

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR LANCASHIRE



APPENDIX A

Children and Young People's rape and sexual assault services

1. Context

As part of the Police and Crime Commissioner's responsibility to deliver victims' services county-wide, it has been identified that victims of rape, sexual assault and sexual exploitation require specialist support to help them cope and recover.

This means there is an identified need in Lancashire to create a specialist service over and above what is offered by Victim Support, through the core offer.

Typically, support for victims of sexual offences would take the form of ISVA (Independent Sexual Violence Advisor) support – which tends to be practical and focusses on immediate support as well as advocating and advising the victim through legal processes - with a further referral for counselling if required.

For adult victims, the initial referral process and low to medium level advocacy can be provided through Victim Support.

In Lancashire, children are supported through The Children's Society, Preston Domestic Violence Services (PDVS), the health and social care element of the multi-agency police Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) teams, the Safe centre (Sexual assault referral centre), Preston, and Trust House, Preston, in terms of advocacy and ISVA support.

Counselling and therapeutic support provision is reported to be limited, and is provided by The Magdalene Project in Bacup, NSPCC in Blackpool, Barnardos in Preston, Trust House and The Birchall Trust, in Lancaster and Morecambe.

2. Identified need

It is proposed the PCC adopts a phased approach to the implementation of services to support victims of rape, sexual assault and sexual exploitation.

Trust House and The Birchall Trust were funded to develop a model (Decision no: 2014/72) of what ideal provision for support services would look like in the county.

From this, and from additional work carried out within the OPCC, it has been established counselling and therapeutic support services for children and young people represent the most pressing need, and should form phase one of service implementation.

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The rationale for this is as follows:

- Victim Support do not currently take referrals for children and young people who have been the victim of sexual offences.
- Organisations who provide advocacy support for children and young people have identified long waiting lists for therapeutic counselling, which can deter victims from getting the help and support they need.
- The need for ISVA/advocacy support does not appear as pressing as the need for counselling.

3. Service outline

The service will include the following provision:

- Age and Developmentally appropriate therapy / counselling to children and young people aged 4 to 17 with the flexibility to extend to 21 in individual circumstances and where appropriate.
- Counselling / therapy for safe family members including parent, carer and siblings.
- Service is available on a short, medium or long-term basis dependent on assessment and identified need.
- All counsellors / therapists work in accordance with Home Office Pre-Trial Therapy Guidelines, including types of therapy and counselling offered and will have an awareness of court and criminal justice processes.
- All counsellors / therapists work in accordance with local safeguarding and protection processes.

The service will be available pan-Lancashire, with centres based in Preston, Lancaster, Morecambe, Fleetwood, Burnley and Skelmersdale.

Provision in Lancaster and Morecambe will be available immediately, with the other centres to follow in September 2015.

The service will also include provision for immediate support and more in-depth counselling, if required, for parents, carers and siblings to help them come to terms with the situation.

4. Recommendations

The Commissioner is recommended to support the proposal outlined below to ensure the delivery of specialist support services for children and young people who have been victims of sexual offences.

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- Trust House and The Birchall Trust to be funded to develop counselling and therapeutic support service for children and young people to be accessible to victims county-wide.
- That the funding take the form of a **£99,659 grant**, allowing for the provision of services for the period up to March 31, 2016.
- That the commissioning of counselling and therapeutic support services for children and young people who have been victims of sexual offences be incorporated into the 2016-17 funding/commissioning programme.

ENDS