



**OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER FOR THAMES VALLEY**

**INFORMATION REPORT TO THE
THAMES VALLEY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
8th September 2017**

VICTIMS' SERVICES RE-DESIGN

Background

Since 1st April 2015, the OPCC has commissioned a range of services to assist victims to cope and recover from the consequences of crime. The majority of these services were 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 (VS), in collaboration with Surrey and Sussex PCCs. This contract (the 'VS contract') included a 'referral mechanism' which was a requirement under the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Victims Grant agreement.

For Thames Valley, Surrey and Sussex, this referral mechanism essentially involved continuation of previous arrangements, e.g. daily Automatic Data Transfer (ADT) of victims' contact details from the respective police forces to the joint '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).

Those victims who are contacted by the VARC and accept the offer of support undergo an assessment of needs then, if appropriate, are referred to a VS local support service (LSS) which provides (non-specialist) emotional and practical support to all victims of crime, by trained volunteers by telephone or face-to-face, or to specialist (non-VS) support service providers where necessary and appropriate.

Key issues driving the victims' services re-design project and objectives

1. The ADT process and contact methodology used in the current service model leads to a consistently high level of attrition of victims. The move away from ADT to a 'consent-based' referral mechanism will be operational prior to the end of the current VS contract (i.e. by no later than 31st March 2018).
2. When the ADT is switched off, the VS 'VARC' will no longer be needed in Thames Valley as only details of those victims who have positively

requested a service will be referred, triggering contact by the new OPCC 'Victims' First Hub'.

3. Re-location of the Thames Valley Police (TVP) Witness Care Unit (WCU) from Reading Police Station is required by April 2018, coinciding with the conclusion of the 3 year term of the VS contract (as well as several other PCC-commissioned victims' services contracts).

Re-design of TV PCC victims' services

Based on learning from the first round of victims' services commissioning, improved data and knowledge of the service provided through the VS contract, as well as insights from other PCC areas, the PCC for Thames Valley has undertaken a fundamental re-design of commissioned victims' services. The new service model will go live on 1st April 2018.

The development of the new service model will involve the following key activities and project timeline.

Phase 1 - to be implemented by April 2018:

- (i) Switch-off of the current ADT referral mechanism on 1 April 2018 and replacement by a 'consent-based' victims' referral mechanism, involving direct referrals of victims to the Victims' First Hub by TVP.
- (ii) A central 'Victims First Hub', co-located with the TVP WCU to facilitate improved, joined-up, service delivery to victims and witnesses, based in the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services (RBFRS) Headquarters in Reading.
- (iii) The functions of the central Victims' First Hub will involve a range of administrative and coordinating functions to support delivery of 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.
- (iv) Commissioning of an outsourced Emotional Support and Advocacy Service (ESAS), supporting victims with 'low level needs'. This will involve face-to-face emotional support, peer or group support and advocacy services.
- (v) Extended contract with a range of existing specialist service providers supporting victims with more complex needs.

Phase 2 – to be developed during 2018/19:

- (vi) A network of community 'touchpoints' (or 'Safe Locations'), designed to improve self-referral into victims services, where members of the public or professionals coming into contact with vulnerable people can access information, obtain advice or initiate a referral to the Victims' First Hub.

Phase 3 – development subject to further research and a possible pilot project:

- (vii) Proposed longer-term transition from a 'crime-focused' approach to

commissioning victims services to a 'needs-focused' approach, involving a move from a range of separate specialist services (and providers) determined by crime-type to provision of complex needs services/collaborations determined by the needs of victims.

The eventual new service 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.

Together, the Hub and ESAS will replace the existing Victim Support contract at a lower cost (current forecasts indicate potential annual savings of around £300,000). As the services are funded by Ministry of Justice grant funding, savings actually realised will be re-directed into specialist victims' services, particularly domestic abuse and adult exploitation (which is recognised as a gap in current, formal, service provision and has been supported previously by OPCC grant-based, time-limited funding).

The overall aim of this service re-design is to provide a better and more personalised service to victims of crime, through coordination of victim and witness care (for those coming through the criminal justice system) and a single point of contact, together 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).

Re-design Project – a summary of the current position

The main purpose of this update is to provide information on the progress of the development and implementation of the central Victims' First Hub, and the tendering of the ESAS and specialist services (i.e. 'Phase 1' project activities).

1. Project governance is taking place via joint TVP/OPCC project board.
2. VS and partners have been notified of the PCC's intention that the VS contract will not be renewed at the end of March 2018 when the existing contract expires. This contract will be replaced by the Victims' First Hub and the ESAS.
3. A series of market engagement and consultation events have been held to communicate and obtain the views of service providers and other partners to help inform the re-design project in terms of the development of the new Victims' First Hub and the specification of the ESAS.
4. Co-location of the Victims' Hub with the TVP WCU has been agreed by the PCC and the Chief Constable. Agreement has also been reached with the RBFERS that the co-located Victims' First Hub and TVP WCU services will be based in the RBFERS HQ in Reading.
5. A victims' services needs assessment was commissioned by the PCC and

undertaken between late January and early June 2017, focusing on the voices and experiences of victims. This needs assessment was used to inform the victims' services re-design.

6. A new 'Victims' First' website and Facebook page have been launched (late-April 2017).
7. Recruitment of staff for the Victims' First Hub is underway. Hub staff will be employees of the PCC.
8. A new OPCC 'PR and Communications Support Officer' has been appointed (due to take up position mid-October 2017), to provide additional capacity to support the PCC's victims' services work, e.g. to support promotion of the 'Safe Locations' initiative and the 'Victims' First' website and 'brand'.
9. Specifications for new service contracts for generic 'Emotional Support & Advocacy Service' and any other TV-wide service contracts are due to be finalised by end-September 2017, tenders to be advertised by mid-October and contracts to be awarded by end-January 2018.
10. Negotiations with current specialist victims' service providers, to agree (where necessary) extensions to current service contracts and/or variations to service specifications and contract prices with effect from 1st April 2018, are ongoing – due to be concluded by end-September 2017. 12 month contract extensions beginning 1st April 2018 have been agreed *in principle* with the existing Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy (ISVA) service (provided by Refuge), the Young Victims Service (provided by SAFE) and the Restorative Justice (RJ) Service (provided by the TVRJS). The latter contract has been negotiated at a much reduced rate to reflect the low uptake of victim-led RJ.
11. The Hate Crime service contract was terminated a year early at the end of March 2017. The Hate Crime helpline, website for third party reporting, and Hate Crime 'app' are being provided by the OPCC as an interim measure. The 'community touchpoints' element of the project re-design, due to be developed under phase 2 of the new service model, will involve development of a network of 3rd party reporting centres, as well as 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 all PCC victims services via the Victims' First Hub.
12. A TVP Local Police Area (LPA) 'pilot project' (to test the switch-off of the current ADT referral mechanism and the introduction of the new 'consent-based' referral process) has been running in the Cherwell and West Oxon LPA since July 2017. The initial results from the pilot indicate that the volume of victims seeking referral may be greater under the new 'consent based' referral mechanism than under the current ADT referral system. An additional pilot project (Windsor & Maidenhead LPA) is due to commence

in mid-September. It is expected that the majority of TVP will be operating an 'opt-in' consent-based referral approach prior to the end of the current VS contract. (In support of this, police training is being undertaken – briefings and an e-learning package – in addition to promotion of the PCC's internet-based Victims' First portal www.victims-first.org.uk).

13. A Thames Valley Domestic Abuse (DA) Commissioners Board has been created by the OPCC to support joint commissioning of domestic abuse (DA) services with local authorities. Negotiations concerning proposed co-commissioning of DA services are currently taking place with Oxfordshire County Council (re commissioning of services on behalf of the PCC for the areas of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes), Slough BC (re commissioning on behalf of the east of Berkshire area), and West Berkshire Council (re commissioning on behalf of the west of Berkshire area). The DA services funded by the PCC will include medium-risk safety planning resources, roll-out of the DA complex needs approach developed in Oxfordshire (and known as the TAP model), and outreach support for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and Refugees (BAMER). Local DA commissioners will commission these services in addition to their core provision from April 2018 using new funding provided by the PCC.
14. Development of service user 'Outcomes-based' service performance measures currently being investigated.
15. Initial financial modelling indicates that the new service design may generate significant annual financial annual savings of around £300,000 (subject to future levels of referrals), which would be available to be re-invested in specialist victims' services (e.g. domestic abuse, young victims, exploitation / slavery).

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