



WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

5 APRIL 2019

Development of a West Yorkshire Victims' Strategy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide Panel members with a copy of the draft Victims' Strategy and consult with members on its content.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The PCC plays a key role in commissioning and funding a wide range of services for victims. However he has an equally important role in championing the interests of victims. In October 2017, as part of a restructuring of the OPCC, a dedicated Victims Services Adviser was appointed within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. This is one of three Adviser posts, the others being a Criminal Justice Adviser and Safeguarding Adviser.
- 2.2 One of the developments envisaged when the post was created was the development of a victims' strategy. Work has been undertaken on it over the last six months, and the attached draft (Appendix 1) has reached the stage where consultation with partners and the Police and Crime Panel is required.
- 2.3 The draft has been discussed within a number of partnership forums/groups including the LCJB Victims and Witnesses Group at its meeting on 9 January, the West Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership Forum on 25 February and the Partnership Executive Group (PEG) on 15 March. The initial feedback received has been positive.

3. Reasons for developing a strategy

- 3.1 Whilst there is no statutory requirement to develop a victims' strategy, to date, within the OPCC there has been a number of reasons identified, highlighted below:
 - (i) to focus on responding to the needs and views of victims; sharing data we have about needs and views; identifying gaps in our understanding
 - (ii) move away from a compartmentalised / specialist approach, to a more holistic approach across all victims regardless of crime type, age, gender / identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability
 - (iii) develop more collaboration between statutory and third/independent sectors; within the criminal justice system; across the public sector e.g. councils, NHS

- (iv) maximise the use of local discretion to do what is right for West Yorkshire
- (v) maximise influence over decisions taken nationally that affect West Yorkshire victims – such as the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Victims’ Strategy
- (vi) address key gaps e.g. victims of Anti-Social Behaviour; businesses / organisations as victims

3.2 There are also a number of key facts that have influenced development of a strategy, including;

- (i) Approximately 200,000 individuals reported crimes to West Yorkshire Police in the 12 months to June 2018
- (ii) This number is increasing year by year, and so are the number of repeat incidents
- (iii) Victims are not evenly distributed across West Yorkshire; they are concentrated in particular council wards (where they live/where crime was committed)
- (iv) Many victims do not report to the Police. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates that 57% of violent crime victims do not report. CSEW can therefore be a better indication of actual need rather than Police figures.
- (v) Overall victim satisfaction with the Police response is declining and this may well drive down reporting further
- (vi) PCC annual budget from the MoJ for victims’ services is £2.5M which has been a standstill for last 3 years.
- (vii) The MoJ is considering the devolution of monitoring of compliance of the Victims Code to PCCs.
- (viii) The research report from Victim Support “Victim of the System” and the recommendations made <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/more-us/policy-and-research>

4. Governance

- 4.1 It is proposed that the strategy should be jointly owned by both the PEG and the LCJB. This is to make sure that all the relevant agencies and partners that need to work together to develop and deliver it are involved.
- 4.2 The draft strategy was discussed at the LCJB Executive on 5 March and the PEG on 15 March. A final draft will go for approval at the June meetings of the LCJB and PEG.
- 4.3 CSPs also have a vital role, in taking a strategic view of issues for victims at the district level. The response from CSPs was positive at the CSP Forum in February; however they are encouraged to circulate the draft and undertake wider consultation. The draft has been shared with each of the 5 CSP Executive Boards for consideration by all the members who sit on this partnership.

5. Consultation questions

- 5.1 As part of the consultation process we are asking partners and Panel members to consider the below questions and would welcome any feedback ahead of finalising the strategy:
 - The key aspects of a West Yorkshire victims’ strategy?
 - What can we do to understand the needs and perspectives of victims better, including those who do not report to the police?

- What do you think about the draft strategic objectives?
- Where should responsibility for the delivery of a strategy rest at both partnership levels and in individual organisations?
- How can victims / witnesses themselves be engaged in this discussion?
- What else needs to be considered?

6. Next Steps

6.1 Some further development of the strategy is envisaged. This includes the addition of:

- a SMART action plan to deliver the strategic objectives
- inclusion of quotes from victims that link to case studies
- a timeline of key points in the development of victims services in West Yorkshire
- appropriate photos and diagrams

6.2 When the strategy is launched an awareness raising campaign is being considered, aimed at stakeholders