

Go/ no go evaluation

Victim Support – First contact assessment and contact service

1. Since 2015 the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner has commissioned Victim Support (VS) to provide the first contact assessment and referral service for victims of crime in the West Midlands.
2. The service has been commissioned on an annual basis and has been through a grant commissioning process [REDACTED]
3. This approach was common with many other PCC areas who when took over the commissioning responsibility for commissioning victim services, were faced with a very limited evidence base to inform their local commissioning arrangements and in effect kept on the only one established service provider in Victim Support.
4. However, since 2015 the victim services landscape has developed considerably and there is an established body of evidence that can enable commissioners to consider a wider range of options and make more informed decisions.
5. This go/no go analysis will enable the OPCC to review the potential for commencing a procurement and tendering exercise in relation to the first contact assessment and referral service.
6. the purpose of this analysis is that we can assess the opportunities of procuring a new services against any challenges we might face in doing so.

Background

7. Over the life of the commissioning relationship with VS have been frequent attempts by the OPCC to secure the quality and in depth understanding of the outcomes which they deliver.
8. [REDACTED]
9. The majority of referrals coming into service are from West Midlands Police through the automatic data transfer process. [REDACTED]
10. Amongst other things, despite receiving high levels of referral (on average 11,000 per quarter) the OPCC was concerned with the high levels of attrition. [REDACTED]
11. In 2018 the OPCC commissioning a health check in order to seek assurance that the service was sufficiently flexible and responsive enough to meet the needs of victims of crime whilst also providing value for money and in order to inform future commissioning
12. The following issues were raised by the OPCC to be included within the evaluation;
 - A need to understand the data
 - An examination of the reasons for the low levels of self-referrals in to the service
 - An understanding of why the levels of attrition (number of referrals compared to number of victims supported) appears to be high.
 - How the profile of Victim Support and its role within the Victims Commission could have been more pronounced.

- How we could strength the partnership working between VS and other specialist providers to ensure that victims were receiving support based on their individual needs.
- Concern about a duplication of service provision, particularly in the Domestic Violence arena.

Conclusions of the health check

13. the findings from the Health Check can be found here;
14. In summary the health check found VS is built on an established brand which benefits from a strong national infrastructure. This brings added value which in the West Midlands is apparent from the range of additional services that VS have been commissioned to provide.

Victim Support Improvement Plan

15. Based on the findings from the Health Check the OPCC worked with Victim Support to develop a new operating model which was implemented in 2019/2020 and can be found here;
16. The new operating model was based on learning and practice in other VS areas, focusing on engagement and conversion rates, outreach, self-referrals and broaden the scope of the services available for victims of crime.
17. The plan sought to introduce an improved contact methodology.

Review of the improvement plan

18. In order to assess the impact of the improvement plan the OPCC requested an annual review which can be found here
19. The review showed...

Covid -19

20. It is important to note that after putting in place the improvement plan with VS we entered a period of unprecedented uncertainty as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Future considerations

21. There are a growing number of victim service models that have developed since 2015 and a body of evidence on 'what works' when supporting victims and survivors of crime.
22. Developing a more bespoke approach to meet the needs of victims in the West Midlands could encourage innovation, drive out inefficiencies that could deliver a more effective and seamless journey for victims and survivors.
23. The OPCC must consider the potential risks/opportunities of developing a more bespoke model and to do so the below go/no assessment will be helpful;

| Relevant factors | Negative (3 points) | Neutral (6 points) | Positive (10 points) | Overall score |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Time and resource factors | | | | |
| Will re-commissioning the service achieve Value for money | | | | |
| Do we have the right capacity in the office to carry this out | | | | |
| Deliverability | | | | |
| Will a new service improve quality of service | | | | |
| What sort of history do we have with the client? Do they pay timely? Are they difficult or challenging, etc.? | | | | |
| Do we know who the competition is, and can we compete (on paper) against them | | | | |
| Would a new service present a possibility to expand our expertise? | | | | |
| Wider factors | | | | |
| Does this project really fit our corporate strategy and goals | | | | |
| How will our stakeholder's reaction of stakeholders be? | | | | |