

## Police and Crime Panel

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> October 2016

## Delivering Change for Victims and Witnesses

## Report of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner

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### Purpose of report

1. To update members of the Police and Crime Panel on victim services planning and commissioning priorities.

### Background

2. The OPCVC has responsibility for commissioning the majority of victim services. During 2014, work was undertaken to identify and evaluate existing support for victims and summarise needs, gaps and solutions. This work culminated in production of the first 'Delivering Change for Victims and Witnesses' report. Two years on, the report has been refreshed to provide an update on progress towards implementing recommendations made in 2014 and to set out plans to further improve the care and support available to victims and witnesses.
3. In summary, the report notes that significant progress has been made in respect of commissioning victim services. In particular:
  - A new model for delivery of referral and support for victims has been commissioned that will focus on outcome based needs assessment and care plans tailored to the needs of individual victims rather than the crime type;
  - From autumn 2016, independent advocacy will be available to support victims with mental ill health and victims of hate crime;
  - Work is currently being undertaken to strengthen support for victims of domestic abuse, rape or sexual violence, including exploring new models of supporting victims of child sexual abuse or exploitation;
  - A commissioning model has been introduced to ensure services are victim-centred, based on evidence of need, use collaborative approaches where appropriate, achieve best value, efficiency and effectiveness;
  - A review of partnership arrangements has been completed and recommendations are being implemented relating to improving collaboration, co-operation and co-ordination in terms of planning, commissioning and delivering support for victims and witnesses;
  - Victim initiated Restorative Justice has been developed along with support to introduce a range of restorative approaches that enable early intervention and seek to prevent situations escalating to a point where a criminal justice outcome is the only alternative.
4. Future plans and priorities are also outlined in the report and these include:

- Further development of formal and informal pathways across service providers and initiatives that facilitate co-ordinated support for victims;
- Development of ongoing relationships with culturally and/or geographically specific programmes and resources to ensure equitable access for victims;
- Further improving collaborative working arrangements across partners to deliver end-to-end support for victims and maximise existing/available resources;
- Exploring new ways of integrating and delivering victim-centred services;
- Helping to build and maintain collaborative relationships across all stakeholders involved in planning, commissioning and delivering support to victims of crime;
- Developing a mutual understanding of definitions relating to the rights and support of victims and witnesses and the role of individual partners in upholding these e.g. enhanced services, special measures, victim personal statements;
- Support the development of effective policies and protocols to connect the work between appropriate partners, ensuring clear definition of roles and responsibilities, to facilitate a ‘whole systems’ approach in terms of the development, delivery and evaluation of support for victims;
- Developing and putting in place formalised arrangements for monitoring and evaluation of commissioned services and measuring victim experience.

5. Service development will continue to be overseen by the County Durham and Darlington Victims and Witnesses Planning Group which is chaired by the OPCVC and includes representation from all relevant local community safety and criminal justice partners.

## Recommendations

Members of the Police and Crime Panel are asked to:

- Note the contents of the report
- Provide any comments and / or questions for the PCVC

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**Police, Crime and Victims’ Commissioner**

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