

For Information	
Public/Non Public*	Public
Report to:	Police and Crime Panel
Date of Meeting:	2 November 2015
Report of:	Update on Strategic Theme 1: Protect, support and respond to victims, witnesses and vulnerable people
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Agenda Item:	7

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UPDATE ON STRATEGIC THEME 1: PROTECT, SUPPORT AND RESPOND TO VICTIMS, WITNESSES AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report sets out to highlight NOPCC and Nottinghamshire Police's current work around Strategic Priority Theme 1: Protect, support and respond to victims, witnesses and vulnerable people. The report provides updates on commissioning activity and work to ensure that the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime 2013 is fully implemented and reviews Nottinghamshire Police's current performance around conviction and attrition rates within the Criminal Justice System.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Panel notes the report.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To provide further information to the Panel on one of the Strategic Themes contained in the Police and Crime Plan.

4. Summary of Key Points (this should include background information and options appraisal if applicable)

4.1 Update on commissioning activity

- 4.1.1 In January 2015 the PCC part-awarded a contract to Victim Support to deliver an integrated victim support service to support all victims of crime and anti-social behaviour, identity theft, road traffic collisions and hate incidents. The new service is fully delivered within Nottinghamshire. In addition, the PCC has awarded a contract to Remedi to deliver victim-initiated restorative justice support and grant funded services to support specific groups of very vulnerable victims such as victims with mental ill health and complex needs and elderly repeat victims of scams and fraud.

4.1.2 After an open procurement process, the PCC has awarded a contract to Baker Tilly to conduct an independent review of victims' services. The review will report in early November, providing:

- feedback on current victims support services;
- findings from research into the needs of victims of unreported crime with protected characteristics;
- a strategic assessment of victims in Nottinghamshire;
- a summary of best practice in victims' service provision from other police force areas;
- recommendations for improvements and efficiencies in existing victims support pathways including victims referrals;
- recommendations for a new delivery model.

Baker Tilly will report the findings of the review at the Strategic Resources meeting on 16 November 2015. A new victims' support service will be procured in 2016.

4.1.3 Following a joint review with Nottinghamshire County Council in 2014 into domestic violence services in the county, the Deputy PCC worked with the Council to co-commission a new integrated domestic abuse support service to enable domestic abuse survivors to cope and recover from crime. Contracts were awarded by Nottinghamshire County Council, as the lead agency, to Nottinghamshire Women's Aid for the north and WAIS for the south. The new services began on 1 October 2015.

4.1.4 Discussions are ongoing between the PCC and the County Council and county based Clinical Commissioning Group partners about potential co-commissioning of sexual violence support in the county.

4.1.5 In the city the Deputy PCC chairs the Domestic and Sexual Violence Joint Commissioning Group (JCG). The JCG is co-commissioning domestic violence services, with invitations to tender for prevention and domestic and sexual violence support to be published by mid October 2015. New contracts will be awarded in December and work will begin on 1 April 2016.

4.2 Update on implementation of Code of Practice for Victims' Code 2013

4.2.1 As part of her role as Chair of the Victims and Witness Board, which now reports to the Safer Nottinghamshire Board and the CDP, the Deputy PCC is overseeing the dip testing of a small number of cases with partner agencies to establish whether victims are receiving the services to which they are entitled under the Code. The dip testing will follow the journey of a small number of victims through Nottinghamshire Police and HM Courts. The work includes feedback from the victims concerned. It will be completed by the end of the October and reported to the V&W Board on 4 November.

4.3 Update on Nottinghamshire Police's current performance around conviction and attrition rates within the Criminal Justice System.

- 4.3.1 All data used in this report for Conviction rates and Attrition rates is accurate to August 2015 and is sourced from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).
- 4.3.2 In terms of Attrition rates for Magistrates Court cases Nottinghamshire have been improving slowly since Quarter 2 2014/15 which saw a gap of 4.7% against the national average, with quarter 3 of the same year actually exceeding the national average (that is less unsuccessful outcomes than the national average). Since that time the Force has fluctuated around the national average and at the latest full quarter (Q1 2015/16) the Force was only 0.2% off the national average.
- 4.3.3 Much has been done in the last 12 months under the leadership of Detective Supt Helen Chamberlain to enhance partnership working with CJS colleagues, restructure how the Force processes domestic violence cases and to understand victims of Domestic Abuse more in order to respond better to their needs. So that in terms of Domestic Violence attrition cases the Force has seen some remarkable improvement starting Q1 2014/15 with a 3.2% gap on the national average the Force is now in the position whereby more often than not we exceed the national average and for the latest reported month (August 2015) the Force exceeded the national average by 4.7%. In terms of Conviction rates for DV cases we fluctuate around the national average in both Courts but it is worthy of note that in two months the force actually exceeded 90% in a context whereby the national average has never broken 75%.
- 4.3.4 In terms of performance in the Crown Court for attrition Nottinghamshire are consistently exceeding the national average each quarter.
- 4.3.5 The Force's conviction rates for the Magistrates Court are stable ranging from 84.9% in Q1 2014 to 82.3% in the latest reported quarter. The Force's national ranking in this area is currently 34th but has been as high as 24th in the last 12 months.
- 4.3.6 In Crown Court again performance is excellent and consistently exceeds the national average with the Force being placed 7th national in Q3 2014/15.
- 4.3.7 Whilst in Nottinghamshire we have a quick turnaround from arrest to charge as a process (10 days) the volume of Domestic Abuse charges has meant that the slots for the next available charging date are often filled and therefore the case is 'bumped' to the next available slot. At times this can mean several weeks from the point of charge which in turn extends the pressure on the victim and, it is suggested, adds to our victim and witness attrition rates. We have worked together in partnership with Public Protection, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Courts to provide additional Specialist Domestic Violence Courts and also to rearrange listing to enable adjourned cases to be more flexible and slot in aside other matters to provide the victim a quicker and more responsive turnaround once in the Court listings. This issue has been highlighted and managed through various Local Criminal Justice Board sub groups and is currently returning to a more acceptable level of frequency and efficiency.

4.3.8 Unlike other areas in the East Midlands Nottinghamshire does not suffer from long delays in setting trials, however we are aware, as a regional unit, this is a potential area of concern we do monitor time to trial through a very active Prosecution Team Performance Management meeting held quarterly. Given that this group has a wealth of shared experience and is very open to new thinking for example, whether template statements could help with file quality in this area, it also examines charging decisions to ensure they are of quality and taken by the right organisation and the time taken to provide legal advice on files. All these issues are currently under review in the group and therefore by both the CPS and the Police in order to look for ways of enhancing our protection, response and support of all victims and witnesses but with particular focus on Domestic Abuse.

4.3.9 Further as we have moved towards a regional Criminal Justice provision we have also benefited from the employment of a regional witness care unit manager. This role will help us to highlight performance issues – she sits as a core part of the PTPM group – but also share best practice and to learn from others.

4 Financial Implications and Budget Provision

5.1 Commissioning victims' support services: the PCC receives a dedicated Victims' Services Grant from the Ministry of Justice which is used to commission victim support services. In addition, the PCC allocates funding from his wider community safety budget to support victims and vulnerable people. Spend on victims' support services has been protected to date from cuts and budget provision has been made to ensure that the same level of investment will continue into 2016/7.

5 Human Resources Implications

6.1 Commissioning victims' support services: advice on TUPE was undertaken during the procurement of victims and domestic violence support services.

6 Equality Implications

7.1 Commissioning victims' support services: all bidders were scored on their ability to recognise the needs of victims and survivors with protected characteristics and their action plans to address those needs.

7.2 In addition, the independent victims' service review is specifically consulting victims with protected characteristics about their support and access needs for future services.

7 Risk Management

- 8.1 Commissioning victims' support services: all bidders were asked to submit a risk register which was assessed as part of the procurement process. Risks are managed through on-going contract management.

8 Policy Implications and links to the Police and Crime Plan Priorities

- 9.1 This is an update on a strategic priority in the current plan.

9 Changes in Legislation or other Legal Considerations

- 10.1 In July 2015, MoJ consulted on revisions to the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime 2013. The revisions proposed a number of technical changes to ensure compliance with the EU Victims' Directive (2012/29/EU) which comes into force on 16 November 2015. The proposals included extending provision of the Code to victims of any criminal offence, rather than victims of crimes notifiable under the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS). Currently victims of offences such as careless driving do not receive support under the Code. Whilst the PCC supports the proposals in principle, thought needs to be given to the operational impact of the revisions.

10 Details of outcome of consultation

- 11.1 The outcomes of the consultation contained within the Baker Tilly review of victims' support services will be available later in November 2015.

12. Appendices

- 12.1 None.

13. Background Papers

13. None.