



## Report of the Police and Crime Panel

**Report title:** Victims Services Commissioning – Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> March 2024

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**Purpose of the report:** As requested by the Panel

**Recommendations:** Information only

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### **Executive Summary**

Contracts for the current victim services commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) expire on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, these services will be replaced by three new services. These specialist services have been developed after a period of extensive research, data-modelling, consultation with victims, and engagement with local victims' service providers. This report details the work undertaken by the OPCC Victims Team to commission the following three new victims services:

- Adults Victims Service
- Children and Young Peoples Victim Service
- Sexual Violence Service

### **Main Body**

#### **New Support Services in the Thames Valley**

The new specialist victim services will meet the needs of those most affected by high harm crimes such as sexual violence, domestic abuse and to provide specialist provision to children and young people. Ensuring that victims of crime in Thames Valley will be supported by high quality services that enable victims to cope with the impact of crime and build resilience to move forward with daily life. They will provide a range of holistic support in order to meet the varied needs of victims most seriously harmed by crime. Providing one to one support, group support, counselling, advocacy, peer support and psychoeducational programmes.

These services will work alongside and be supported by:

- The existing Victims First Hub
- The existing Victims First Counselling Service
- A new online support programme
- A new case management system

The Victims First Hub serves as the central point of contact for all victims in the Thames Valley, handling referrals from the police, direct victim referrals, and those from partner agencies. It ensures victims can access specialised, tailored support. In late 2024, the PCC plans to transition the referral mechanism to an automatic data transfer process, aiming to guarantee that every victim reporting to the police receives an offer of support.



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### Service Design and Preparations

The OPCC Victims Team engaged in various activities to inform new service design, these included:

- **Victims Services Review.** Completed in May 2022. This evaluation focused on three key objectives: assessing current commissioned and internal victim services, providing a framework for future commissioning, and incorporating the voices of victims to shape services. The review involved data analysis, discussions with providers, partners, and sector staff, resulting in the framework for the victims' transformation project. This framework included the commissioning of new services and a planned shift to an automatic referral process for all victims from TVP.
- **Victim Survey.** In 2022, a comprehensive online survey was conducted, involving 778 participants who identified as victims. The survey aimed to enhance understanding of victims' awareness of support services, assess the accessibility of these services, and gather insights into their overall support experiences. Participants were also asked about perceived gaps in support within the Thames Valley and areas where improvement is most needed. Additionally, qualitative data, including quotes from victims, was collected and integrated into the Victims Services Review.
- **Focus Groups and interviews with victims.** An expert in lived experience work conducted focus groups, interviews, and a discussion group session with victims from Diverse Communities, including Afro-Caribbean, Sudanese, and British Asian backgrounds. The sessions involved detailed discussions about the crimes experienced and the support received. The insights gained from these workshops proved invaluable in enhancing understanding of diverse experiences, and the feedback gathered was integrated into both service specifications and a broader transformation project.
- **Market Engagement.** In spring 2023, the OPCC organized three market engagement events focusing on adult support services, children and young people support, and sexual violence support. These events were well-attended by local and national service providers as well as statutory services. Valuable feedback obtained during these events informed service specifications, highlighting priorities and key design elements. Subsequent surveys were conducted to gather additional feedback, specifically identifying priority areas for the recommissioning process.
- **Commissioned Research.** The OPCC also initiated academic research to explore best practices for interventions and services aimed at children and young people affected by crime, as well as victims of sexual violence. The research aimed to identify evidence-based interventions and uncover opportunities for the development of new support services, with a focus on future evaluations.



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- **Literature review.** The Victims Team conducted a comprehensive review of key literature to enhance their understanding of the support services available to victims. The focus of the review encompassed victims' needs and priorities, common gaps in support services, the frequency and patterns of various crime types, different support interventions, and the overall impact of support on victims' lives.

### Commissioning Process

The individual lots for the three Victims Services were tendered, offering specialised bidders the chance to provide each service. The procurement process concluded in December 2023, and the services are currently in the mobilisation stage, preparing for the start date on April 1st.

### Services Procured

#### *Service to support Adult Victims of Crime*

**Length of Contract:** Three years (plus one, plus one extension options)

**Value:** £1,660,153.53 for the initial three-year term

**Awarded to:** Victim Support

**Provider information:** Victim Support is a leading independent national charity, currently providing services for 29 out of 40 Police and Crime Commissioners, making it the largest and most experienced victim services provider in England and Wales. Additionally, the organisation operates the National Homicide Service, with a significant workforce with over 1000 employees and more than 400 volunteers.

**To whom will the service provide support?** To victims and witnesses of any crime (excluding sexual violence) aged 18 or over. The service will provide a holistic offer of support including:

- Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) support
- Structured group support, including a domestic abuse programme and a wellbeing programme
- Case Worker support
- Modern Slavery support
- One off informational sessions e.g. navigating the criminal justice system
- Peer mentoring
- Victim awareness training function to provide training to the police, criminal justice agencies, statutory services and community organisations.



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### Other Service Highlights:

Service Highlight	Comment
Victim Voice App	Collects victims' feedback quickly and regularly.
24/7 Supportline and LiveChat	Ensures Victims can speak to someone even outside of traditional opening hours and/or when service's capacity is stretched
National Resilience Team	Deployable in times of high demand or low capacity ensuring provision of resilience and continuity of support
Experience of dealing with major incidents	If any major incident happened in the Thames Valley, Victim Support are well placed to support
Have national leads on domestic abuse, sexual violence and CYP services	We will be able to benefit from learning lessons from other PCC areas, not just from the Thames Valley

### *Service to support Children and Young People*

**Awarded to:** SAFE!

**Length of Contract:** Three years (plus one, plus one extension options)

**Value:** £2,423,866.32 for the initial three-year term

**Provider information:** SAFE! is the current provider of victims services for Children and Young People in the Thames Valley, holding the contract since 2015. With 15 years of experience, they specialise in supporting children and families affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence. SAFE! also operates the Building Respectful Families service, focusing on families experiencing Child and Adolescent on Parent violence.

**To whom will the service provide support?** To victims and witnesses of any crime who are aged between 5 and 18 years old. The service will provide a holistic offer of support including:

- Children and Young People Independent Domestic abuse and Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs/IDVA's)
- Structured group programmes, including for domestic abuse victims
- One to one case worker support
- Therapeutic support
- Support for parents

### Other Service Highlights:

Service Highlight	Comment
Wide variety of support options for victims	Including story-telling, play therapy, restorative approaches, therapeutic listening, grounding exercises, group activities/trips, protective behaviours.
Support for parents and guardians	Parent support coordinator runs regular peer support groups. In addition, group work, online and telephone 1-1 support will be available for parents. A digital support offer will also be developed.
Service User Consultation combined with Trips and Activities	SAFE! run regular opportunities to bring CYP together with a gentle and positive activity-based approach. Run residential, fun trips and activities, and combine these with lived experience consultation activities.
Young Champions programme	Volunteering scheme for CYP with varied opportunities to get involved, for example social media content creation, story telling through blogs and case studies, peer supporters, co-facilitating workshops and Young Champions Steering Group.
Comprehensive digital support offer	Text support service with increased hours on school holidays, online resources, self-guided activities, and video content, webinar-style groups, and weekly online drop-in. Live-chat will be developed.



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### *Service to support Sexual Violence Victims*

**Awarded to:** Hope After Harm (formally Thames Valley Partnership)

**Length of Contract:** Three years (plus one, plus one extension options)

**Value:** £1,803,850.77 for the initial three-year term

**Provider information:** Hope after Harm is the incumbent provider for the VFSS and VFESS (two current adult services) in Thames Valley, and has been providing services in the area for 30 years. They are committed to offering vital support for victims and witnesses of crime.

**To whom will the service provide support?** To victims of Sexual Violence offences who are aged 18 or over. The service will provide a holistic offer of support including:

- One to one ISVA and sexual violence case worker support
- Structured group support and one off informative and drop in sessions
- Psychoeducational support
- Peer mentoring

### **Other Service Highlights:**

Service Highlight	Comment
ISVA support and a range of specialist group work provision	Service Users will be able to access support from an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor and access a range of specialist group work provision.
Embedding of lived experience within the service	Peer supporters, volunteers and members of board of trustees have lived experience. Feedback on service provision will be sought through surveys, forums, and conversations with caseworkers. A lived experience policy will be in place. Encouragement of lived experience to apply at recruitment stage.
Pathways for former Service Users to move into paid roles	Paid roles, volunteering and peer mentoring roles all available for former Service Users. These roles will be supported by managerial input as well as contact from a clinical supervisor.
Support for Service Users who are waiting for court cases	Regular check-ins to be provided by volunteers and supervised by an ISVA to those awaiting court dates. Ensure victim always feels supported and held and minimise the chance they will disengage with police/the CJS process.

### *Online Support System*

The OPCC also procured an online support system for adult victims, which will be used by the Victims First Hub and the Adult and Sexual Violence services

**Awarded to:** SilverCloud

**Provider Information:** SilverCloud is an online support platform developed by medical experts with nearly two decades of clinical research support. The platform is evidence-based and emerged from research focusing on the demand for effective and clinically validated digital products. It has received numerous awards and recognition for its innovative contributions to the mental health space.

**Service Details:** SilverCloud consists of an online self-guided or case worker guided support provision made up of 11 programmes to assist victims and improve their wellbeing. The structured courses include programmes on sleep, anxiety, stress, mindfulness, alcohol use and resilience.



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### *Case Management System*

In addition the OPCC procured a new case management system for the Victims First Hub and commissioned Victim Services, to provide victims with a seamless journey through support.

#### **Awarded to:** Make Time Count Today

**Provider Information:** Make Time Count Today evolved from collaboration with London Probation, recognising the potential for improved outcomes through enhanced technology for offenders, victims, and others affected by crime. In partnership with a coalition of police forces, they developed Make Time Count, a case management solution. As a social enterprise, Make Time Count Today is committed to reinvesting 51% of its profits into a Chances fund, dedicated to supporting vulnerable individuals in starting their own businesses.

**Service Details:** The new system will automate repetitive administrative tasks, such as structured contact via text/email, and provide a case triage function. It features a modern, intuitive interface with versatile reporting tools. Victim Services can use the system for one-click referrals, eliminating the need for victims to repeat their stories. This allows the OPCC to track a victim's progress from initial contact to case closure, including outcome data. Additionally, the system includes scheduling and booking capabilities, along with reminders for upcoming calls and sessions.

### **Next Steps**

During the remaining mobilisation period the OPCC will work closely with the providers of new services. Weekly meetings are scheduled to ensure preparedness before the services' launch. Following the commencement, a service implementation phase will focus on learning and developing services, with ongoing close collaboration and robust contract management through regular meetings and quarterly reporting. Monitoring service effectiveness is a priority, with ongoing discussions about implementing regular service user feedback mechanisms. Feedback from service users and those with lived experience will play a crucial role in shaping and improving services. The transition to an automated referral system for all victims is expected later in 2024, allowing new services to embed and deliver interventions prior to an anticipated increase in demand.

### **Conclusion**

The ongoing mobilisation period for the new victim's services is focused on managing the transition for service users, ensuring continuity of support and a smooth shift to the new services. Moving forward, the incorporation of lived experience and service user feedback will be crucial in shaping and enhancing services. The goal is to provide high-quality support that meets the needs of all crime victims in the Thames Valley.