

## Overview of Advisory Group Meetings – Round 2 2017

Following the work undertaken to refresh and re-launch the PCC Advisory Groups, each group has now held their first meeting of 2017. This note provides an overview of key discussions and actions taken.

### Overview of Advisory Group Meetings

A selection of key points raised and issues discussed by each of the groups can be found below:

#### Gender Advisory Group

- The meeting was held at the office of Ben-Hoare Bell as members felt it would be useful to rotate meeting venues. Helen Anderson from the Safeguarding Team was present as a representative from NP.
- **MASH models** - the Angelou Centre expressed concern about the way local Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs are developing their own operating models without regard to the needs of domestic abuse victims, including those with more complex needs. They felt the Gateshead MASH model was an effective model and needed to be promoted across all other areas as good practice. NP to take this concern into consideration when developing future models alongside local authorities.
- **Practice direction 12 J – Child arrangements and contact order: domestic violence and harm** - the group expressed concern that Practice Direction 12J is not only having little direct impact on local practice in the family courts but the situation appears to be worsening – a focus needs to remain on domestic abuse and its impact on children. If appropriate the group would like to contribute to the family court liaison work funded by the PTF bid (if successful). The group to be kept up to date of any significant work in this area.
- **Trafficking and modern slavery** – the group highlighted the lack of focus on domestic exploitation and slavery within marriage. This is an issue that local Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked (MSET) groups are beginning to pick up, as well as caseloads within the Angelou Centre and local solicitors. There was a plea for NP to include this element of modern slavery in their trafficking work.
- **Handling of Protective Orders** - advisory group members expressed concern about the handling of protective orders that involved HBV, particularly FGM protection orders. Helen Anderson was present and agreed at a future meeting to address a number of issues including:
  - The number of protective orders that have been issued by the courts in 16/17
  - The ability of NP to identify and then flag HBV related protective orders,
  - The ongoing reliance of law firms on process servers who will only deliver protective orders to the front desk of local police stations

- The development of a central email address to which all such orders could/should be sent and then processed appropriately by a designated Detective Sergeant.

### **Age Advisory Group**

- **Safe Reporting Centres** - following discussion on reporting hate crime members requested a list of safe reporting centres so that they could disseminate this information to their members and circulate it in their bulletins. This to be provided.
- **Domestic abuse and older people** - Louise Cass-Williams provided an update on NPs approach to tackling domestic abuse and older people, giving examples of work undertaken to train police officers, enabling them to provide responsive services to people with dementia. Members of the panel were keen to explore opportunities for domestic abuse campaigns aimed at older people, similar to the one on 'Words Leave Scars too'. This to be fed back to corporate communications. There was discussion on the role of Workplace DV Champions and the opportunities to train workers supporting people with dementia, where they would be the single point of contacts in their workplaces, supporting people experiencing domestic abuse – opportunities to be discussed with the appropriate lead in the OPCC.
- **Victims First Northumbria** - Danni Wylde, the older people's champion from VFN updated the group on the work of VFN and how the care and support provided to victims is tailored to their individual needs. Victims are assigned a single point of contact who provides support throughout the 'victims journey' by referring the victims to specialist services which for example can help to tackle domestic violence, substance misuse, hate crime and sexual assault.
- **Cycling in the city centre** - the Elders Council raised concerns regarding inconsiderate cyclists in Newcastle City Council and how elderly pedestrians and people with visual impairments felt vulnerable and prone to accidents with cyclists on footpath. This issue was referred to Superintendent David Felton in Central Area Command.
- **Community messaging** - the Pensioners Convention highlighted concerns amongst their members on 'scams' targeting older people, how people could be kept up to date if specific neighbourhoods were targeted. Members were updated on 'YourNorthumbria' and asked to actively promote this initiative on Community Messaging amongst their members.
- **Reporting ASB** - Voice North have received a number of reports from their members experiencing anti-social behaviour in their neighbourhoods and their reluctance to report incidents to the police due to repercussions from the people causing the nuisance. Reassurance was provided to the group that ASB victim satisfaction was high and that residents should have confidence to come forward with any concerns they have. Voice North were asked to inform their members to contact relevant departments within local authorities dealing with ASB and Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

## **BME, Faith and Belief Group**

- The meeting was held at Newcastle College as it was felt it was a more central venue for current members of the group.
- **Victims First Northumbria** – Sana Ali the VFN lead for BAMER communities attended the group due to the comparatively low number of referrals being made to VFN from BAMER communities. Sana informed panel members on VFN are and the type of support they offer to all victims of crime. They currently receive 90% of their referrals from Northumbria Police and have recently employed a Sexual Violence ISVA and Young People & Children's worker. Sana explained that VFN offer language support to victims with language difficulties. Sana also explained that VFN provide support to any individual who access the service, regardless of whether they have reported the crime to the police or not. The aim of the service is to build confidence within the communities and individuals who feel they have been impacted by crime in anyway. Members of the panel were asked to help promote VFN through their services and to invite Sana to meetings/events which provided opportunities for VFN to engage with the diverse communities.
- **Hate Crime and Community Safety – Presentation by PC Andy Howe and Engagement Officer Vadood Aghajani** - The panel received a presentation on hate crime and community safety as this was causing concern amongst BAMER communities following BREXIT and the recent tragic events in Manchester and London. PC Andy Howe informed members that Northumbria Police were preparing to launch 'Your Northumbria' messaging service for community leaders and individuals working within communities to receive information from Northumbria Police following meetings and decisions. It also allows contacts to communicate via text or voice messages. A member of the panel expressed her dissatisfaction with community leaders being the primary contact when meetings take place following events within the communities and asked that individuals who work at a local level, with an emphasis on females, also needed to be approached for comments and feedback. NP to consider this in future communications.
- **Hate crime incidents** - Of the hate crime incidents within Northumbria, it was confirmed 75-80% are race hate crimes. Members from NP felt that although hate crime is still under reported, it has become easier to report. To aid this, engagement officers visit facilities where reporting is low to provide advice and guidance to individuals affected by crime who would benefit from the support available in their area. This enhanced engagement was welcomed.
- **Community confidence** - members of the panel raised concern regarding the need for more communication between the police and the victim once a crime is reported. It is important that the community have confidence in the people to deal effectively with their issues, therefore improvement in communication was needed. NP officers present agreed to take this back.

## **LGBT Group**

- **LGBT Liaison Officers** - At the previous meeting of the group, members were keen to meet one of the Northumbria Police LGBT Liaison Officers and hear about their role. Following this request PC Amy Tapping (LGBT Liaison Officer and Chair of the LGBT Staff Association) attended and discussed her role in detail. She described the work that liaison officers undertake in the areas where they work reassuring the community and also being the dedicated contact in dealing with LGBT issues and support. Amy highlighted that LGBT liaison officers in previous years had only been recruited from Police Constable roles, however since the refresh of the position, staff members working in areas such as the force control room have taken up the position. Amy discussed a report which is being produced looking in depth at Hate Crimes and is due for publication in October. It was agreed that Amy would return to the next meeting of the group to present the report and its findings.
- **Pride** – NP discussed arrangements for Newcastle Pride and updated the group on policing of the day and gave re-assurance following a question by a group member in relation to security at the event. It was confirmed that armed officer's as well as uniformed officers would be in attendance on the day however there was no specific threats. As Sunderland Pride were in attendance at the group for the first time, NP also provided similar reassurance for the Sunderland Pride Festival in September.
- **Recruitment** - Ellen Glynn attended the meeting to discuss NP recruitment in relation to increasing the take up of LGBT candidates. NP highlighted that LGBT candidates show a higher dropout rate at the first two stages of the recruitment process however they perform better than other candidates at the last two stages of the process which are the assessment centre and final interview. Reassurance was provided that the equality monitoring form is removed at the beginning of the process. NP to link in with the LGBT associations at local universities and seek their feedback in relation to the recruitment process and advertising.

### **Disability Advisory Group**

- **Easy Read Police and Crime Plan 2017/21** – The group were informed that an easy read version of the recently launched Police and Crime Plan was to be developed. As the group had been pivotal in providing advice on the previous easy read police and crime plan it was felt that their thoughts would be sought on the new plan. The group confirmed that the style and layout of the new plan should be kept the same with some slight amendments to the “staying in touch” section of the document and advised of other contact methods e.g. Next Generation Text. Once the new plan has been developed, this will be forwarded to group members for final comment.
- **Disability Etiquette Document** – Carol Taylor, NP HR presented the group with a draft document developed by the force following a focus group which identified gaps in the provision of information for disabled individuals. The group were very impressed with the inclusion of detailed maps of Police Station public areas which many commented would provide excellent reassurance to their service users if they ever needed it. Feedback was also provided in relation to the layout and format of the document with these changes being considered before the final document is produced and available for individuals and groups to access online.

### **Youth Advisory Group**

- Streetwise are hosting the PCCs Youth Advisory Group and the office are working with them to support young people to gain an understanding of policing priorities, concerns, statistics, developments, public safety and community need, to help inform and influence service delivery and developments. The aim is to ensure young people's views, opinions and voices can help inform and influence the work of the PCC in relation to decisions, consultations and policy.
- **Police Station Visit** - the group were keen to visit a working police station to gain a better understanding of the work of NP and custody arrangements. This has been arranged for Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> July where officers will be on hand to answer any questions the group have and facilitate a visit around Etal Lane station.
- **Priorities and peer research** - the group have produced a questionnaire to be used to gather views of young people in relation to policing. Over 60 questionnaires have now been completed. The group agreed that they would continue to try and get more questionnaires completed until the meeting in July where the results of the questionnaires would be analysed and shared with the OPCC for consideration.
- **Police and Crime Plan** – Dean Lowery gave an overview of the work of the PCC and the recently published Police Crime Plan. He explained the police and crime priorities and how all of the PCC advisory Groups are used to gather views of people and groups which is then used to produce the plan.
- **Victims First Northumbria** - Becky Childs, young people's champion at VFN delivered a presentation to the group on VFNs work including how they support young people, how to refer in to the service, specialist services and also the process of restorative justice.
- **Further development** - the group are in the process of setting up a group chat using social media and text messaging which will allow messages to be passed from Streetwise to youth members and also allow discussions in-between meetings. Streetwise have agreed to specifically include the views of looked after children and children carers in the advisory groups work.

### Victims Advisory Group

- It was agreed with you that the VFN Service User Group would also fulfil the role of the PCCs Victims Advisory Group.
- **Priorities** – the group were presented with the new Police and Crime Plan which showed members that their specific feedback on priorities had fed directly into the Police and Crime Plan. The group were pleased to see how their specific feedback had been taken into account and how their priorities could be seen in the published version of the plan.
- **Restorative Justice** – the group were very keen to learn more about RJ which was discussed at length. The key issue from the victims' perspective was the timing of the RJ offer – although the Victims Code suggests that RJ should be discussed at a very early point, victims did not agree with this and said it is surely something for much later. It was agreed though that it really is a case by case basis. Victims of sexual violence who were present think that the opportunity to have their say with the offender was welcome although most likely would prefer letters and indirect interventions.

- **HEAL project** – VFN talked through the new sexual violence support project that is based in Gateshead. The group thought the idea of specialist outreach in cases of sexual violence was a very good concept and are keen to keep up to date with progress. All said it would have been of benefit to them had it been available in their local authority area. Perhaps something to consider when setting future victims commissioning priorities.
- **Victims Commissioner visit** – we are expecting a visit from Baroness Newlove in October and asked the group if they would be happy to meet with her as part of this. The group have agreed to this and were very keen.
- **Future topics** – the group are keen to learn more about the VFN Champions and Communications Strategy so this will be covered at the next meeting.