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**To:** Kent Community Safety Partnership – 14<sup>th</sup> October 2014

**Classification:** For Information

**Subject:** Victims' Focus

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## Summary

This report provides an overview of the Police & Crime Commissioner's victims' services commissioning responsibilities and the commitment to delivering a victims' centred approach.

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### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) will be devolving responsibility for the commissioning of victim support services to Police & Crime Commissioners from October 2014. Currently, the MOJ issue various grants for victim services in two key areas. Firstly, the MOJ issue the Victim Support charity with a grant to deliver a national service which provides the initial referral mechanism for victims into support services and the community led support for victims of crime. This national grant will cease in October 2014 and Police & Crime Commissioners will assume responsibility for commissioning this service for their local area. Due to the tight timescales for Commissioners to have in place local arrangements it has been agreed that Victim Support will continue to deliver their current service in all areas, apart from those designated as Early Adopters, until 31 March 2015.
- 1.2 Secondly, and in addition to the grant to Victim Support, the MOJ has provided grant funding to other specialist victim support providers operating in Kent. This funding will also be devolved to Commissioners in October 2014.
- 1.3 The Commissioner is committed to ensuring that victims receive a quality service and this is reflected throughout the Police & Crime Plan. In July 2013 the Commissioner and the Kent Criminal Justice Board delivered a Victim Services Design event, which was attended by professionals from criminal justice agencies and support service providers. This event looked at identifying the opportunities to improve existing services and understand the gaps in current service provision. The key gaps and issues identified during this event included,
- Extensive contact across the agencies
  - No single point of contact for victims
  - Cross-over in statutory and support service responsibilities
  - Not enough focus on the victim
  - Offender driven triggers
  - Limited information sharing agreements

- No agreed standards and accountability across partner agencies

1.4 The Design Event was pivotal in highlighting the gaps in current service delivery, both across the criminal justice agencies and support services. It also highlighted that there were significant opportunities to improve and build upon current victim services delivery. In particular, it highlighted that future services should be tailored to the individual and their needs rather than the crime they had experienced and the criminal justice processes. In addition, future services should, as much as possible, prevent duplication, manage expectations and improve multi agency co-ordination. To take these ambitions forward the event developed the concept of a Victims' Centre. This centre would enable enhanced multi agency working, which is tailored to the individual and aligns the victim's criminal justice journey with their support needs.

1.5 The devolution of funding has enabled the alignment of the commitment to deliver a quality service for victims with the concept of the Victims' Centre and centred approach. However, Commissioners are required to have local services in place by 1 April 2015 and procurement law requires that a formal contract for support to victims be competitively tendered. However, due to deadline for services and the concept of the Victims' Centre being in development, a single tender, for a short period, with the existing provider will be progressed. This will allow a robust longer term specification to be developed which accords with the ambitions of the Design Event and crucially allows a better understanding of the current victim support offer.

1.6 Accordingly, the delivery of the Victims' centred approach has been divided into two phases. Whilst these are two distinct phases they will be delivered in tandem to ensure that development opportunities are not constrained by the timing of the phases. Partnership working is fundamental to delivery of both phases and this will be core thread throughout developments.

## **2.0 Phase One**

2.1 Phase one is focused on the following,

- The commissioning of victim support service providers for 2014/15 and 2015/16
- The co-location of the victim support service provider with the Kent Police Witness Care Unit.
- The physical building

2.2 To prepare for the commissioning of victims' services and the victims' centred approach the South East Region Police & Crime Commissioners co-commissioned Victim Focus Groups and a Victims Services Needs Assessment by Portsmouth University.

2.3 Kent held four Victims Focus Groups which consisted of a mix of gender, age, backgrounds and crime type experienced. The groups explored their experiences of crime, the criminal justice system and support requirements. In addition to the groups, in-depth telephone surveys were also undertaken. The findings from this work have provided a detailed understanding of the victims' views from first point of

contact, the criminal justice system and provision of support services. The key findings can be distilled into the following

- I want to be recognised as an individual in the system
- I have personal needs
- I want to have my say
- I want some ownership of the process

2.4 The Victims Services Needs Assessment by Portsmouth University is currently being finalised but it includes, an audit of existing services, mapping of the victims journey and recommendations to improve the services for victims. There are a number of recommendations identified for Kent which will inform the development of the commissioning plans for victims' services. In particular, the needs assessment has recommended the need for a model that provides victims of crime with one point of contact for information, support and referral to specialist support services.

2.5 The current national Victim Support service will continue until 31 March 2015, with Police & Crime Commissioners taking a more active role in the oversight of their work from 1 October 2014. This oversight will include the provision of performance management information from Victim Support.

2.6 In addition to the Victim Support contract there will be the ability to commission specialist victim support services and restorative justice services. The Commissioning Plan for both these areas is currently in development and will incorporate initial six month support for those Kent based specialist support services in receipt of MOJ funding until 1 October 2014.

2.7 The co-location of Victim Support and Witness Care Unit brings significant benefits for service delivery for victims and will provide a strong foundation on which to build phase two developments, enable closer working and provide quality service for victims. The benefits of this co-location include

- Improved information exchange and case management
- Services tailored to the individual
- Reduced duplication
- Improved pooling of multi-agency skills and expertise
- Alignment of the victims support journey with their journey through the criminal justice system.

### **3.0 Phase two**

3.1 Phase two will be delivered in tandem to phase one, which will ensure that development opportunities can be progressed at the point of identification. It will also ensure that phase one developments take into consideration sustainability for the longer term victims' centred approach.

3.2 Phase two is focused on developing the victim centred approach across the broader criminal justice system and will look to develop effective and efficient services for victims, which is tailored to the individual, whilst recognising the statutory requirements of criminal justice agencies and the capacity and capability of victim support organisations.

3.3A firm commitment has been made to partner agencies to help co-design phase two, as a quality service to victims cannot be delivered in isolation. This co-design approach will be undertaken in conjunction with the Kent Criminal Justice Board, with the first meeting being held on 9 October 2014.