

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

DECISION RECORD

Decision Record Number DR39/2023

Title Victim Support Capacity

Executive Summary

This paper outlines the case for providing additional capacity resources for Humberside's Victim Support Service (Victim Care Advocates). The paper proposes to increase the resource and enable additional capacity that is required to meet increasing demand over the forthcoming months (November 2023 to March 2024). This will be funded directly from the MOJ victim grant at a total cost of £7,800

Decision of the PCC

Approved

Background Report: Open– with FOI exemption(s) stated

Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside

I confirm I have considered whether or not 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.

The above decision has my approval.

Signature



Date 14/11/2023

**POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER
FOR HUMBERSIDE**

SUBMISSION FOR: DECISION

OPEN

Title: Victim Support Capacity

Date: 31/10/23

1. Executive Summary

This paper outlines the case for providing additional capacity resources for Humberside's Victim Support Service (Victim Care Advocates). The paper proposes to increase the resource and enable additional capacity that is required to meet increasing demand over the forthcoming months (November 2023 to March 2024). This will be funded directly from the MOJ victim grant at a total cost of £7,800.

2. Recommendation(s)

That the request for commissioning additional resource at a total cost of £7,800 be approved. This will be funded directly from the MOJ victim grant

3. Background

- 3.1 In 2023, new legislation was put in place and Humberside adopted a public task model towards victim engagement. This have evidenced a significant increase in engagement rates, for enhanced and complex need, also showing that the number of referrals prior to this point was not reflective of actual demand. As displayed below:

Period	Enhanced	Standard
Q1 2020-21	943	3130
Q2 2020-21	1196	3607
Q3 2020-21	955	3266
Q4 2020-21	1011	3084
Q1 2021-22	1230	3254
Q2 2021-22	925	2749
Q3 2021-22	886	3308
Q4 2021-22	932	3081
Q1 2022-23	718	1857
Q2 2022-23	692	1367
Q3 2022-23	847	1337
Q4 2022-23	2341	2665
Q1 2023-24	1887	2300

3.2 The increase in referral rates is seen as a positive, however this also has coincided with the Force transfer from Connect into Niche, with a number of months missed cases and missing information. This has created suppressed demand issues for Victim Support, in addition to increasing existing demand.

3.3 There have also been difficulties experienced with Force communication and vulnerability flags which has impacted on casework – e.g., Victim Support staff report 95% cases taken up with police advocacy and checking information accuracy.

3.4 In summary there has been a significant increase in all cases. However, enhanced need cases, and complex need, often based on the immediacy of the referral and wider issues in society are impacting, such as the type and nature of crime. Broader issues being felt by the individuals mean they are more impacted by the crime.

3.5 Furthermore, there has been an evidenced increase in more serious and complex crime, such as serious violence, violence with injury, malicious wounding, lots of violence and lots of trauma.

3.6 This impacts on:

- Staff wellbeing and burn out due to increased caseloads and inability to do the best job for victims.
- Staff capacity, limiting the ability to do quality casework and potential negative impact on victim experience is an increasing concern, creating concern about reputation.
- One very experienced Victim Care Advocate has 2 cases that take up around 2 days per week as part of her full caseload of approximately 30

4. Options

The Following options were considered:

1	National Resilience Team Caseworker support @ £215 / day	Increased capacity for agreed and reviewed timeframe using trained VS staff	November at earliest for capacity for them to allocate staff to us Additional cost not budgeted	review at earliest opportunity.
2	Overtime for existing Humber VCAs @ £195 / day	Increased capacity for agreed and reviewed timeframe using trained local VCAs – 1 day / week each on rolling	Additional cost not budgeted	Proceed - approval sought.

		basis – time to be used for focused needs assessing		
3	TL completes initial needs assessments only for 2 days per week alongside management duties	Increases initial assessment capacity. Frees up the VCA who is currently needs assessing so he can revert to case management.	Impact on other elements of her role – staff support, meeting attendance etc. – less time to focus on. Management to discuss and agree prioritise if proceed.	Try out hours as per above and have this as planned resilience – Proceed if needed.
4	Personalised text options including ‘opt-in’, ‘pre-text’, ‘haven’t been able to contact you’ etc. which include links to online support and information including a personalised my support space link e.g. you may find it useful to look at the guide on ‘talking to your child after crime’.	Really good, personalised service and gives custom service to victims. Gives some initial information to ‘hold’ the victim before the needs assessment. May also be ‘enough’ for some.	Takes up time to copy and paste different text options and takes ‘management’ judgement to decide which text to send Takes up capacity and time.	Do not proceed at the moment but continue to improve the SMS options and explore in the longer term. Is not a short term solution. Has accidentally expanded our custom text options for when we have a longer-term solution for numbers and can look at general service improvements.
5	Send one standard text other than specific highest risk crime types	Quick and simple way to get some information to victims initially and ‘hold’ them before needs assessing. Doesn’t take up time and capacity. More serious crime or vulnerabilities may still be more personalised.	Isn’t as personalised a service as above but is a good short term fix that would help with numbers.	Proceed
6	FAQs sheet to send out early on in victim contact. Get it put on local website that we can link to via a text.	Answers a range of initial FAQs more efficiently, potentially reducing ongoing case figures and VCA time. Efficient and empowering for victims too.	Doesn’t solve the problem but may reduce impact to a degree	Proceed
7	Police support SPOC with dedicated capacity	Data quality improvements to increase efficiency from outset and tackle challenge of possible DA cases and time taken assessing whether we should text them. In shorter term, ability to check data quickly and through one channel.	Requires input from force	Proceed Julie B speaking to Phil Ainsworth (Crime Manager, FCR) w/c 11/09. Stew to explore with Force.

8	Access to Niche re data quality	More efficient to check and clarify	VS accessing police data; time taken – no dedicated staff member; limitations on what we can view and use (going on SY experience)	Don't proceed
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4.1 Option 2 is recommended for decision, to provide additional resources to provide capacity in Victim Advocacy team to provide additional capacity that is required to meet increasing demand over the forthcoming months, to:

- Provide additional resources to provide capacity in the Advocacy team to pilot additional interventions and to provide additional capacity that is required to meet increasing demand over the forthcoming for 12 months:
- There is an identified gap in capacity to enable a quality in response.
- Current Victim service response for all victims is improved and is delivering, however the prevalence is much greater than current engaged caseloads. This opportunity offers an enhancement of service for an additional, specified period, providing additional resilience and improved victim support.
- Enables enhanced service considering serious violence, VAWG and contributes towards the VPP and VAWG plan for Humberside, supporting Humberside Police in their approach to supporting victims.
- Enables capacity to be increased and caseloads managed by local experienced existing workforce, negates the requirement for delays in recruitment. A rapid response is required. A different approach is required to meet additional demand.

Use of the additional hours and impact:

- Dedicated needs assessing role for the additional hours worked
- Revert current needs assessing VCA back to case management
- Team Leader to also undertake needs assessments 2 days / week (if required)
- Total impact of dedicated needs assessment hours: approx. 80 needs assessments carried out per week (4 days x 20 assessments)
- Option to shift from overtime to use of National Resilience Team as required
- Team Leader element to be reviewed and amended as needed at any stage.

4.2 Do Nothing, not recommended:

- Does not represent any added value the PCC's Police and Crime Plan priorities as detailed within this report.

- Does not optimise the PCC's statutory obligations to provide quality victim services within context of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) grant.
- Reputation risk to the OPCC and Humberside Police s by not meeting obligations/Police and Crime Plan Priorities and meeting identified gaps for victims.
- The above representing a risk in terms of stakeholder expectations and positive impact of the current service.

5. Financial Implications (Seek financial advice from Chief or Deputy Chief or Deputy Chief Finance Officer)

Cost Breakdown:

- £195 / VCA / day overtime cost
- VCA's = £390 / week
- Cost for w/c 1/11/23 – w/e 29/03/24 = 20 x 390 = £7,800

6. Legal Implications (Seek advice from Legal Services)

Discussion with Legal and Procurement as there is a current ITT in place for the Victim Support Service.

7. Driver for Change/Contribution to Delivery of the Police and Crime Plan

- **Engaged, resilient and inclusive communities:** communities are confident that they can access support, receive a proportionate, speedy, and effective outcome and sense of justice.
- **Safer Communities:** The service provides specific safety information to service users, whilst also raising awareness within the criminal justice system about the safety options and risks facing victims.
- **Effective organisations:** Liaising and advocating with a range of criminal justice system agencies, enabling the system work better for local communities. The aim is to enhance the criminal justice system and in particular the police response to all victims, working together and providing a multi-agency approach to the support, advocacy, and communication with victims.

8. Equalities Implications (Have due regard to the Public Section Equality Duty)

Positive impact on all protected characteristics

9. Consultation

- Stakeholders have been consulted in demand management and requirement for additional capacity.

- Workforce consultation has taken place within Victim Support to explore on options for improvement and workforce wellbeing
- OPCC consulted with Senior Leadership at Force accountability board. Consultation was in regard to communication and victim advocacy. Case studies and audit presented

10. Media information (Seek advice from Head of Communications)

Limited opportunities, OPCC Commissioning manager to discuss with Head of Comms.

11. Background documents (This will be published if open)

N/A

12. Publication

Open

13. DPIA considered (Data Protection Officer will complete full checklist – see attached)

Yes, covered under existing DPIA