



**OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX**  
**VICTIM SERVICES COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS**  
October 2014

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## **BACKGROUND**

### **Local commissioning**

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) have responsibility for commissioning local support services for victims of crime from October 2014, and will have wider responsibility for victims' referral and assessment services from April 2015. Funding is being devolved from national Government (the Ministry of Justice) to support this.<sup>1</sup> The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is also giving PCC's additional capacity building funds to help set up commissioning systems and prepare local organisations in readiness for this change.

PCCs will also receive some funding to commission local restorative justice services. Restorative Justice is where offenders have an opportunity to repair some of the harm they have done to victims and local communities, and where victims have a say in this process including, if they wish to, the opportunity to meet their offender and explain to them the harm they have done.

### **National commissioning**

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) will continue to nationally commission a small number of high impact specialist services. These include support to those bereaved by homicide, victims of trafficking, some services to victims of rape and domestic abuse and support for witnesses at Court.

### **Regional commissioning**

The Office of the PCC is exploring opportunities to commission a small number of services regionally, in particular the 'referral and assessment' components of victims' support services. The PCC is working closely with PCCs from the Eastern and South Eastern Regions, alongside local providers, to explore these options.

### **Victims' Code**

The Code for Victims of Crime sets out the standards of service that victims who are going through the Criminal Justice System can expect to receive, with a focus on being kept informed and supported throughout the criminal investigation and court processes. There are enhanced services for those affected by serious crime, those who are persistently targeted and those who are vulnerable and intimidated.

The Victims' Code sets out minimum standards of service. The PCC can choose to enhance these when commissioning services to support local victims of crime.

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<sup>1</sup> The victim service commissioning budget for Essex is as follows:

- **Oct 2014 to March 2015:** £0.6m for victim of crime services and Restorative Justice
- **2015/16:** £1.8m to include victims' referral and assessment components

## PRINCIPLES FOR COMMISSIONING SERVICES

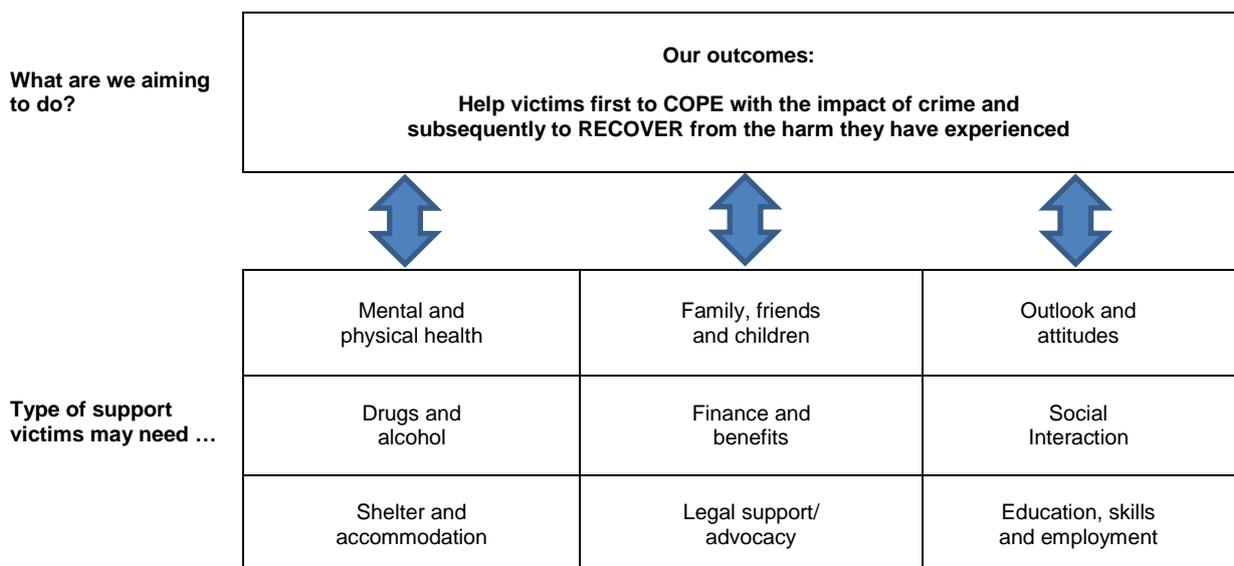
In commissioning services for victims of crime in Essex, Southend and Thurrock, the PCC and his Office have adopted the following set of principles:

- Our key outcomes are to help all victims of crime to cope and recover from the impact of crime
- The voice of victims and their needs will be at the heart of decisions made about what services to commission and how they are provided
- There will be clear and straightforward access to services, with an aspiration to make the same level of service available to victims regardless of where they live in the county and their particular characteristics, and with flexibility to respond to local need
- There will be a standard level of emotional and practical support available for all victims of crime, with specialist services for victims of serious crime and the most vulnerable
- Direct self-referral to victim services will be promoted, alongside building confidence to report crime to the Police and others
- We will seek to commission services that are effective, proportionate, accessible, inclusive, sustainable and joined up
- We are committed to delivering positive outcomes for victims and value for money for the public purse

## OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

The overarching aim of the PCC is to have less crime and fewer victims of crime. All of the activity set out in the Police and Crime Plan seeks to deliver on this aim. For those people who do become victims of crime, the PCC wants to ensure that they receive the best possible support so they can *COPE* with the impact of the crime and subsequently *RECOVER* from the harm they have experienced.

Our outcomes framework is represented below:



The OPCC will use this framework as a guide when commissioning services for victims of crime, supported by more specific outcomes and measures of performance/quality standards depending on the services being commissioned. We believe that it is important to consider the whole picture of complex need when thinking about improving services to victims of crime, so have included a range of support that might be relevant.

## OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH

Above all, we want to ensure that victims are at the centre of our commissioning strategy, and that services are developed and designed with their needs at the heart.

Our victim services commissioning strategy is based on the following steps:



### Step 1: Understanding

It is essential that we understand the needs of victims of crime in Essex, in order to understand what services we need to commission to meet these needs.

The *Profile of Victims' Needs and Services* is a key resource to help us to understand the level and nature of victimisation in Essex, Southend and Thurrock. It has informed our Commissioning Intentions and principles, and helped to identify areas for further exploration and work. In addition we have funded work to better understand the views and wishes of victims in Essex.<sup>2</sup> We have also commissioned further research to understand the perceptions, needs and experiences of young victims of crime.<sup>3</sup>

### Step 2: Building

This is about:

- building capacity with current victim service providers to address urgent service gaps and stimulate and test out new ideas
- building relationships with partners who also have an interest in the health and wellbeing of victims of crime as potential co-commissioners of services
- supporting the ongoing development of skills and expertise across providers to ensure victims can access high quality, professional support services

### Step 3: Sustaining

One of the key findings from our *Profile of Victims' Needs and Services* was the currently fragmented and fragile funding arrangements for some specialist victim services, such as for victims of sexual violence.

Local commissioning of victims' support services gives us a new opportunity to work with our partners to develop more sustainable local funding frameworks to deliver the best possible outcomes for victims. **Through our commissioning strategy, we will seek to bring together other public sector commissioners, alongside service providers, to establish more sustainable models within the financial resources available.**

We are also looking for regional solutions where there are common needs and potential for economies of scale, such as the work we are doing with Eastern and South Eastern Region colleagues and others to prepare for the commissioning of victims' referral and assessment arrangements from April 2015.

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<sup>2</sup> The Essex Victims' Perspectives project is being conducted by IPSOS MORI

<sup>3</sup> Specification for 'Young Victim of Crime Perspectives' project, June 2014