**OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR HUMBERSIDE
DECISION RECORD**

Decision Record Number: **17/2022**

Title: ERVAS Cyber Responder Service

Executive Summary:
This is a record of the decision to fund a Cyber Responder Service to provide a victim centric reporting process within Humberside, located within the Force Control Room. Which will listen to the victim's story and provide immediate advice and support to the victim, rather than refer them to action fraud which can leave them feeling abandoned and alone in a very confusing and traumatic time.

Cyber Responder Service will enhance existing services, providing a tailored victim care with an offer of a 6 week face to face cybercrime technical programme; personalised to the victims needs to ensure they are protected from further fraud. This will have a number of advantages beyond the help and support supplied to the victim.

Decision:

That the request to commit to provide funds of £20,000 be agreed to support this service, funded from the MoJ Victims Grant, there is available funding to meet this requirement.

Background Report: Open

Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside

I confirm I have considered whether I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with my code of conduct.

Any such interests are recorded below

This above decision has my approval

Signature   Date: 04/03/2022

Title: ERVAS Cyber Responder Service

Date: Wednesday 2nd March 2022

1. Executive Summary

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Recommendation(s)

That the request to commit to provide funds of £20,000 be agreed to support this service, funded from the MoJ Victims Grant, there is available funding to meet this requirement.

2. Background

The current process for reporting fraud results in victims feeling abandoned and unimportant. It has reduced the confidence in the police and CJS as a whole.

Fraud is already a major problem and has increased during Covid.

Nationally there is a new inquiry into fraud and the justice system. In the meantime new victims are reporting crime every day.

Fraud accounts for approximately half of all crimes committed and could cost the UK over £137 billion a year. The majority of fraud is facilitated by digital technologies, meaning many cases can be perpetrated from other countries. The first half of 2021 saw a 285% rise in online fraud, such as phishing and text scams, fuelled by the increased use of online platforms during the pandemic.

Scams often focus on the most vulnerable in society and can cause serious harm to victims. Consumer organisation which? Calculated that 350 people a week were victims to a fraud that left them in severe emotional distress. Depending on the form of the fraud, victims do not always get their money back and the long-term financial consequences can be severe (New Inquiry: Fraud and the Justice System 03/12/2021, @ UK Parliament 2022).

There are support services in existence for assisting victims of fraud, unfortunately the help on offer is not always understood by victims or they are not aware of the agencies to contact.

They can feel alone, traumatised and helpless to regain their hard earned funds. This crime is life changing and can lead to extreme financial difficulties, depression, as people feel embarrassed that they have been fooled by fraudsters, and a limited life.

There is service proposal on offer to improve victim care (please see the proposal document below)

Project Proposal.pdf

2.1 Driver for change/contribution to Delivery of the Police and Crime Plan

Engaged, Resilience and Inclusive:

- Clear routes to raise concerns
  One place for victims to contact for fraud issues which will provide guidance on what to do next.
- Effective and timely support for those impacted by crime
  To listen to the victims needs and respond to them, in a way that is timely and builds confidence in the service and HP
- Organisations equipped to respond to evolving crime issues
  As each new fraud is reported, this service can react quickly and ensure it is reported to the HP cybercrime team, any new fraud is included in their awareness packages and training. This will allow a more consistent response to raising awareness of specific fraudulent activity locally and arm individuals against it.
- Place – based approaches that respond to community safety issues
  Providing face to face technical training and awareness for victims of cybercrime in a place of their choosing, a local service that is reacting to local victims issues and crimes.

Effective Organisations:

- Better partnership working
  Allowing already existing support services to provide a more joined up and effective service, assisting with timely reports to HP fraud teams and effective informed referrals into victim support, and these agencies in turn can refer individuals into the Cyber Fraud technical awareness programme.
- Innovative approaches to community safety
  The ability to tailor the service to the individual and community. Changing fraud awareness campaigns to respond to new threats as well as providing a one to one service that will be adapt as needed for each victim.

3. Options considered:

Option 1 Leave as is - Fraud is reported to the police and victims are advised to report directly to Action Fraud. This can lead to victims feeling the police do not care and they are being brushed off. Action Fraud can take up to 6 weeks to respond to the report – at this time the individual may be referred to Victim Support and HP fraud teams will be informed of the incident by Action Fraud. This lengthy period of time risks losing the opportunities to

support the individual at this difficult time, regain the lost finances and to protect others from this fraud locally.

Major Banks have fraud departments to report incidents to, which will advise their customers on avoidance of fraud and hope to recoup financial losses. Victim Support have a fraud service that can support the victims of all types of fraudulent activity.

However, this is fragmented, relies on the victim finding services for themselves. If referred by Action Fraud there being a delay in support (referrals can also be refused by victims not being aware of what victim services offer).

Option 2 Fund the Cyber Fraud service – Cyber fraud is a service that will complement the existing services described above to ensure the victim is supported from the initial contact with HP. Rather than being asked to call Action Fraud, the victims will be directed to the volunteers by HP call takers. The cyber responder would have the time to listen to the victim and understand the impact the incident has had on them and care about their needs.

They will:

- Advise on and assist reporting to Action Fraud
- Report to the HP cybercrime unit for timely action
- Explain the services Victim Support can offer and encourage a referral
- Advise on contacting banks and other financial agencies as soon as possible (especially if the incident involves more than one financial institute)
- Then offer a visit to all cybercrime victims with a PCSO to set up a technical assistance programme. This will assist the victim in many ways, but the focus is to supply a 6 weeks technical support programme to equip the individual with the skills and knowledge to prevent further victimisation.

Option 3 Commission this service: Commissioning a new service will be a time consuming process, which would not benefit the victims in the short term. Whereas the Cyber fraud service is ready to be implemented (concluding a pilot service). The volunteer coordinator role is provided by an experienced volunteer coordinator from the East Riding Volunteer Action Services, who already volunteers within the HP force control room and works closely with HP cybercrime team and understands the processes and issues with the current service.

Any commissioned process would need OPCC resource which is limited at this time and may be wasted as the commissioning of the Victims' Hub may encompass this work in 2023/24.

3.1 Recommended option: Option 2 Fund the Cyber Responder Service:

This service will allow the victim to have their voice heard and provides a joined up approach to the victim, where they can be guided through the support and help on offer during a very confusing, traumatic and often embarrassing time for them.

It will also have a ripple effect locally, as people experience the technical programme they will share their learning with others to help prevent fraud.

The frauds reported to Cyber Fraud will be dealt with, locally and more immediately and new frauds can be swiftly added to any awareness campaigns to alert local people more effectively.

4. **Financial Implications**

The Cyber Responder service will cost £20,000 initially with a view to providing resilience and sustainability with an additional £30,000 during 2022/23.

5. **Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications

6. **Equalities Implications**

There are no equalities issues to be considered.

7. **Consultation**

There is frequent consultation with service users, reviewed quarterly via case studies and self-reported outcomes monitoring. This consultation is fed into the quarterly Rape and Sexual Assault Service Improvement Group (RASSO SIG) meeting with stakeholders and force scrutiny over service   provision, pathways and intervention. There is regular feedback provided from a variety of victim circumstances.

8. **Media information**

None.

9. **Background documents**

None.

10. **Publication**

Open

PLEASE COMPLETE AND APPEND THE FOLLOWING TABLE TO ALL REPORTS THAT REQUIRE A DECISION FROM THE COMMISSIONER

This matrix provides a simple check list for the things you need to have considered within your report. If there are no implications please state

I have informed and sought advice from HR, Legal, Finance, OPCC officer(s) etc prior to submitting this report for official comments	Yes
Is this report proposing an amendment to the budget?	Yes
Value for money considerations have been accounted for within the report	Yes
The report is approved by the relevant Chief Officer	Yes
I have included any procurement/commercial issues/implications within the report	Yes

I have liaised with Corporate Communications on any communications issues	No –None required
I have completed an Equalities Impact Assessment and the outcomes are included within the report	No - None required
I have included any equalities, diversity and or human rights implications within the report	Yes – There are none
Any Health and Safety implications are included within the report	Yes
I have included information about how this report contributes to the delivery of the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan	Yes