



STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD

17th

Police and Crime Plan Priority: Supporting Victims of Crime

Title: Services for Victims of Hidden Crime in the West Midlands

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Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Strategic Police and Crime Board (SPCB) with an update on the work undertaken by the OPCC funded victim services in relation to hidden crime and how the OPCC has continued to work towards the priorities outlined in the Police and Crime Plan.

Background

2. The landscape of services for victims of hidden crime continues to change as trends at national and local levels require for more tailoring of services to meet the needs of

communities and investment in specialist local voluntary and community sector organisations.

3. Delivering comprehensive services to victims across a large geographical area with diverse communities such as the West Midlands is not without challenge, not just in terms of coverage but also in terms of the spectrum of victim need which we must respond to. Responsibility for providing, or arranging provision of, the majority of emotional and practical support services for victims of crime in the West Midlands transferred to PCCs with the introduction of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2014. A grant is received each year by each PCC from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) with which to provide victims services. The allocation is based on population data.

At a national level, the Ministry of Justice continues to commission a witness service, a homicide service, support for victims of human trafficking, services for victims of rape through national rape support centres, some national telephone helplines and other support for victims of domestic and sexual abuse.

4. There are continued efforts to ensure that victims are at the centre of the criminal justice system. The forthcoming update to the Victims' Code of Practice¹, announced in the Government's Victims Strategy, should allow victims to have clearer expectations of criminal justice agencies so that services can be better tailored to individual need. The OPCC has submitted a comprehensive response to the new proposals, having consulted with victims leads within the force and with voluntary sector leads. The consultation closed on 11th September 2019.
5. The OPCC works with and funds a range of specialist services to support victims of hidden crime, and by doing so aims to ensure that:
 - Services have a positive impact on victims by improving their circumstances around coping with the effects of crime and recovering from the harm they have experienced

¹ <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/proposed-changes-to-the-victims-code/consultation/>

- The victim experience is simplified and improved and their voice is put both at the heart of the service and delivery
 - Victims know what to expect at every stage of their journey. Build a culture of ownership for victim care by the voluntary and community sector and partners so that victim experience quality support from the first point of contact
 - There is robust needs assessments, processes and referral mechanisms, ensuring that victims have access to appropriate support, including those victims who choose not to report to the police
 - There are improved outcomes for victims.
6. The priorities for victims services are set out in the Police and Crime Plan and were informed using intelligence from the West Midlands Police Strategic Assessment, Local Police and Crime Plans, local consultation, consultation with victims of crime and the West Midlands wide consultation process. The priorities are:
- First contact, assessment and referral service
 - Domestic abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Hate crime
 - Female genital mutilation (FGM)
 - Forced marriage and honour based violence
 - Modern slavery
 - Support services for children and young people
 - Fatal road traffic collisions
 - Child sexual exploitation.

Overview of Funding 2019/20

7. West Midlands PCC received £3,346,608 from the MoJ for 2019/20. There is

currently an overspend of £10,609 as we have joined other PCC areas in committing to funding the national 'Unseen modern slavery helpline' and the NHS & Arden regional modern slavery campaign. There is underspend within the workshops pot, which will balance this overspend.

8. Victims Commission and Victims Fund allocation against priorities is summarised in the Table 1² below. A full breakdown of funding allocation is detailed on the Record of Decisions section of the PCCs website.

Please note that each project is allocated against a primary priority but many of these overlap. For example, the initial contact, assessment and referral contract includes provision for children and young people and for victims of hate crime and the rape and serious sexual offences provision includes child sexual exploitation.

Table 1

Service Provided	Victims Commission (£)	Victims Fund (£)
Initial contact, referral and assessment service & Independent Victim Advocate (IVA) service	948,920	
Restorative Justice	450,000	
Rape and Serious Sexual Offences	405,936	
Domestic Abuse	869,925	36,853
Stalking and Harassment	119,200	
Female Genital Mutilation	84,035	
Modern Slavery	78,327	
Honour-based Abuse and Forced Marriage	38,307	94,231
Fatal Road Traffic Collisions	69,820	15,974
Child Sexual Abuse	£107,561	
Child Sexual Exploitation*	£58,000	

² <https://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/transparency/record-of-decisions>

Staffing and Commissioning	179,191	
Workshops	10,000	
Other		

Overview of Service Delivery 2019/20

9. The information below summarises the services delivered in the first half of this financial year:
- More than 38,000 new referrals into PCC victims services were received, with the police being the main source of referrals.
 - Victims were supported across the full range of crime types with the most common being Violence Against the Person following by Theft and Burglary.
 - More than 13,000 victims were offered and received some form of support from the services
 - For those for whom outcomes data were available the vast majority showed improvements across the four MoJ outcomes: improved health and well-being, better able to cope with aspects of everyday life, increased feeling of safety, better informed and empowered to act.

Monitoring of services

10. Providers who are funded by the PCC are required to supply the office with monitoring information to allow us to review the delivery and outcomes of the services and ensure the services we fund are providing high quality services to victims and delivering value for money. This is particularly challenging in an environment where resources are limited and demand substantial.
11. Organisations currently complete a monitoring form which will be sent into the office and feedback provided. Going forward, we will be holding quarterly monitoring meetings with all of our funded organisations, to allow us to discuss and analyse needs and trends in more depth. This will also better enable us to make informed decisions regarding funding in the future.
12. PCCs are required to supply the MoJ with monitoring information under the grant conditions between PCCs and the MoJ.

13. The MoJ need to be able to evidence good quality data on outcomes as part of the Spending Review work. The OPCC produces high quality data on outcomes through monitoring and is still working with the MoJ and other PCC's to review the monitoring framework and how it could be improved to capture needs-rich data.

Key developments 2019/20

New contact methodology for Initial Contact, Referral and Assessment service

14. Earlier this year, the OPCC requested a review of the contact methodology for the Initial Contact, Assessment and Referral service currently being delivered by Victim Support. Since, alternative contact methodologies were proposed by Victims Support and the OPCC produced an improvement plan which details the agreed change and actions expected of Victim Support, the OPCC, WMP and third-sector specialist services in order to implement the new model effectively.

The purpose of the new model is to ensure that:

- Victim Support are delivering a support service that has the most effective outcomes for victims
- Contact methodology is used in a way that is more likely to engage with victims than the current model
- The volume of non-productive work is reduced by targeting resources on those who most need support
- Victim Support build effective partnerships with specialist services
- There is better quality of information and communication of the Victim Support brand across the West Midlands
- The model deliver best value for money.

The desired outcome is that the Victim Support service can meet, with high levels of confidence, the proposed visions and aims through improved leadership, management and performance. This in turn should allow for Victim Support to deliver an effective and efficient service to victims of crime and for the service to reflect the full benefit and value for money to the OPCC.

**Attached with this report is the Victim Support Implementation Plan*

Hate Crime

15. On the whole, the majority of our funded services will support victims of hate crime as part of their overall work with people from diverse communities.

There are few accessible voluntary sector specialist organisations available for 'victims of hate crime' per se within the West Midlands. Service provision is disparate, with victims often sourcing support from agencies that provide services for a specific group, rather than from an agency that specialises in supporting victims of hate crime. The emphasis for support often remains dependent on the protected characteristic.

As a group, victims of hate crime are underrepresented in terms of reporting crime and especially in receiving support. It is possible that victims of hate crime are unclear of the options available to them. Currently, the OPCC funds Victim Support to deliver the initial contact, assessment and referral service, which also encompasses the 'IVA service' – Independent Victim Advocate. IVA's work with all victims of crime, including Hate Crime victims, to identify the victims' needs and offer a bespoke support service.

The MoJ specifically states that the Victim's Commission funding must be spent on services that offer direct support services to victims of crime. We will often receive applications to the victim's fund which fall into the educational and/or awareness raising arena, and therefore do not qualify for Victim's funding. An improvement in specialist provision for victims of hate crime will only take place when the gap between supply and demand is identified and therefore the OPCC will begin working with WMP to analyse trends from the new Hate Crime app, and the theme for the Victim's Summit will focus on identification of and the response to Hate Crime, online abuse and technology-facilitated abuse and harassment.

West Midlands Honour-based Abuse and Forced Marriage helpline launch

16. Over the last 12-18 months the OPCC has been moving towards a commissioning model which harnesses the expertise of local community organisations in tackling hidden crimes such as Honour-Based Abuse and Forced Marriage. This move has been driven by the acknowledgement that there are a number of community organisations responding to victims within local communities who may not find it appropriate to approach larger organisations for support.

The OPCC has worked with three BAME voluntary sector organisations to create a west-midlands wide, 24 hour, honour-based abuse and forced marriage helpline³, using money from the Victim's Fund 6.

The Helpline is aimed at male and female victims age 13+, family and friends as well as practitioners seeking advice. Its purpose is to provide high quality telephone support, assistance and information services to those experiencing or at risk of Forced Marriage & Honour Based Abuse, and signpost to the most appropriate services.

Modern slavery – labour exploitation and sex trafficking

17. The OPCC has funded two modern slavery engagement officers since September 2018 through the Victims commission and both have proven to be invaluable to the Force's slavery hub. Both officers work closely with the force to share intelligence in order to identify and reach out to potential victims of slavery.

One engagement officer works to identify and support victims of labour exploitation, actively working with West Midlands Police supporting an operation around Polish and Romanian victims of human trafficking for labour exploitation purposes in the Wolverhampton / Birmingham area. This post continues to build trust within the affected community.

The second role involves frequent visits to brothels, either established parlours or, more frequently, visits to pop-up brothels to help the force in identifying women that have been trafficked into sexual exploitation. In terms of engagement, the officer has worked with sex workers in East Birmingham; undertaken ethnographic work in East Birmingham and Sandwell with a focus on mapping sex work sites and identification of potential modern slavery hot spots; and engagement with young adult females who have been victims of grooming gangs. More recently, the officer has conducted analysis of online sex work and the buyer 'community,' with a particular focus on Viva Street and Adultworks, to identify potential exploitation. Currently, the project is very broad and covers a large geographical area. The danger is that this wide focus could mean that project delivery is scattered and does not add up to a coherent whole; therefore the project is currently developing two detailed geographical case studies. These analyse the patterns of sex work in the area, the social, economic and cultural

³ <https://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/new-helpline-for-victims-of-forced-marriage-and-honour-based-abuse/>

background of the areas, and the extent of trafficking and modern slavery in the sex sector. This will create a better understanding of the issues, and a basis from which effective engagement can proceed.

West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network Victim Care & Coordination

18. The OPCC is working with WMASN to bring together groups of services that work with slavery victims to begin mapping existing victim care and support services across the West Midlands and to identify any gaps in provision. Group members have provided details of their organisations to include what is offered; who for; referral criteria; CG or not; no recourse to public funds; geographical area covered, etc.

As it stands, the Group have concerns over what happens to a slavery victim with National Referral Mechanism (NRM) 'negative conclusive grounds' who may present with multiple complex needs. These people are not being offered support and are at risk of becoming homeless or re-victimised. The group meets before the anti-slavery network to examine case studies to provide insight into how members can share best practice and to begin developing a regional victim care pathway for modern slavery which will provide support for those exiting the NRM / present with complex needs.

Stalking and harassment service

19. The PCC has funded Black Country WomensAid to deliver a specialist stalking and harassment service. The service supports women and girls over 13 who are experiencing stalking and harassment.

Victims Mission Statement 19/20

20. The OPCC has released the 19/20 Victims' Mission Statement, which sets out the priorities for the rest of the year. The statement speaks of the PCC's commitment to meeting the needs of victims by continuously seeking to create opportunities for innovation, working diligently with a wide-range of partners to improve services for vulnerable and repeatedly targeted victims of crime. The statement provides an

outline of the journey of improvement for victims in the West Midlands over the years and the contribution of partners and VCSE organisations in supporting victims, enabling them to live their lives free from the fear of crime.

The mission statement outlines the vision for the forthcoming year, which is a continued focus on improvement of support and criminal justice outcomes for victims of hidden crimes. The OPCC will continue to improve engagement with hard to reach communities by harnessing the expertise of specialist BAME organisations. The OPCC will continue to work in partnership and strive to achieve enhanced outcomes for all victims whilst they navigate through the complexities of the Criminal Justice System.

New 'For Victims' pages on PCC website

21. The OPCC 'For Victims' pages have officially gone live on the new website. The victims policy team have worked closely with the internal communications team and an external media partner to ensure that specific support information is available per crime type and per local authority area, and that our services are clearly accessible via the website.

This will now provide those who find themselves on the website looking for help the correct information they need in an easy to navigate way.

Future plans

Support for Victims of Major Incidents

22. Following the terrorist incidents in Manchester and London in 2017 the Government stood up a joint cross-government Victims of Terrorism Unit (VTU) to co-ordinate support for victims of terrorism. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has worked as part of the Unit and with nationally commissioned victim support services, the APCC and PCC offices to develop a joined-up and consistent approach across areas and a suite of products to support that approach.

The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners are looking to review and revise the Major Incidents Framework and the OPCC, with other PCC areas, will begin taking this forward in September 2019.

The OPCC is in the process of establishing a strategic link with Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) and other senior management in the local area that may be involved in responding to major crime incidents (seen as a SPOC coordinator role) and the provision from local victim services of people sufficiently trained to perform the role of a caseworker/SPOC for victims of major crime incidents. The OPCC will be working to ensure that within local victim services there is a structure/process in place to enable effective co-ordination of cases referred into victim services in the event of a major crime incident/terrorist attack.

Victims Summit

23. The Victim's Team are in the process of pulling together the annual Victim's Summit, analysing current themes and trends to explore for the event, the most prevalent being Hate Crime and online harassment and abuse.

Victims and Witnesses Delivery Group

24. The first meeting for the Group saw information gathering from different agencies detailing their compliance with the Victims Code and challenges to measuring compliance. This work is being used both to support each other to improve compliance with the Code and also to contribute to national work to strengthen the Code and improve monitoring of compliance.

Fraud Victims

25. HMICFRS's recent inspection of the national fraud response found that 'police forces respond to fraud in an inconsistent manner, often leaving victims confused and disillusioned'. The OPCC will be looking into how we can better govern the response to fraud victims and will begin scoping to establish a coordinated response from the voluntary sector to support victims and to prevent re-victimisation of fraud.

Allocation of Victim's Fund

26. We will continue to work with community organisations in order to build stronger links. This includes capacity building of the voluntary sector working with victims of crime to enable them to apply for Victims Fund.

Victims Fund application will open on 1st December 2019 and will close on 17th January 2020.