



## WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

15 September 2017

### PCC UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE PANEL IN THEIR VICTIM AND WITNESS COMMISSIONING SCRUTINY REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

It is slightly over one year since the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel published their review of the PCC's commissioned services. The Review identified 14 recommendations, an update was provided in March 2017 and six months on this paper provides further progress in relation to the three areas Panel wished to focus on - the core referral contract, development of video link facilities and further specialist training.

#### **Progress to date**

##### Core Referral and Local Support Services

Police and crime commissioners became responsible for commissioning local victim core referral mechanisms and local support services from 1 April 2015. This service was previously commissioned by the Ministry of Justice when Victim Support held the national contract.

An exercise was undertaken during the latter part of 2014 to identify if there were any other providers in the market. As none could be identified an exemption was gained from Regional Procurement to allow West Yorkshire to contract directly with Victim Support on a 12 month basis with the option to extend for a further 12 months. The 12 month extension was agreed on 3 November last year.

West Yorkshire's contract with Victim Support for the core referral mechanism and local support services comes to an end on 31 March 2018.

Last September the PCC carefully considered an option paper for the delivery of these key services and as there are now other providers in the market decided to undergo a full procurement exercise for the service.

A specification has been developed; a market engagement was held in April; and the opportunity will be advertised in September 2017. It is hoped that the contract will be awarded towards the end of the year to enable any mobilisation and implementation to take place prior to the contract beginning on 26 March 2018.

##### Court video remote evidence link facilities in Halifax and Wakefield for vulnerable victims

Good progress is being made in preparing for the introduction of video link facilities directly into Leeds and Bradford magistrates courts in both Halifax and Wakefield town centre. The aim at this stage is focused on supporting vulnerable victims and witnesses particularly those who have suffered domestic or sexual abuse.

Earlier this year Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) published a target operating model which has assisted greatly in the planning and ensuring processes are followed rigorously. Partners involved in the project have visited a project in the North East of England to identify good practice and particularly to view and discussed how the processes work. This has enabled the Victim and Witness Group to draw together a shared

multi-level agreement to ensure the court links and the key agencies involved are in a position to respond to court procedures.

Estimates have been received for installing the links and any building works needed. The project is now awaiting sign off from the Judiciary and HMCTS Head of Crime which it is hoped will take place during September in accordance with the national protocol.

#### Provision of specialist training (victim services)

There is recognition that those delivering victims services on behalf of the PCC need to have the skills, knowledge, experience and willingness for continued development. For all procurement exercises undertaken for victims' services this is made a key requirement and providers must be able to evidence that this occurs.

For the Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) contract the PCC offered an additional amount for training and development of key workers within the service. This was an exceptional offer for a service which requires specialist training.

Delivery of restorative justice within West Yorkshire has also included an element of development opportunities with workshops delivery across the County.

A workshop has been delivered on domestic and sexual abuse, and while the focus was working with partners to take forward the new strategy there was a large element of peer learning within West Yorkshire with key speakers from Mountain Healthcare on the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), the Saima Afzal Solutions on the BAME Victims Champion role and West Yorkshire Police presented a whole system approach to domestic abuse.