



THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR CLEVELAND

DECISION RECORD FORM

REQUEST: For PCC approval.			
Title: January 2017 - Anti-Social Behaviour Support Provision			
Executive Summary: To approve recommendations as set out in the attached report.			
<p>Decision: The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) defines Anti-Social Behaviour as 'Acting in a manner that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more person not of the same household as the perpetrator'.</p> <p>It can also be defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to a person; b) Conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation or residential premises or; c) Conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person. <p>Although much is done across the Cleveland area to support our most vulnerable victims of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) due to the strong partnership links that currently exist, a gap in provision in terms of direct support for victims of ASB where there are no associated crimes or where the main reason for referral is due to the impact of ASB. Local agencies including councils, housing providers and community police teams currently provide low level support to victims, although this differs across areas and is provided in the context of dual role which encompasses both the support and investigation of cases. Although this enables low level support to be provided, those identified as high risk and/or particularly vulnerable are not receiving more comprehensive tailored support that will assist in their ability to cope and recover.</p> <p>This decision record form is therefore to approve additional funding to the Victim Care and Advice Service (VCAS) to increase capacity by recruiting two additional Victim Care Officers to enable these victims to be appropriately supported. Further information relating to this decision can be found in the attached report.</p>			
OPCC Lead Officer: Rachelle Kipling			
Contractor Details (if applicable): Safe in Tees Valley			
Implications:			
Has consideration been taken of the following:	Yes	No	
Financial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Legal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Equality & Diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Human Rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sustainability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Risk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(If yes please provide further details below)			

Decision Required – Supporting Information

Financial Implications: (Must include comments of the PCC’s Chief Finance Officer where the decision has financial implications)

Funding is available within the 2017/18 budget should this proposal be approved.

Legal Implications: (Must include comments of the Monitoring Officer where the decision has legal implication)

Having read this report and having considered such information as has been provided at the time of being asked to express this view, the Chief Executive is satisfied that this report does not ask the PCC to make a decision which would (or would be likely to) give rise to a contravention of the law.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None apply.

Human Rights Implications

None apply.

Sustainability Implications

None apply.

Risk Management Implications

None apply.

OFFICER APPROVAL

Monitoring Officer

I have been consulted about the decision and confirm that financial, legal, and equalities advice has been taken into account. I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Signed  Date 13/6/17

Police and Crime Commissioner:

The above request HAS my approval.

Signed  Date 13/6/17



The provision of support services for vulnerable and repeat victims of anti-social behaviour

Background

On 1 April 2016 the Victim Care and Advice Service (VCAS) commenced following a joint commissioning exercise between Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner and Durham Police, Crime and Victims Commissioner.

The Victim Referral Service was commissioned to provide support to the most vulnerable victims of crime to help them cope with the immediate impact of being a victim of crime and assist in their subsequent recovery.

Funding provided by the Ministry of Justice to Police and Crime Commissioners for this service is specifically available for victims of crime, meaning those who are affected by anti-social behaviour (ASB) are excluded from the current contracting arrangements. In addition to this domestic and sexual abuse are excluded from the contract due to the specialist services accessible and commissioned locally.

Cleveland and Durham OPCC/OPCVC hold regular development sessions with VCAS to ensure their service is delivering against the Service Specification, to explore areas of service development and to identify gaps in provision. Both areas have different needs and priorities which are identified locally and overseen by local Victims and Witnesses Strategic Planning Groups which are sub groups of the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB).

Anti-Social Behaviour – Definitions and impact

The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) defines anti-social behaviour as:

'Acting in a manner that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more person not of the same household as the perpetrator'.

It can also be defined as:

- a) Conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to a person;
- b) Conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation or residential premises, or;
- c) Conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.

Anti-social behaviour is a broad term used to describe the day to day incidents of nuisance and disorder that make many people's lives a misery – from litter and vandalism, to public drunkenness or noisy or abusive neighbours.

Such a wide range of behaviours means that the responsibility for dealing with anti-social behaviour and tackling local issues affecting resident's quality of life is shared between a number of agencies, particularly the council, police and local housing providers. Due to this it makes it difficult to understand the true picture in regards to the number of people affected across the Cleveland area. Individuals may report to one or all routes available to ensure that their voices are heard and that the ASB is dealt with appropriately. Therefore it is key that the response to ASB is collaborative to determine the most appropriate solution. Where a report or complaint is made to one agency then that agency should consider the potential role of others in providing a solution if they themselves are not able to take action or support. This would ensure that reports of ASB are not lost between agencies and could also be a positive mechanism for engaging wider communities to find solutions for specific ASB issues. It is important for agencies to consider how victims are supported as part of this process.

The impact of victims and communities

Victims may think that an incident of ASB may be small or unimportant to start with, but if it becomes persistent it can affect people and impact upon their lives in different ways, for example;

- Affecting sleep
- Feelings of anxiousness and constantly on edge
- Frightened to go out
- Not feeling safe in their own home
- Children get upset
- Changing routines to avoid problems
- Feeling like you can't speak to anyone
- Feeling you must have done something to cause the ASB

- Thinking nothing will change and it will never end

Therefore when considering the response to a complaint of ASB, agencies are encouraged to consider the effect that the behaviour is having on the lives of those subject to it recognising for example, the debilitating impact that persistent or repeated ASB can have on its victims and the cumulative impact if that behaviour persists over a period of time.

In many instances ASB can be prevented or de-escalated by effective early intervention which can be co-ordinated by one of the agencies mentioned above. However, any action taken needs to be proportionate to the incident reported. Early intervention, especially through informal approaches, may often be all that is necessary to stop incidents of ASB. Such interventions can establish clear standards of behaviour and reinforce the message that ASB is not tolerated. Other examples of informal interventions include the use of mediation or other alternate dispute resolution services. In many cases, awareness of the impact of the behaviour on victims and the threat of more formal enforcement may be sufficient to encourage an individual to change their behaviour. When and as necessary, agencies can use their statutory powers to provide protection for victims, witnesses and the wider community. Particular consideration should be given to the needs and circumstances of the most vulnerable.

Gap in Service Provision – Anti-Social Behaviour

As the responsibility for dealing with ASB sits with a number of agencies this means that it can be reported in numerous ways:

- Directly to the police
- To a relevant local authority
- Via social housing landlord (who has a responsibility to ensure that their tenants don't behave in a way that breaks their tenancy agreement)

Individual's perceptions of ASB often differ with some individuals being more tolerant than others. That is why it is important that each case of ASB is looked at on its own merit based on individual's needs and vulnerabilities.

Although much is done across Cleveland to support our most vulnerable victims of ASB due to the strong partnership links that currently exist, a gap in provision in terms of direct support for victims of ASB where there are no associated crimes or where the main reason for referral is due to the impact of ASB. Local agencies including council, housing providers and community police teams currently provide limited low level support to victims, although this differs across areas and is provided in the context of a dual role which encompasses both the support and investigation of cases. Although this enables low level support to be provided, those identified as high risk and/or particularly vulnerable are not receiving more comprehensive tailored support that will assist in their ability to cope and recover.

Between November 2016 and January 2017 (3 month period) VCAS supported 27 victims of ASB (although it is outside of their remit) where the sole reason for referral to the service related to an actual ASB incident(s). This figure would be much higher if indicator crimes such as criminal damage and harassment were looked into further where ASB was also present and the primary reason for referral for support. The cases picked up by VCAS involved some of our most vulnerable members of society and without the offer and take-up of in-depth support provided to them; these individuals may not have successfully coped and recovered from the impact of the ASB and things may have further escalated.

Victims First Policy

During 2016 Cleveland Police launched the Victims First policy. The aim of the policy was to provide clear guidelines and advice for dealing with incidents where increased risks of vulnerability or harm to individuals and/or communities have been identified. The policy provides standard procedures and guidance for all staff in correctly identifying risk, vulnerability and harm associated with all incident types, and subsequent investigation and management of relevant cases.

At 13 January 2017 43 active persons were flagged on the Niche system as being identified as vulnerable through victim first, this included 10 active high risk cases. In addition to this during January 2017 ASB increased by 2.5%, the rolling 12 months comparison shows an increase of 0.7%.

Since the launch of the Victims First Policy, police officers and staff have engaged with VCAS seeking their assistance for support as and when required. Again VCAS have supported when possible despite this falling outside of their current contractual arrangement.

Proposal

In March 2016 the Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner announced a £1.5million boost to Neighbourhood Policing across Cleveland. An element of this

funding included the scope to commission support provision for vulnerable and repeat victims of ASB.

Therefore based on the above information and from discussion with partner agencies the proposal would be to extend the VCAS remit to include support for vulnerable and repeat victims of crime AND anti-social behaviour (ASB), by providing funding for two additional Victim Care Officers. Initially, this will be a pilot (up to 31 March 2018) to enable an understanding of what actual demand and referral pathways should look like. If the pilot period is successful then it is envisaged that ASB will be included as part of the current contracting arrangements. In the long term if effective and successful, ASB will be included in the future service specification when the service is re-tendered.

A service specification will be developed detailing expected service delivery requirements for the duration of the pilot arrangements although the service will be required to be flexible and continue to develop and change as required throughout the pilot period to support the development of future more long term service delivery.

A time limited task and finish group will be convened during the pilot period involving police, housing providers and local authorities to support implementation of the extension of service and to monitor the number and types of referrals being received. This is to ensure referrals being made are appropriate. Those with responsibility for dealing with ASB will still actively provide their service and those identified as a repeat or vulnerable victim and require additional more intense support will be referred to VCAS.

Conclusion and recommendations

As highlighted above this additional work has become necessary due to a gap in service provision for our most vulnerable members of the community significantly affected by ASB. A change in supplier from the current victims referral service would not be practical due costs associated with a competitive process. The current service provider is well established and embedded across the Cleveland area and a different service provider for victims of crime and ASB would cause substantial inconvenience and confusion to victims in our area. For business continuity purposes it is therefore recommended that this be the best approach to take going forward.

Recommendation 1: Funding to be provided to VCAS for an initial pilot period (from 1 July 2017 – 31 March 2018) to support vulnerable and repeat victims of ASB at the cost of £50,177.

Recommendation 2: If pilot period is successful support for vulnerable and repeat victims of ASB be included as part of the current VCAS contract with the strategy to include ASB as part of the Victim Referral contract when re-commissioned in the future at an additional cost of up to £75,000.