARE MODEL

As part of Integrated Victims Strategy, Avon and Somerset Constabulary have been working closely with partner agencies locally to work towards the implementation of integrated victim care teams by October 2014. These teams will bring together victim contact roles in the Police service, co-located with partners, to provide more coordinated end-to-end care for victims.

The new Integrated Victim Care teams will guide a victim through their journey from first point of contact with the police, through the investigation and on to the end of the criminal justice process. The aim of the new teams will be to provide greater ownership of the whole journey of a victim, reducing handovers and providing a 'single point of contact' approach. This will radically simplify the process for victims.

Key features of the proposed model include

- Robust identification of 'service tier' (i.e. enhanced victims as defined in the Victim's Code of Practice) at the first point of contact through an initial tier assessment.
- Immediate referral into the new Integrated Victim Care team for vulnerable, intimidated and persistently targeted victims, as well as victims of serious crime.
- Full and detailed common needs assessment for victims, to identify and put in place appropriate support pathways from an early stage.
- Provision of safety and crime prevention advice, target hardening measures and other practical interventions to help reduce the risk of repeat victimisation.
- Regular and timely updates on case progress as required by the Victim's Code of Practice, delivered in the way that the victim wants it.
- Multi-agency co-location to ensure effective partnership working and a more cohesive approach.
- Clear links with multi-agency safeguarding hubs to ensure safeguarding concerns and risks are identified and addressed.
- Restorative approaches that are truly victim led, and available to as many victims as possible at the appropriate point in their journey.

The Integrated 'end-to-end' approach



The model will be underpinned by a robust programme of training to frontline police officers, force service centre and enquiry office staff, and those who will be working in the Integrated Victim Care teams.

It is envisaged that there will be close working relationships between the Integrated Victim Care teams and the new commissioned service providers. Co-location will be explored where appropriate, and secure data sharing maximised to ensure the Police, Criminal Justice Partners and support service providers can effectively work together to provide a well-informed and responsive service to victims.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE NEW EU DIRECTIVE FOR VICTIMS

A key requirement of the EU directive is that support must be accessible to all victims, even those who do not report to the police.

Our Integrated Victim Care model will be supported by a range of activities that will ensure victims have access to support, regardless of whether or not they choose to report to the police. These include:

- The development of an online victim 'service directory' (based on the Integrated Offender Management pathways website¹) which will be available for all to access regardless of whether or not they have reported to the police

¹ <http://www.impactpathways.org.uk/>

- A telephone number available to all victims to call for advice on how to access support organisations – this telephone number will be heavily promoted and advertised widely
- The development of a common needs assessment tool that the Integrated Victim Care Teams will use, along with all service providers of commissioned services, to ensure an equitable approach for all victims

In addition, a key feature of the commissioning specification will be a requirement for all support service providers to ensure they are accessible to victims, through initiatives that ensure they build a strong presence in their local communities and encourage victims to come forward and seek help and support.

COMMISSIONED SUPPORT SERVICES

The PCC will receive funding from the MOJ for support services for victims from October 2014. Given these timescales and the desire for robust commissioning to take place it is intended that fully commissioned / procured services will commence from April 2015. This will also ensure alignment with timescales for allocation of community safety grant funding, which is important given that much of this grant is used to fund victim services. As outlined below the OPCC will engage with current MOJ funding recipients to ensure appropriate transitional arrangements are in place for the October 2014 – April 2015 period.

The PCC holds other commissioning and grant funding, most significantly the 'Community Safety Grant.' From April 2014 the OPCC will ensure these resources are allocated in a way that supports the Avon and Somerset Integrated Victim Strategy.

Alongside this, the OPCC will be running a separate process in relation to the commissioning of restorative justice services. Further information is available in the Restorative Justice: Commissioning Intentions document which is available on the PCC's website.

COMMISSIONED SUPPORT SERVICE: PRINCIPLES

The following principles will underpin the OPCC approach to the commissioning of support services for victims:

- ***Support should be driven by need not offence type***
A baseline, generic support service commissioned as part of this approach will ensure that emotional support is available to all victims of crime and ASB, regardless of type.
- ***Additional specialist support should be available for the most vulnerable***
Many vulnerable victims display needs which may require more specialist support. As such, the OPCC proposes a staged approach, with specialist advocacy services being commissioned for those victims who require more intensive support, including needs associated with, but not limited to, protected characteristics.

- **Continuity of care for victims is paramount**
Early engagement with existing MOJ grant recipients will take place so as to ensure effective transition arrangements are established covering the period October 2014-March 2015. This will ensure that there is no breakdown in care arrangements for existing victims. We are working with the MOJ and other commissioners to ensure access to support for victims who live outside of Avon and Somerset. Current principles will continue to apply, whereby the victim is directed to support on the basis of where they live.
- **The commissioning approach should be consultative and collaborative**
The OPCC will seek to adopt a consultative approach throughout the commissioning process, ensuring the views of providers, partners (including the VCSE sector) and service users are used to inform the process.
- **Partnership working is crucial to ensure the best services for victims**
The services commissioned as part of this process are only one element of a complex and varied network of support which currently exists for victims across Avon and Somerset, and it is important that local commissioning bodies work in partnership to ensure a cohesive approach.

Where existing baseline services exist, the OPCC will work with partners to ensure resources are appropriately allocated to prevent duplication, and to encourage local innovation in developing responses to those victims with more acute needs.

- **Locally, regionally and nationally commissioned services should complement not duplicate**
The OPCC will continue to monitor progress in relation to a number of national funding arrangements for services for victims of serious crime, and will keep abreast of any developments as to the wider scope for national services and funding arrangements. Opportunities for collaboration with regional PCCs will be explored with a view to ensuring best value and improved outcomes for victims.

TIMESCALES

Timeframe	Activity
February 2014 – May 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of commissioning intentions and needs assessment • OPCC consultation and engagement with partners and providers • Engagement with current MOJ funding recipients
June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of consultation responses and development of service specifications
July 2014 – September 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of service specifications
October 2014 – March 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Victim Care Model goes live • Transitional arrangements in place
April 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioned Services go live

COMMISSIONED SUPPORT SERVICES: PROPOSED MODEL

Following an initial mapping and needs assessment exercise it is proposed that the following services are formally commissioned as part of this programme:

1. **A single baseline service to support the emotional needs of all victims of crime and ASB**
2. **Specialist support services where there is a clear rationale, so to align provision within the current landscape**

Within the proposed model, this relates to stages 2 and 3.

Stage		Service	Service to be procured as part of this intentions document?
1	PRACTICAL	Integrated Victim Care team (from October 2014)	x
		Self-referral arrangements (from October 2014)	x
2	EMOTIONAL	A baseline emotional support service for all victims of crime and ASB (From April 2015)	✓
3	SPECIALIST SERVICES	Specialist support services (From April 2015)	✓
4	OTHER SPECIALIST SERVICES	Other specialist services (existing)	x

Stage 1 – Integrated Victim Care team and Self-referral arrangements

Stages 2-4 should be considered in light of the service that will be provided by the Integrated Victim Care team and self-referral arrangements i.e. practical support, advice, information, updates and onward referrals as described elsewhere in this document.

Stage 2 – Baseline emotional support service

The PCC intends to commission a single baseline support service for all victims of crime and ASB. It is proposed that this service will:

- Offer a basic level of emotional support to all victims of crime and ASB.
- Be designed so to respond to the needs of specific cohorts

- Accept referrals from a range of sources, not just the police, including self-referral

Stage 3 – Specialist support services

As per the principles above, this element of the service will be designed to address specialist needs identified through this early stage of the commissioning process.

Specific areas for consideration at this time are:

- **Advocacy for cohorts with specific needs** – This would include victims of hate crime, victims with learning disabilities, young victims and victims with cultural advocacy requirements, for example. This service would facilitate vulnerable victims to engage with statutory and other support services
- **Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs)** - The PCC inherited a complex funding arrangement and from 2013/14 has supported this service through an annual grant agreement. It is proposed that this service is commissioned so that it can fully meet current needs and provide the best value support for victims of sexual violence in Avon and Somerset.

Stage 4 – Other specialist support services

The OPCC recognises that there is a vast and complex range of support services for victims of crime in Avon and Somerset ranging from informal community support through to high intensity services. Moreover, there are a wide range of commissioners who provide support for different care pathways.

The proposed model is based on the crucial principle that the commissioning of services by the PCC should be seen as part of the wider range of support services commissioned by partners. In order to provide the most effective support to victims these services should be joined up, providing clear care pathways.

Existing services: National

As mentioned above, there are a number of national funding arrangements for services as part of the mixed commissioning model. Some specific local examples include:

- Ministry of Justice funding for the Somerset and Avon Rape and Sexual Abuse Service
- Ministry of Justice funding to support victims of trafficking, those bereaved of homicide and the recently announced male rape support fund
- Home Office VAWG grant which supports to ISVAs, IDVAs and MARACs in Avon and Somerset.

Existing services: Local

A wide range of partners contribute to services for victims in Avon and Somerset. Some examples include:

- Domestic abuse service provision such as refuges, IDVAs and support programmes
- Specific services such as the Integrated Hate Crime Service in Bristol
- Tenancy support via housing associations
- Support from health agencies

Other commissioning activity undertaken by the PCC

The PCC holds resources in addition to the funds from the Ministry of Justice which may be used to provide support services for victims. In line with the principles above, resources will be looked at holistically to provide an effective and efficient service force-wide. In particular the PCC holds a separate commissioning budget (historically known as the 'Community Safety Grant'). The PCC intends to use a significant part of this funding alongside the MOJ funding to ensure that support for victims of crime and ASB can be co-commissioned (as MOJ funding can only be used for victims of crime) and to ensure the centrally commissioned service is of a significantly high standard.

Within the proposed model remaining resources from the PCC's commissioning budget will be allocated locally (via Community Safety Partnerships) to respond to local needs and support specialist services on an annual basis. Moreover, it should be noted for example that the PCC will continue to support the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in partnership with NHS England.

The OPCC welcomes feedback on these proposals during the consultation period which will remain open until 31st May 2014.

**Feedback is welcomed via the Avon and Somerset consultation hub:
<http://www.consultation.avonandsomerset.police.uk/pcc/victim-services-commissioning-intentions>**

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