



POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – 10 JUNE 2016

VICTIMS BUREAU

REPORT BY THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update Members on progress with the implementation and development of the Victims Bureau and associated victim support services and initiatives in Dorset.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Since first being elected the PCC has been committed to improving the journey for victims of crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in Dorset. One of his initial priorities was the implementation of a Victims Bureau and in November 2013, with the Victims Commissioner Baroness Newlove, he launched the Dorset Victims Bureau – one of only two such facilities in England and Wales at that time. The Dorset Victims' Bureau was implemented to ensure that victims would be kept updated, informed and supported throughout their journey.
- 1.2 Following this, in October 2014 Victim Support (based in Poole) was commissioned on a three year contract to deliver support services throughout Dorset with a view to be co-located with the Victims' Bureau within the contract term. The OPCC Victims Project Manager has been working closely with Victim Support to enhance and improve the support services process for victims, to ensure that all victims have access to support.

2. VICTIMS HUB

- 2.1 Whilst the Victims Bureau was initially housed in Bournemouth Divisional Police Headquarters the PCC had a longer-term ambition to scope options to implement a Victims' Hub in a non-police estate building to ensure that victims could access the services they required, and to open up options to victims who did not wish to directly engage with the police. The Victims' Hub would incorporate the Victims' Bureau and the commissioned victim services supplier. The options for a Victims' Hub were fully scoped and a suitable location was identified at the former Boscombe Police Station. The building was at that time occupied by the local Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT), who were due to move into the vacant Argos building in Boscombe.
- 2.2 Bournemouth Borough Council, as landlord of Argos building, suffered a number of significant delays during the building works, which ultimately impacted on the ability for the Council to hand the building over to Dorset Police and for the NPT to vacate the Boscombe Police Station. This delayed the proposed refurbishment works on the Victims' Hub.

- 2.3 From January 2016, refurbishment works on the former Boscombe Police Station were able to commence. The building at this stage was in need of rewiring, a new boiler and considerable redecoration to bring it up to the standard for office accommodation. On the 4th April 2016 all refurbishment works had been completed and the IT was installed.
- 2.4 On the 11th April 2016 both the Victims' Bureau and Victim Support moved into the new accommodation and the Victims' Hub was open. The site has now been renamed as The Victims' Hub, Gloucester House in Gloucester Road, Bournemouth. Although the building is still part of police estate, the appearance has been made to look like non-police premises and the site is void of any marked police vehicles or officers. This is vital in ensuring that victims who would like to access the services can do so without feeling that it is specifically a part of Dorset Police.
- 2.5 The partnership approach to victim care under the Hub arrangement has vastly improved with both agencies working together in the same location. Throughout 2016, Victim Support intend on running a marketing campaign to encourage victims of crime who may or may not have previously reported their crime to the police, to walk into the hub to access support services.

3. VICTIM SUPPORT

- 3.1 Victim Support has for some time experienced national IT issues with their case management system which unfortunately impacts of the local Dorset delivery. The system has a number of technical issues which have caused outages at times and the system runs very slow. Victim Support is due to roll out a replacement case management system during 2016.
- 3.2 Victim Support, with financial assistance from the OPCC, is also due to fully join a satellite hub in Blandford which again increases the accessibility for victims to access services. At this time they have had presence at the satellite hub in Blandford but a move to ensuring staff from Victim Support will be there on a full time basis from May 2016. The satellite hub is an extended partnership arrangement comprising of Victim Support, TREADS, Citizens Advice Bureau, Shelter, Rethink Mental Health Dorset and Dorset Mental Health Forum.

4. VICTIM SURGERIES

- 4.1 In the last financial year 2015/16 twenty-one PCC Surgery days were offered to members of the public to come and meet with the PCC in a one-to-one confidential setting. Thirty four members of the public attended PCC Surgery appointments

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Members are invited to note the update in relation to the implementation and development of the Victims Bureau and associated victim support services and initiatives in Dorset.

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