

Redditch Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel: Chair's report of Panel meeting held on Thursday 21st October 2010.

Officers from Worcestershire PCT attended to respond to five questions which had earlier been submitted by the Panel regarding the possible establishment of a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in the West Mercia Police area. The responses to each question were followed by a question and answer session.

1) What is your provision at the moment for victims of sexual violence?

Worcestershire PCT officers informed the Panel that, in the absence of funding to establish a SARC, the Worcestershire Referral and Sexual Advice Centre (WRASAC), had been established. A paper was circulated outlining the current "patient pathways" which included a flow chart /diagram of the services available. Worcestershire PCT officers praised the WRASAC, although acknowledged the pathways to entry could be strengthened. The WRASAC is based at a confidential location in Worcester.

2) What funding could you provide to support a SARC in the West Mercia area?

No funding has been identified by any of the four PCTs in the whole West Mercia area however a "Certificate of Stakeholder Agreement" was signed by the four PCTs and by West Mercia Police in October 2010. This details key deliverables which clearly is progress and was welcomed by the Panel.

3) Please could you briefly outline what changes are due to be made to the NHS and in particular to local PCTs?

The release of the NHS White Paper *Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS* outlined proposed changes to be made in the NHS and the local PCT. This included the establishment of NHS Commissioning Boards at a strategic level; and GP Practice teams working in consortia at a local level. It was presently understood that PCTs would remain in operation until 2012.

4) How are these changes to NHS and PCT provision of services likely to impact locally on potential support for a SARC?

Details of how the changes of the NHS would impact on the provision of a SARC for this area were not yet known. It was uncertain who would pick the SARC issue up although it was thought that this might fall to NHS Health and Wellbeing Boards.

5) Is there anything further which you would like to add on behalf of the Worcestershire PCT regarding SARCs?

Worcestershire PCT Officers said they had nothing particularly to add but took the opportunity again to say that any help we could offer to the support group would be appreciated.

The Panel thanked both Officers for their attendance and their help and advice.

The Next Steps

The Panel decided to make several recommendations following discussion during the previous item.

- 1) To support Cllr Blagg, the Panel's co-opted representative, in her visit to James Brockenshire MP, Minister for Crime Prevention, where this matter will be raised in December;
- 2) To write to the Redditch Community Safety Partnership supporting the WRASAC whilst highlighting the "Certificate of Stakeholder Agreement", particularly paragraph 3 which discusses the aspiration deliverables in relation to improved health and forensic outcomes; and
- 3) To write to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee supporting the need for a SARC in the West Mercia Police area and to seek their support, and that of Council, with a view the Council issuing a letter to the Health and Wellbeing Board highlighting the level of uncertainty for the future provision and the apparent gaps in the NHS white paper.

The Panel were also updated on initial findings to public consultation responses of the Home Office White Paper "Policing in the 21st Century – reconnecting police and the people". The Panel had earlier issued its own response. Over 800 responses including 440 online had been received. Some of the early findings and ideas which came forward included:

- a) Local Policing Teams - to ask local people what information they want from the Police and to make the information more accessible via the internet;
- b) one stop shop - to develop a seamless one stop approach between agencies which are victim centred to encourage more people to come forward to report crimes; and
- c) encouraging more recognition of Neighbourhood Watch, victim support, Special Constable Volunteers and indeed to create a volunteer network to assist the Police in "back room" functions or even assist the paid Police Community Support Officers.

Members confirmed that the next Panel meeting would take place on 20th January 2011 at 6.30 pm (previously 7.00pm)

Bill Hartnett.
Chair Redditch Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel.
22nd October 2010.