



Avon and Somerset Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Victim Services Re-commissioning: Strategy and Intentions

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The OPCC welcomes feedback on these proposals during the engagement period which will remain open until 3 June 2018.

Feedback is welcomed [online](#)

The OPCC will also seek to inform partners at key meetings and events. Should you want the OPCC to brief your organisation please contact [Donna King](#).

Introduction

This document sets out the Avon and Somerset Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (OPCC's) intentions with regard to the commissioning of support services for victims in Avon and Somerset. In order to do this it provides national and local context for the OPCC's proposals and commissioning strategy in order to seek views on the commissioning of support services for victims of crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in Avon and Somerset from April 2019.

Victim Services in Avon and Somerset 2015/16 - 2018/19

In April 2015, after a period of engagement and procurement, a range of new services for victims commenced delivery in Avon and Somerset. These services, alongside Lighthouse sought to meet the ambitions in the PCC's 2013-2017 Police and Crime Plan:

"I want to improve victim's satisfaction with and influence over the services they receive. I will do this by supporting the development of a joined-up approach to victim services that has the voice of victims at its heart. I will be a fierce advocate for all victims, particularly victims of targeted offences such as hate crime and young people who are more likely to be victims of crime than any other group."

Ministry of Justice Devolution of commissioning funds

The introduction of these services was made possible following a Government consultation in 2012, *Getting it Right for Victims and Witnesses*, in which the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) set out its ambitions for the introduction of a mixed model of national and local commissioning of support services for victims of crime.

Funding was issued to PCCs as a grant under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 to support 'victims, witnesses or other persons affected by offences'. The MoJ Commissioning Framework stated that PCCs may wish to make funding available from other sources to support victims of antisocial behaviour (ASB) which the PCC did following engagement on the OPCC's commissioning intentions. A summary of the conditions of this grant are at **Annex A**.

European Union Directive (establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime)

EU Directive 2012/29/EU (**Annex B**) put in place a number of provisions that informed the design of services locally:

- The development of an online victim '[service directory](#)' available for all to access regardless of whether or not they have reported to the police
- A [telephone number](#) available as part of the Emotional Support Service for all victims to call for advice on how to access support organisations.

- The introduction of a common needs assessment tool that the Integrated Victim Care Teams use, along with service providers of commissioned services, to ensure an equitable approach for all victims.
- Support that is accessible across these services to all victims, including those who do not report to the police.
- All providers are required to be accessible to victims, through initiatives that ensure they build a strong presence in their local communities and encourage victims to come forward and seek help and support.

Victim Support Services 2015/16 – 2018/19

The service model that was established during this period was based on an integrated end-to-end approach. The services up for recommissioning are part of a wider integrated victim care model:

The Integrated 'end-to-end' approach



Lighthouse Victim Care teams are based at three hubs across Avon and Somerset in Keynsham, Bristol and Bridgwater to ensure that each victim receives the tailored support and services they need locally to them. All teams have:

- An Area Manager
- Team Leaders
- Victim and Witness Care Officers
- Team Support Officer
- Co-located Multi Agency Partners

On average Lighthouse deal with 2500+ enhanced victims a month across the three hubs, which accounts for about 27%+ of all crime and incidents recorded.

Lighthouse work with victims of crime who are entitled to an enhanced service in accordance with the Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) guidelines. This includes:

- **Victims of a serious offence**
- **Persistently targeted victims**
- **Vulnerable victims**
- **Intimidated victims**

All cases are referred into the service through the police and allocated to a Victim and Witness Care Officers (VWCO). Lighthouse does not accept external or self-referrals.

A large percentage of the people Lighthouse work with are repeat victims and as such they try to ensure where possible that they are allocated to the same officer each time in order to build a positive relationship and ensure consistency of support.

The VWCO's role is to:

- Compile background checks to ensure safeguarding needs are met and to inform our support of the victim and appropriate means of contact.
- Make contact with the victim via the phone to complete a needs assessment to establish any vulnerability they may have, and any support networks already in place.
- Coordinate referrals to support services that may be of benefit to our enhanced victims – only with their permission
- Act as a single point of contact for any questions or queries victims may have.
- Schedule follow up calls to ensure support requested is being received.
- Victims are given the direct number of their allocated VWCO so they can get straight through to them.

In all Domestic Abuse cases referred to Lighthouse, consideration will be made by the VWCO of the need to make referrals into Social Care, Health and Education for Child in Need, Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult concerns.

If the victim's case proceeds into the court process the VWCO will remain with them throughout the Criminal Justice Process.

In addition, Lighthouse provides on-going support, updates and information to **all** victims and witnesses going through the court system. Lighthouse is currently managing around 2600 live criminal prosecutions at any one time across all three hubs. The role of a VWCO in this instance is to ensure that all witnesses understand their role within the case, whether they are required to give evidence and how, updates on hearing to take place and the outcome of hearings once they have occurred. Lighthouse will also support witness to ensure they have had opportunity to complete a Victim Personal statement, have access to a pre-trial visits, Witness Service support on the day and special measures where appropriate and applicable.

Lighthouse also support personally targeted victims of Anti-Social Behaviour in the same way in which VCOP enhanced victims are supported. Lighthouse will liaise closely with ASB Coordinators and Neighbourhood Policing teams where needed to support the ongoing activity around ASB management.

The most vulnerable of victims are referred from Lighthouse for specialist support. Victims that have not reported to the Police or are not involved with Lighthouse are able to self-refer to victim support services.

The support services commissioned by the OPCC which enable the delivery of this model to help victims to cope and recover are:

Service	Provider	Value	Description
Lighthouse Integrated Victim (from October 2014)	Avon and Somerset Constabulary	£2,196,000	Victims, who are vulnerable, intimidated, persistently targeted or experience serious crime will be offered practical and emotional support and guided through the criminal justice process by specially-trained staff. The service has teams made up of both police staff and independent support workers and volunteers.
Emotional Support Service for Victims of Crime and ASB	Victim Support	£296,973 p.a. (contract, 3 years +1)	Emotional and practical support for victims of crime and ASB, available both to those who report to the Police and those who do not. This service also receives all 'out of area' referrals – where an individual was a victim of crime in another area but lives in Avon and Somerset – and self-referrals. In these cases the Emotional Support Service acts as the 'referral mechanism' – referring victims to the most appropriate service.
Adult Advocacy Service - AVoice with SARI	The Care Forum (lead) working with SEAP and SARI	£329,467 p.a. (grant, 3 years +1)	AVoice is a specialist advocacy support service for victims of crime or ASB who require enhanced support relating to mental health, learning difficulties, physical disabilities, problems associated with isolation, race, religion, or sexuality. Available both to those who report to the Police and those who do not.
Children and Young People Advocacy Service	Young Victims' Service	£165,000 p.a. (grant, 3 years +1)	Young Victims' Service is a specialist advocacy support service for young victims of crime and ASB up to the age of 18 and victims of crime and ASB aged 18-25 where additional needs are identified. Available both to those who report to the Police and those who do not.
Independent Sexual Violence Advisor Service (ISVA)(Missing Link)	Safelink (Missing Link)	£194,580 p.a. (contract, 3 years +1) plus CSA fund of £67,753 p.a. since 16/17 and NHS England contribution of £80,000 since 18/19.	Specialist advocacy support for victims of rape and sexual assault. Available both to those who report to the Police and those who do not.

Modern Slavery Support Service	Unseen UK	£38,595 (annual grant)	Specialist support service focusing on the needs of victims of modern slavery before engaging in nationally commissioned services as well as the period after that support ends. Available both to those who report to the Police and those who do not.
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Since 1 June 2017 the following force-wide Restorative Justice Service has also been in operation:

Service	Provider	Value	Description
Restorative Approaches Avon and Somerset - Restorative Justice Service Across Avon and Somerset	Bristol Mediation in collaboration with the Bristol Neighbourhood Justice Partnership	£179,000 p.a.	A holistic approach that supports the victim, their family and communities enabling their voice to be heard and empowering them to move towards closure and for perpetrators to have greater insight into the impact of their behaviour.

TOTAL ANNUAL SPEND:	£3,547,368
PCC budget contribution to Lighthouse (out of scope)	£906,000
Avon and Somerset Constabulary budget contribution to Lighthouse (out of scope)	£1,290,000
TOTAL VALUE OF SERVICES IN-SCOPE FOR RECOMMISSIONING	£1,351,368

In addition to these services, victims are referred and signposted to a wide range of other services across Avon and Somerset in order to meet their needs. The Lighthouse [website](#) has a directory of services to enable access.

National context

Since the introduction of new services in 2015, there have been a number of significant national changes that need to be considered in the recommissioning of victim services:

Victim's Code of Practice changes

Since November 2015, victims of road traffic offences have been entitled to an enhanced service under VCOP.

Ministry of Justice funded services

It should be noted that there are a number of services directly commissioned and funded by the Ministry of Justice. These provide support to:

- Adult victims of modern slavery;
- Families bereaved by homicide and road traffic crime;
- Victims of terrorism;
- Victims of rape and sexual violence; and
- Victims and witnesses at criminal courts.

Devolution agenda

Following a letter to PCCs from the Justice Minister in May 2016, the MoJ has been in dialogue with OPCCs via the Association of PCCs (APCC) regarding the potential to devolve a number of nationally commissioned services to PCCs. At the time of writing those discussions have been largely focused on the Court Based Witness Service. The APCC understand that the present arrangements for this service will be extended for a further 12 months until April 2019.

Should Ministers take the decision to devolve funding for the Court Based Witness Service to PCCs from April 2019 this would need to be taken into account in the commissioning of the services that are the subject of this document. Given that there has been no clear indication that this will happen, at present these intentions are based on the assumption that the Court Based Witness Service will remain the commissioning responsibility of the MoJ.

MoJ Outcomes Framework development

Throughout 2017 the MoJ developed an outcomes framework for victim services in collaboration with OPCCs. This seeks to bring some standardisation to the reporting from OPCCs to the MoJ and Ministers. This will be important to consider when designing local specifications and performance frameworks. It is anticipated that this will be introduced in April 2018.

Services are currently working to meet the following MoJ outcomes to help victims *cope* and *recover*, more specifically:

Improved health and well-being
Key outcomes relating to mental health include coping with trauma (such as bereavement through homicide); reducing stress, anxiety and depression; and increasing confidence, independence and resilience. Increasing victim well-being by listening to victims' experiences and acknowledging the impacts of the crime are also important aspects of support provision. Outcomes related to physical health include improved access to healthcare services, reduced substance misuse, access to emergency healthcare for victims of violence, and the detection and treatment of sexually transmitted infections for victims of sexual violence.
Increased safety and perceptions of safety
Reducing the risk of re-victimisation and increasing victim perceptions of their own safety are important outcomes, and might be particularly relevant for victims of violent crime. Reduced risk assessment scores, enhancing victims' feelings of their own safety, target

hardening¹ and re-housing victims away from perpetrators are all potential indicators of increased safety.

Re-integration

This captures a wide range of outcomes related to victims leading fulfilled lives and, as far as possible, returning to the lives they had before the crime. Outcomes include returning to work or education, finding housing, receiving financial support, such as a successful compensation claim, reducing social isolation, and improving relationships with others.

Feeling informed

The need for information is a priority for victims of crime, so an important outcome for service providers is that victims feel more informed about the support available to them, as well as developments in CJS processes (where relevant). Ensuring that information provided is accessible, timely and accurate is critical to achieving this outcome.

Improved experience of the CJS

It is not the job of services supporting victims to affect CJS outcomes. However, they do play an important role in supporting victims during their contact with the CJS, possibly improving victims’ experiences of it. Outcomes include victims feeling supported and informed about developments in their case.¹

MoJ Victims Strategy

The Government announced in January 2017 that it would be ‘inappropriate to legislate’ further on victims policy in advance of the Government setting out our strategy for victims. As such over the last year the MoJ has been drafting a Victims Strategy which is due to be published imminently.

The OPCC intends to commission services that are in line with the MoJ’s Victims Strategy once published.

Victims Commissioner for England and Wales

The commissioning of victim services in Avon and Somerset will aim to support the work of the Victims Commissioner and her [Strategic Plan](#).

Services will also be required to have due regard to [Standards](#) set by the Victims Commissioner.

Violence Against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations

In December 2016 the Home Office published the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) National Statement of Expectations (NSE).² This document sets out what local areas need to put in place to ensure their response to VAWG issues is as collaborative, robust and effective as it can be so that all victims and survivors can get the help they need. While focusing on a specific set of crime types, the general commissioning approach within

¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/217386/measuring-outcomes-for-victims-of-crime.pdf

²<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/violence-against-women-and-girls-national-statement-of-expectations>

this framework translates to the commissioning of victim services. As such the commissioning of victim services in Avon and Somerset will align with the spirit of this document and make use of the accompanying Toolkit where relevant.³

Restorative Justice Action Plan

Services will need to take into account the MoJ's Restorative Justice Action Plan 2016-2018 which sets out how the MoJ in partnership with the PCC and others intends to develop access to restorative justice, raise awareness and understanding and ensure high quality services.⁴

Local context

There have been a number of local developments which impact upon the commissioning of victim services:

New Police and Crime Plan

The PCC's Police and Crime Plan sets out Sue Mountstevens' vision and objectives for Avon and Somerset. It includes the following four headline priorities. The elements most relevant to the recommissioning of victim services are highlighted below:

1. Protect the Most Vulnerable from Harm

This priority re-affirms the PCC's commitment from the first term to focus on crimes such as:

- Child Abuse inc. Female Genital Mutilation
- Exploitation including Modern Slavery and Child Sexual Exploitation
- Domestic Abuse including so called 'honour' based abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Hate Crime

This priority includes an objective that organisations across the force area work together to 'provide an effective victim-centred response'. There is emphasis on meeting the needs of our most vulnerable, including those in mental health crisis. It also includes an objective to 'ensure the provision of services to enable victims to cope and recover' and the commissioning of services is the primary way that the OPCC will work towards fulfilling this objective.

"Effective support services are central to enabling victims to cope and recover. I want to work with our partners to explore opportunities around the commissioning of services which

³<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/violence-against-women-and-girls-services-local-commissioning>

⁴<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/restorative-justice-action-plan-november-2016-to-march-2018>

meet the needs of our most vulnerable.”

In addition this priority has an emphasis on prevention and early intervention.

2. Strengthen and improve your local Policing Teams

This priority includes the following objective:

Victims are Satisfied with the Service they have received

“I want to improve victim satisfaction with the services they receive. I will work closely with the police and partners to ensure that victims experience high quality, joined-up support is tailored to their needs and that the voice of the victim continues to be heard in the criminal justice system

Restorative justice – which brings together those harmed by crime or anti-social behaviour and those responsible for the harm – empowers the victim by providing an opportunity to explain the real impact of the crime. I am keen to see an increase in the offer and take up of restorative justice because government research shows that restorative justice has a positive impact on victim satisfaction and reducing reoffending.

I will ensure all the services I commission will support victims in a way that helps victims to cope and recover from their experience.

The police must consistently identify, protect and support victims and deliver the service promise.”

3. Ensure that Avon and Somerset Constabulary has the right people, right equipment and right culture

This priority includes the objective that ‘all victims, witnesses, suspects and detainees will be treated fairly and respectfully’.

4. Work together effectively with other Police forces and key partners to provide better services to local people.

This priority includes the objective to ‘transform the local criminal justice services in order to make it speedy, effective and improve the experience of victims’.

Criminal Justice Review

The PCC in partnership with the Avon & Somerset Criminal Justice Board has jointly appointed a Senior Responsible Officer to deliver a programme of work to transform the local criminal justice service. The programme builds on work carried out by the Behavioural Insights Team in 2017 to understand barriers and recommend interventions to transform a disjointed system into a streamlined local criminal justice service and to improve the experience of victims on their journey. The programme will run over two years, until December 2019. Opportunities to strengthen arrangements for capturing the voice of

victims and ensuring that learning is used to drive service improvements will be considered as part of the programme of work.

Lighthouse

A business case for change is currently being consulted upon which will see the functions and staffing of Constabulary Lighthouse and safeguarding teams more closely aligned. This will further support the safeguarding and support of Avon and Somerset's most vulnerable and at risk children, young people and adults.

Headline data from the Needs Assessment

From November 2017 to January 2018, Perpetuity Research Consultants undertook a victims' needs assessment, commissioned by the OPCC. The assessment included literature reviews, analysis of data and engagement with local stakeholders including the services in scope for recommissioning.

Local recorded crime trends and caseload figures for OPCC commissioned services suggest that referral levels to victim services are likely to continue to increase in the immediate future. Within the VCOP defined 'priority' crime types, domestic abuse and hate crime currently represent the largest volume of recorded crimes (and recorded levels are increasing), but notably high increases were observed in human trafficking and false imprisonment (although based on small numbers) suggesting that these issues will remain a key focus. This is echoed in the 2017 *Tipping Point* report which states that the Force faces 'increasingly complex challenges to keep communities, vulnerable victims and individuals safe'⁵ and that '...our demand is growing and becoming ever more complex.'⁶

The overall impression from the needs assessment process is that victim services are undertaking a much needed service and this is largely considered to work well and be effective for victims. OPCC service providers were very committed to the work they were undertaking and enthused about the interaction between services and the creativity and flexibility they were enabled and encouraged to use by the OPCC. The general view is that the OPCC commissioned services provide an effective foundation in Avon & Somerset, albeit some further refinement is needed as these services become more established.

However, a number of gaps were thought to exist across Avon & Somerset (although this is not uncommon and is largely reflective of the national situation). The gaps predominantly reflect issues of demand versus capacity, i.e. that more of the same is needed, but also that some types of support are not available. Those most consistently mentioned among stakeholders were a lack of support for those who do not qualify as vulnerable victims under VCOP and those who do not meet the threshold for access to statutory services to deal with additional needs, along with those in need of therapeutic support. Moreover, some services are only available in certain areas (Somerset was perceived by many to be lacking and generally there was a perception that in the more rural areas there was less provision).

⁵ <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/media/29964806/safe-sustainable-policing-report.pdf> p.3

⁶ <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/media/29964806/safe-sustainable-policing-report.pdf> p.4

It was also felt that some types of victims of crime (in terms of personal attributes and also crime type) may not be attempting to access support. In terms of personal attributes, young people, those with mental health issues, BME communities, males and LGBTQ were most commonly mentioned by stakeholders. In terms of crime types, sexual offences, CSE, hate crime (and disability crime was specifically noted) and ASB were most commonly cited.

The other main issue apparent (for victims who come into contact with it) is the negative impact that interacting with the criminal justice process can have. Possible refinements to the local approach were also highlighted in relation to commissioning, partnership working, defining vulnerability, and overcoming barriers to accessing services. The potential to use existing services outside of those designed to work with victims, that are currently underused but could provide certain aspects of support was also explored. Each of these aspects is considered in detail within the main body of the report which is available on the PCC website.

Headline recommendations from needs assessment

In order to further develop services, the assessment made recommendations that fell into eight categories:

1. Recognising and Celebrating Progress
2. Meeting changing needs
3. Partnership and integrated working
4. Awareness raising
5. Addressing gaps in service provision and reaching victims
6. Improving victims' experience of the CJS
7. Ensuring Best Practice
8. Developing consultation

This commissioning intentions document seeks to put forward a model that addresses the key issues and recommendations from the needs assessment. An OPCC response to each of the Recommendations in the assessment will be published as part of the Commissioning Plan once the engagement period is over. This will include actions to be taken on areas out of scope for recommissioning (e.g. Lighthouse).

Funding Envelope

MoJ funding is allocated annually to PCCs. For 2018/19 the MoJ has allocated the following budget for victim services to Avon and Somerset:

Police Area	Force	Population Proportion [1] [2]	Victim Grant	CSA	Total Allocation
Avon and Somerset		2.88%	£1,818,002	£135,437	£1,953,439

[1] Based on ONS' Mid-2016 Population Estimates for England and Wales (aged 0+) [the latest available estimates]

[2] Population proportions shown to two decimal places. Minor differences in grants compared with 2017/18 allocations result from very small changes in the population proportions which are only visible beyond two decimal places

The victim services recommissioning budget has been set on the assumption that the annual allocations throughout this period it will remain at the 18/19 level. Any changes to the funding available to the PCC will need to be worked through with providers.

In order to also support victims of ASB, the PCC has made available other funds to supplement the MoJ grant. Additionally, as part of the OPCC's partnership to deliver SARC services, NHS England has committed £80k p.a. for three years from 2017/18 with the option to extend for two further years to contribute to the provision of ISVAs for Children and Young People in Avon and Somerset.

It should be noted that the following services are out of scope for this recommissioning budget as explained elsewhere in this document:

- Lighthouse
- SARC
- CSE
- CSA grants

As such below is the total annual budget for the recommissioning of services is as follows:

Funding Source	Amount
Ministry of Justice Victims Grant	£1,953,439
Additional PCC Contribution	£807,542
NHS England CYP ISVA Contribution	£80,000
Minus separately commissioned services (out of scope)	£1,489,613
TOTAL BUDGET FOR RECOMMISSIONING	£1,351,368

It should be noted that this budget has been protected by the PCC and sees no reduction compared to the initial round of commissioning.

In scope

The OPCC's intentions include the following areas:

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

As part of the initial commissioning of victim services, the PCC took the decision to allocate additional resources to ensure parity of support for victims of crime and ASB. This works to

provide support according to need not crime type and as such it is proposed that the services to be commissioned will continue to include support for victims of ASB.

Services

The following services are in scope for recommissioning. As such, all services will be preparing Exit Plans in readiness for the new contract period:

- Emotional Support Service
- Vulnerable Adults Service
- Young Victims Service
- Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVAs) Service
- Modern Slavery Support service
- Restorative Justice Service

Out of Scope

A number of services, crime types and approaches are out of scope for this recommissioning exercise:

Lighthouse

Lighthouse Victim and Witness Care is a co-funded internal Constabulary department and as such is not part of this recommissioning exercise. The Constabulary has a duty under VCOP⁷ to provide access to an enhanced service for victims identified by the code as being entitled to one. The Constabulary's duty under VCOP to provide a post-charge service in liaison with the CPS and HMCTS is also provided by Lighthouse through a seamless single point of contact end to end provision.

Enabling the access to the enhanced service provision is facilitated through a Constabulary owned department as issues of consent between officer and Lighthouse are not present. As such the greatest volume of victims are able to choose to engage with the service. Furthermore, as an internal department victim care needs are not viewed in isolation as Lighthouse staff are able to access police information to check for patterns of victimisation and escalation of risk. This supports the identification of appropriate support service provision to meet the widest level of needs, alongside greater information availability regarding wider concerns to be passed to providers through the consent based onward referral pathways.

Lighthouse is an important mechanism for the referral and coordination of support for victims and as such is out of scope for recommissioning. However, the OPCC will be working with the Constabulary to take forward recommendations that have arisen from the Needs Assessment or will do from the Engagement process that impact upon Lighthouse processes or ways of working.

⁷https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/476900/code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime.PDF

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The OPCC is the lead commissioner of a specialist CSE service, working with Bath and North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council, Somerset County Council and South Gloucestershire Council as co-commissioners. This service is delivered by Barnardo's with the current contract covering the period of October 2017-March 2020. The service works across Avon and Somerset, providing support to children and young people subject to CSE who meet the threshold for this service as well as advice, support and guidance to professionals who work with. As such this service is out of scope for this recommissioning exercise.

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

The OPCC is co-commissioner of the SARC, working with the Lead Commissioner NHS England. The SARC provides crisis support and forensic medical examinations for victims of sexual assault. Throughout 2017 NHS England recommissioned SARC services across the South West and new providers were appointed early in 2018 to prepare for service commencement in October 2018. As a result of this, SARC services are out of scope for this recommissioning exercise.

Child Sexual Abuse Fund and therapeutic services

Since 2016-17 the OPCC has been allocated MoJ funding to support victims of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) following a Home Office allocation process the previous financial year via the Norfolk OPCC. The amount of funding the PCC received in Avon and Somerset in 2016/17 was significantly less than the amount of funding that Avon and Somerset providers received in 2015/16 from the Home Office. With an uplift from core OPCC funds, a smaller reduction was passed onto providers. In 2017 the OPCC engaged with recipients regarding the future of the fund and it was agreed to roll over the existing arrangements for 2018/19.

As co-commissioner of the SARC, the OPCC is working in collaboration with NHS England on sexual assault services. This includes the aspiration in the South West Recommissioning of SARCs to transfer the responsibility for the commissioning of therapeutic services to Clinical Commissioning Groups(s) in line with NHS England SARC Specification 30.^[1] The OPCC and NHS England are working towards fulfilling this ambition. The OPCC does not anticipate a reduction of investment in services as a result of such a change.

As such it is proposed that therapeutic services are out of scope for this exercise and are to be considered as part of options for the best use of the CSA fund working in collaboration with health commissioners.

Police and Crime Grant

^[1] <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/service-spec-30.pdf> p.25

The PCC awards grants to the five Local Authorities in Avon and Somerset to support the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan. It is proposed that this continues to and is not affected by the recommissioning of victim services. It is important that the limited funds available are used as most needed at a local level. To support this, where local commissioners use the grant to fund victim services the OPCC will work with them to ensure services suitably align. It is through this fund that the OPCC supports vital victim support services such as specialist domestic abuse services.

Commissioner's Community Action Fund (CCAF)

It is recognised that the CCAF provides small grants to a range of organisations that provide support to victims. The fund is important to allow for local and specialist providers to take forward pilots, projects and initiatives throughout the financial year (grants are awarded quarterly). This fund will continue to award grants and is not affected by the recommissioning of victim services.

Reducing Reoffending

It is important that in parallel to supporting victims, we work to tackle offending behaviour and reduce the harm caused. This area of work is being led by a new Avon and Somerset Reducing Reoffending Board, chaired by the PCC and is out of scope for this recommissioning exercise.

Principles

It is proposed that the principles followed for the commissioning of victim services in 2014/15 are followed for recommissioning, with a number of additions:

1. Support should be driven by need not offence type

A baseline, generic support service commissioned as part of this approach will ensure that a minimum level of emotional support is available to all victims of crime and ASB, regardless of offence type or where in Avon and Somerset the victim lives.

This approach is supported by the needs assessment which states that:

Given personal circumstances influence victims' needs, the best practice is to focus on victims' experiences with the incident instead of the type of incident.

2. Additional specialist support should be available for the most vulnerable

Many vulnerable victims display needs which may require more specialist support. As such, the OPCC proposes a staged approach, with specialist services being commissioned for those victims who require more intensive support. This aligns with

the complexity of cases noted in the needs assessment.

3. *Continuity of care for victims is paramount*

This is a key element of the model; effective partnership working between Lighthouse and victim support providers is central to the proposal. This is supported by the needs assessment's analysis of good practice.

Moreover, early engagement with existing providers will take place so as to ensure effective transition arrangements are established as new contracts commence. This will ensure that there is no adverse impact on support arrangements for existing service users.

4. *The full commissioning cycle should be consultative and collaborative*

The OPCC seeks to adopt a consultative approach throughout the full commissioning process, ensuring the views of providers, partners (including the VCSE sector) and victims are used to inform the process. This will extend into ways of working during delivery of service, as recognised by the needs assessment as good practice:

The working practices of the OPCC, including their commitment to the services and their willingness to listen and engage at the ground-level had created an environment where practitioners felt able to work flexibly, challenge where necessary, and consider innovative approaches in order to meet the needs of their victims.

In order to reflect on the commissioning process as a whole, the OPCC will replicate a survey conducted in 2015 to learn from the process and inform future work.

Moreover, commissioned providers will be encouraged by the OPCC to work together as a network, sharing good practice, collaborating on projects and developing complementary working practices. This will continue to be fostered by the OPCC, for example via the Victim Provider Forum.

5. *Partnership working is crucial to ensure the best services for victims*

The services commissioned as part of this process are only one element of a complex and varied network of support which currently exists for victims across Avon and Somerset and it is important that local commissioners work collaboratively to ensure a cohesive approach.

Where existing services exist, the OPCC will work with partners to ensure resources are appropriately allocated to prevent duplication, and to encourage local innovation in developing responses to those victims with more acute needs.

Moreover, as illustrated by the commissioning of CSE and SARC services, the OPCC

will continue to work collaboratively with other commissioners where it makes sense to do so.

6. *Locally, regionally and nationally commissioned services should complement not duplicate*

The OPCC will continue to monitor progress in relation to a number of national funding arrangements, and will keep abreast of any developments as to the wider scope for national services and funding arrangements, including devolution.

7. *Services should be commissioned to deliver the four pillars of best practice for service provision*⁸



8. *Prevention and early intervention are crucial as part of the service offer to victims*

Given the increase in demand in a number of areas as highlighted by the Needs Assessment, it is important now that due focus is given to the need to prevent victimisation and intervene early to prevent the escalation of risk. This should ensure lasting change over the period of the contracts to reduce harm and therefore demand on services.

9. *Longer contracts provide stability to the provision of services*

Contracts will be awarded for a longer period than during the initial round of commissioning (which was 3 years +1) to provide greater stability for providers, service users and other stakeholders. The exact length of contracts is yet to be determined, however current thinking is illustrated by recently commissioned services, i.e. Court and Custody referral service which has been commissioned for 5 years +2). It should be noted that the MoJ funding provided to PCCs is currently awarded annually.

10. *The OPCC will focus on ensuring efficient and effective services*

⁸ Wedlock & Tapley (2016)

The OPCC seeks to ensure value for money in the delivery of all commissioned services, with high expectations around efficiency, effectiveness and added social value, giving due regard to proportionality.

Commissioning Intentions

Considering the range of factors outlined in this document, the OPCC is proposing the following commissioning model and seeks feedback on these plans. The rationale for this proposal is that:

- ✓ There was support from the needs assessment for the current model;
- ✓ Issues raised in the needs assessment can largely be resolved without changing the overarching model;
- ✓ A number of recommendations relate to services commissioned by other commissioners which the OPCC can seek to influence via partnership working;
- ✓ There is direction from the PCC as part of the Police and Crime Plan to focus on prevention and early intervention; and
- ✓ Current services are performing well.

All services will be available in accordance with the EU Directive and MoJ grant requirements with more detailed elements from the feedback from the needs assessment and the engagement period being used to inform specifications. Budget allocations for individual lots will be reviewed throughout the engagement period.

Services to be procured as part of this commissioning exercise

- i. An Emotional Support Service for adult victims of any crime or ASB
- ii. A Vulnerable Adults Service for adult victims of any crime or ASB
- iii. A Young Victims Service for victims of any crime or ASB up to the age of 18 (or 25 where there are additional needs)
- iv. An Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) Service
- v. A Restorative Justice Service for victims of any crime or ASB
- vi. Contribution to local specialist provision for victims of Modern Slavery
- vii. A small annual Prevention and Early Intervention Fund to be used collaboratively by the network of OPCC providers to tackle issues jointly identified through service delivery in order to reduce victimisation.

Feedback on this model and the service delivery of each proposed service is welcomed as part of the engagement period.

Key questions for consideration during the Engagement Period

In developing this model the OPCC would value feedback on the following key questions:

- A. It is proposed that the services i-vi are procured as separate lots, do you have any views on this or alternative suggestions?
- B. Should the MoJ devolve the commissioning responsibility (and budget) for the Witness Service to PCCs, what opportunities does this present in Avon and Somerset?
- C. How can both OPCC-commissioned and specialist domestic abuse services / other commissioners work together to best meet the needs of standard and medium risk victims of domestic abuse?⁹
- D. If you think that the OPCC should commission additional services to support victims of crime and ASB, what would they be and which services could be reduced to accommodate this within the overall budget?

Governance

The recommissioning of victim services will be overseen by a Recommissioning Governance Board, chaired by the OPCC Chief Executive. Membership will include OPCC Senior Leadership Team, Avon and Somerset Constabulary Strategic Procurement Services and the Victim Care, Safeguarding and Vulnerability Department. The OPCC will work with a VCSE umbrella organisation to advocate on behalf of the sector throughout the process. The Police and Crime Panel will be represented via a Link Member to provide transparency and additional scrutiny.

The OPCC will work with Avon and Somerset Constabulary's Strategic Procurement Services to procure the relevant services. This will ensure compliance with relevant legislation and good practice.

In order to effectively meet the needs of victims, the OPCC has commissioned TONIC to support the engagement of victims throughout the process including:

- A written report providing feedback from victims on the OPCC's commissioning intentions
- Development of service specifications
- Representation on evaluation panels

⁹ The Emotional Support Service, Adult Advocacy Service and the Young Victim Service all support victims of domestic abuse where appropriate.

- A final report which includes recommendations as to how service user involvement might be embedded in the ongoing management of the victim services contracts from April 2019

Timescales

The project will follow the following high level timescales, which are indicative timescales provided as a guide only as timescales may change. The OPCC website will be kept up to date throughout the period.

Period	Activity
February 2018	Needs Assessment Finalised
March 2018	Commissioning Intentions Published – Engagement period begins
April 2018	Engagement
May 2018	Engagement
June 2018	Engagement period ends Commissioning Plan published
July 2018	Specifications finalised
August 2018	Develop and Finalise Tender Documents
September 2018	Tender issued
October 2018	Submission of tender responses
October/ November 2018	Evaluation
December 2018	Award and Contract finalisation
January 2019	Implementation
February 2019	Implementation
March 2019	Implementation
April 2019	Services commence

The OPCC welcomes feedback on these proposals during the engagement period which will remain open until 3 June 2018.

Feedback is welcomed [online](#)

The OPCC will also seek to inform partners at key meetings and events. Should you want the OPCC to brief your organisation please contact [Donna King](#).

Annex A - Summary of Ministry of Justice Grant clauses

2.2.1 Providing or commissioning Support Services) for victims of crime (as defined in Article 2(1)(a) of the Victims' Directive, that is, including bereaved family members);
2.2.2 Providing or commissioning additional Support Services for victims in the priority categories outlined in the Victims' Code, namely victims of the most serious crime, persistently targeted victims, and vulnerable or intimidated victims;
2.2.3 Providing or commissioning Support Services for family members (as defined in Article 2(1)(b) of the Victims' Directive);
2.2.4 Providing or commissioning Support Services for victims of sexual violence, victims of domestic violence and victims of child sexual abuse or exploitation (as defined in Annex B);
2.2.5 Building the capacity and capability of providers of Support Services for victims of crime and family members (including providers of restorative justice services) from the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector; and
2.2.6 Covering any associated costs that arise in the process of commissioning or providing Support Services with the Grant. (i) bearing in mind the Purposes of the Grant, identify outstanding support requirements to meet the needs of victims and family members within the Recipient's police area; and having identified these (ii) provide or commission Support Services with the Grant which, when taken together with relevant existing provision in the Recipient's police area, satisfy the requirements of the Victims' Directive (in particular Articles 8 and 9 of that Directive) and the Victims' Code.
2.4 In order to comply with Article 8 of the Victims' Directive, Support Services commissioned or provided with the Grant must: (i) act in the interests of the victims or family members supported; (ii) be free of charge; (iii) be confidential; (iv) be non-discriminatory (including being available to all regardless of residence status, nationality or citizenship); (v) be available whether or not a crime has been reported to the police; and (vi) be available before, during and for an appropriate time after any investigation or criminal proceedings.

2.5 Unless the Recipient is satisfied that suitable arrangements are otherwise in place in their police area, Support Services provided or commissioned with the Grant must include a referral service:

(i) with which contact can be made by referring organisations or victims (and family members);

(ii) through which the needs of victims (and family members) can be assessed;

(iii) by which victims (and family members) can be provided with relevant information and/or referred to suitable Support Services (whether or not provided or commissioned with the Grant), in accordance with their needs;

(iv) by which victims who report crime in the Recipient's police area but who reside in a different police area can have their personal data transferred to the support arrangements in place in their area of residence; and

(v) that complies with the Data Protection Act 1998.

2.6 The Recipient must ensure that the availability and contact details of Support Services provided or commissioned with the Grant are widely publicised in a variety of media and locations.

2.7 The Recipient must ensure that data is collected and recorded in relation to all victims and family members supported with the Grant which measures the outcomes achieved, including any improvement to the quality of victims' and family members' lives and their ability to cope with normal activities during and following support provision.

2.8 The Recipient must measure the ongoing status of individuals supported with the Grant in respect of the following categories (where applicable):

- Education, skills and employment

- Finance and benefits
- Outlook and attitudes

- Mental and physical health

- Drugs and alcohol

- Social interaction

- Family, friends and children

- Shelter and accommodation

- Criminal Justice System

2.9 The Recipient must also measure outcomes achieved directly by the Support Services provided or commissioned with the Grant in terms of user satisfaction, including:

- that users have been treated sensitively and respectfully by the service;
- how far the support provided was consistent with what had been agreed at the time of needs assessment;
- how coordinated and effective the provision of support had been;
- overall satisfaction with the service.

2.10 The Recipient must ensure that all personal data, including that of victims, family members, and, in the context of restorative justice services, offenders, is processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

2.11 Where the Grant is used to provide or commission victim-initiated and pre-sentence restorative justice services (see Annex A for further information on restorative justice), the Recipient must ensure that:

(i) account is taken of guidance issued by the Restorative Justice Council and, where necessary, the Council's advice is sought, to ensure the development of safe and competent restorative justice services (in accordance with Article 12 of the Victims' Directive), and

(ii) potential and actual providers can demonstrate that victims who choose to participate in restorative justice processes will have access to safe and competent restorative justice services (in accordance with Article 12 of the Victims' Directive).

2.12 Whilst ensuring that effective support provision is in place for victims of crime (and family members), the Recipient must seek efficiency and best value for money when spending the Grant. This includes consideration of options such as co-commissioning of services and integration of services.

2.13 The Recipient must ensure that all victims and family members are able to access a complaints procedure which enables them to raise complaints and to obtain appropriate redress.

Annex B – The EU Directive

The EU Directive on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime sets minimum standards of service provision to support victims. Article 8 outlines duties to establish specialist support services in addition to, or as part of, the more general victim support services. As with general support services, access to specialist support should not depend on whether the crime has been reported.

The objective of the rules is that all victims of crime and their family members are recognised and treated in a respectful and non-discriminatory manner based on an individual approach tailored to the victim's needs.

The rights include:

- ***Rights of victims' family members***
Family members of deceased victims will enjoy the same rights as direct victims, including the right to information, support and compensation. Family members of surviving victims also have the right to support and protection.
- ***Right to understand and to be understood***
All communication with victims must be given in a simple and accessible language. The form of communication must be adapted to the specific needs of every victim, including for example needs related to age, language or any disability.
- ***Right to information***
The national authorities must give victims a range of information concerning their rights, their case and the services and assistance available to them. The information must be given from the first contact by a competent authority and without delay.
- ***Right to support***
Member States must guarantee that victims have access to support services and the authorities must facilitate the referral to such services. Support must be free of charge and confidential and available also to victims who do not officially report the crime. Both general support services – which are open to all victims of crime – and specialist support services must be available. Specialist support includes shelters, trauma support and counselling adapted to different types of victims.
- ***Right to participate in criminal proceedings***
Victims will get a more active role in criminal proceedings. They will have the right to be heard and be informed about the different steps of the proceedings. If victims do not agree with the decision not to prosecute, they have the right to challenge the decision. Victims also have the right to compensation and if restorative justice proceedings are used in the national system, there are now rules that ensure the safe participation of victims.

➤ ***Rights to protection***

Victims must be protected from the offender throughout the criminal proceedings. In order to determine their protection needs, all victims must receive an individual assessment to see whether they are vulnerable to further harm that may arise during the criminal proceedings. If so, special protection measures must be put in place to protect them during the proceedings and against any possible threat from the offender. Special attention is given to the protection of children.