

From: Ann Barnes, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner
To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel
Subject: Update on Compass House and Victim Support Work
Item & Date: Item B1 17 November 2015



Introduction:

1. This paper follows on from the report the Panel received on victim services on 9 September 2014. As noted in that paper Police and Crime Commissioners were given responsibility for the commissioning of victim support services in October 2014. This required Commissioners to ensure that a core support service was in place for victims of crime regardless of whether their crime had been reported to the police. In addition, specialist services also needed to be made available for victims with more complex needs.
2. The commissioning approach for victim services in Kent has, and continues to be supported by key groups, such as:
 - *The Victims' Panel – which consists of residents who have had a range of victim experiences in Kent. They have been pivotal in the development of Compass House and supporting the commissioning approach.*
 - *The Victim Services Co-Design Group – which is a group of professionals from criminal justice and support organisations who are tasked with making improvements to services that support victims in Kent.*
3. In addition to the above, Portsmouth University undertook a Needs Assessment of victim services in Kent and this has been pivotal in the development of our approach. The needs assessment included an audit of existing victim services, gaps in service provision and mapping of the victim's journey.
4. The Commissioner is committed to providing services to victims and witnesses that are the best that can be offered and tailored to individual needs. The help that victims seek can be simple or sometimes very complex, so a tailored approach which recognises individual needs is fundamental to Kent's approach.
5. The Kent victims services commissioning approach consists of the following:
 - Compass House;
 - Core Victim Service; and
 - Specialist Victim Services.

Compass House:

6. Compass House was launched in June 2015 and is the co-located hub for victim services in Kent. It aims to provide a central point through which victims can access support services and also supports those services to work more collaboratively. The name Compass House was chosen by the Victims' Panel, who were also involved in deciding on the decoration of the public access areas.
7. Currently, Victim Support, as the commissioned service provider and Kent Police's Witness Care Unit (WCU) are co-located within Compass House. This co-location took place in April 2015 and has resulted in greater information sharing and joint working, which is of direct benefit to services that victims receive.
8. In addition to the co-location of Victim Support and WCU, Compass House provides other facilities including:
 - A staffed reception / welcome desk.
 - Support / Counselling rooms.
 - Two Live Link suites, for vulnerable witnesses to provide evidence at court remotely.
 - Private waiting room.
 - Training room.
 - Hot desk facilities.



9. The support rooms, training room and hot desk facilities are available for other support organisations to utilise, free of charge, to meet with clients, undertake training and hold meetings, or hot desk, taking advantage of the co-location opportunities. Some of the organisations who are utilising the facilities at Compass House include:
- Rubicon Cares;
 - Citizens Advice Witness Service;
 - Court Independent Domestic Violence Advisers;
 - Family Matters;
 - MCCH; and
 - Mediation Services.
10. Compass House will continue to be developed over the coming 12 months, including the identification of further opportunities for co-location and use of facilities by other support organisations. It should be noted that victims are not required to visit Compass House to access support services as the services are delivered within Kent's communities. However, we will also be considering options for supporting service delivery in communities to ensure support is as accessible as possible.

Core Victim Service:

11. In April 2015 Victim Support were awarded a 12 month single tender contract to deliver the core victim support service from Compass House. This was to enable a greater understanding of the needs of Kent victims to be obtained to fully inform the specification of the longer term contract.
12. The new service moved away from the 'one size fits all' model delivered by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and focuses on providing a tailored and individual response for victims reporting a crime to Kent Police, British Transport Police or Action Fraud. The service is also accessible for victims who do not wish to report a crime to the police.
13. The service will reach an estimated 14,000 more victims than the previous MOJ model and will provide free and confidential support through initial telephone led support and then within communities. This service is delivered in its entirety from Compass House.
14. The types of support available are
- Emotional support.
 - Signposting and onward referral.
 - Information and advice, including practical advice.
 - Advocacy.

Specialist Victim Services:

15. Whilst Victim Support provides the core support service in Kent, there is also a need to ensure appropriate specialist support services are in place, such as trauma counselling and support for sexual assault victims. These specialist services need to work in collaboration with the core support service to ensure there are effective referral pathways for victims to support access to the right services.
16. The Portsmouth University Needs Assessment has been key to supporting the commissioning of specialist services as it mapped existing provision and gaps in these services. As a result two bidding rounds, in 2014 and 2015 were run to deliver the following specialist services:
- Trauma counselling.
 - Support for hate crime.
 - Support for children and young people.
 - Support for rape and sexual assault victims.
 - Specialist domestic abuse support.
17. Details of those organisations awarded funding can be found at <https://www.kent-pcc.gov.uk/victims-funds.html>.