

BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Commissioning (VCFS) – Review of Activity

23 February 2016

Report of Chief Officer (Governance)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the panel with feedback on the current commissioned contracts within the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) outlining performance towards the delivery of outcomes and the analysis and evaluation of trends and issues arising from the regular monitoring of the commissioning arrangements.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Panel note and comment on the activities and outcomes achieved by partners working on the council's behalf as part of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) commissioning arrangements**
- (2) That the Panel note for comment the changes in the sector in light of any future commissioning arrangements that the Council may wish to undertake beyond 2016 / 2017**

1 Introduction

1.1 The council has a number of contracts with VCFS partners, as part of commissioning arrangements for the delivery of the following main areas of investment which were the result of engagement with a range of stakeholders and a subsequent procurement exercise in 2012:

- **Advice and Information** - specialist advice and information services to help reduce levels of debt, poverty, personal distress and isolation; increase access to existing services and help reduce the need for other crisis services. The main aims being to focus on early intervention and prevention, helping to avoid crisis needs and the associated effect on the lives of families and individuals, and reduce the potential need for mainstream and crisis services.
- **Infrastructure Support** - to help secure the future capacity of the VCFS to deliver important services in the district by supporting VCFS organisations as a contribution to the development and resilience of the sector as a whole and to deliver assured services that are relevant to the needs of the district.
- **Volunteering Coordination** - to increase levels of volunteering in order to: increase the capacity of the VCFS to deliver services in the district and provide effective coordination of volunteers at a central point in support of VCFS organisations.

- **Small Grants** – for the support and development of VCFS organisations and community groups; to protect or develop critical local services and test the feasibility of new local initiatives. An underpinning objective was the achievement of improved social capital in the district by supporting local people, groups and organisations to take an active part, and influence what happens, in their local area.
- 1.2 On 06 October 2015, Cabinet considered a detailed report setting out various options for the provision of VCFS services beyond 31 March 2016 and an option to withdraw funding after that date. At that time, Cabinet resolved unanimously *‘That approval be given to invest in the delivery of key services by the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector through a one year extension to existing commissioning contracts to 31 March 2017, subject to budget requirements’*.
 - 1.3 This option provided the advantage of VCFS services continuing for another year whilst further consideration is given to the advantages and disadvantages of commissioning versus grant funding in the context of the Ensuring Council. This will be principally around how grant funding rather than service level agreements contribute to the Council’s Stewardship of the local area in terms of the social wellbeing of the district supported by social capital and aspects of social justice relating to equality and meeting community needs. This will play into a broader view of the Council’s value for money obligations by ensuring the wellbeing of the area.

2 Details

- 2.1 In reviewing the performance of VCFS partners, Organisational Development (OD) team have contacted organisations through performance reporting and monitoring around the management of each contract and overall activity in line with outcomes and measures set out in the contracts agreed in 2013/14, and planned and ad hoc meetings and conversations with partners.
- 2.2 *Appendix A* provides a review of activity for the delivery of advice and information services, infrastructure support and volunteering, setting out achievements, issues raised and progress made for the period April 2015 to December 2015.
- 2.3 Table 1 on the following page sets out VCFS funding in 2015 / 2016, the estimated budget for 2016 / 2017 and forecasted VCFS grants to 2019 / 2020 subject to the annual budget process.
- 2.4 The Community Advice Network now provide disability advice services following the winding up of a previous VCFS partner (One Voice) receiving the same amount of funding in 2015/16. This was the subject of an Individual Cabinet Member decision by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for the Voluntary Sector and implemented with effect from 19 August 2015.
- 2.5 On 06 January 2016, LESS advised that they have taken a decision to wind up provision of Energy Services from 31st March 2016. This included the Home Energy Advice Service, the outcomes and success measures of which forms a significant part of the current contract. Given these circumstances and based on an assumption that advice on the availability of grants and managing fuel bills can be provided by the Citizens Advice Bureau, who already receive a significant amount of VCFS funding, Cabinet have recently proposed to withdraw the grant to LESS of £4,300 from 2016 / 2017 as part of the annual budget process.

- 2.6 The management and administration of small grants funding is carried out on the Council's behalf by the Community Foundation for Lancashire. Recently, by agreement with the Chief Executive, a sum of £10k was transferred to the Lancashire Flood Recovery Fund Appeal from which grants to help local victims of the recent flooding are now being processed and awarded.

Table 1: VCFS Funding 2015 / 2016 – 2019 /2020

VCFS Partner	Service Provision	2015/16 Revised	2016/17 Estimate	2017/18 Forecast	2018/19 Forecast	2019/20 Forecast
Community & Voluntary Solutions (CVS)	Infrastructure Support / Volunteering Coordination	36,700	37,300	0	0	0
Community Advice Network (CAN)	Advice and Information	14,500	14,700	0	0	0
Age UK	Advice and Information	7,200	7,300	0	0	0
Samaritans	Advice and Information	2,000	2,000	0	0	0
Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	Advice and Information	170,800	173,400	0	0	0
LESS	Advice and Information	4,200	0	0	0	0
Victim Support	Advice and Information	5,200	5,300	0	0	0
Small Grants	Various Discretionary Services	12,200	12,400	0	0	0
Unallocated VCFS grants		0	0	261,800	267,100	272,400
TOTALS		£252,800	£252,400	£257,500	£262,700	£267,900

3 Conclusions

- 3.1 Activities and experiences of partners commissioned for the delivery of services has identified a number of common themes that have had an impact on people's lives, with increasing numbers of people finding themselves in difficult circumstances and needing to access the services provided by VCFS partners.
- 3.2 The implications and impact of welfare reform and the introduction of Universal Credit in the district from December 2014 have resulted in increased and changing demand with the nature and type of information and advice evolving to deal with a widening range of inter-related needs as people make necessarily adjustments to their lifestyles.
- 3.3 Given these challenging circumstances VCFS partners have performed reasonably well with some notable achievements. Going forward, should funding continue beyond 2016/17 it may be necessary to reassess need to ensure that outcomes and measures remain relevant and provide value for money in the investments made.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

Equality and diversity was carefully considered as part of the framework for the commissioning of partners to ensure that appropriate policies were in place. No other impact arising directly from this report, but will need further consideration subject to commissioning continuing beyond March 2017.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None directly arising from this report

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report sets out the performance of the VCFS commissioned contracts which have been extended following Cabinet approval to 31 March 2017. As such this report does not have any further financial implication, any costs incurred having been met within existing budgets. A further report will be presented to Cabinet later in the year setting out options for any ongoing investment in Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector from April 2017 through commissioning or a grant programme dependent on available budget and outcomes in terms of their value against competing pressures on the council.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources / Information Services / Property / Open Spaces: None directly arising from this report but will need to be taken into consideration subject to the commissioning of services from April 2017.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and would highlight that the future reports on VCFS will need to incorporate other associated funding such as that provided to some community centres.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Delivering and Commissioning Plan and monitoring information and data

Contact Officer: Bob Bailey, Organisational Development Manager

Telephone: 01524 582018

E-mail: rbailey@lancaster.gov.uk

Ref: VCFS monitoring 31/12/2015

Lancaster District Community and Voluntary Solutions: Infrastructure Support	
Outcome: Resilience of VCFS is improved	
Success Measure	Comments
Organisations are supported to improve resilience	LDCVS has worked with nearly 60 organisations providing support in improving their resilience in difficult economic times. The nature of support provided has changed noticeably with an increasing split within the sector between the larger organisations – who are more likely to win tenders for contracts and funding - and the smaller, community based organisations that are more reliant than ever on volunteers. An increasing number of organisations are experiencing the impact of welfare reform resulting in higher demand for services
Organisations are supported to develop income generating options	Organisations receive annual direct enterprise support (Nine in 2015) through a programme of workshops and accounting support for accounting – including workshop delivered by Shared Future CIC entitled " <i>Your Chargeable Services – getting the costings right</i> ".
VCFS contacts have access to appropriate information	The monthly LDCVS e-bulletin is currently circulated to 720 contacts, including information on funding, local events and resources.
80% of organisations responding to a survey report they feel better able to cope	Specific information against this measure has not been collected for this reporting period. However, over 70% of respondents to a recent survey indicated that they had used the information provided to apply for funding, with 13% of these successful in obtaining total additional funding of £65,450.
Outcome: VCFS organisations are working together to deliver services/share costs and resources	
Success Measure	Comments
A minimum of 4 forum/network events are held	LDCVS held bi-monthly Morecambe Interagency Group meetings in May, July and September, with 48 attendees in total; a Volunteer Coordinators meeting in July with 11 attendees; and a Meet Your MP event in September with 12 attendees.
At least 5 organisations benefit from collaborative initiatives	Case studies show LDCVS works with at least 20 organisations, providing networking opportunities (for example the Morecambe Interagency Group meetings) and comprehensive support.
5 training sessions are run benefitting at least 50 individuals	Training courses entitled 'Your Chargeable Services', 'Introduction to Managing Volunteers', 'Emergency First Aid', 'Volunteers and the Law', 'Building on Community Strengths' were held including 56 delegates from at least 9 different organisations.
At least 40 organisations are supported to improve organisational/service quality	Support to improve organisations' service and quality includes support around governance, volunteer policies, advice and support, and training with accounts; this support was provided to 36 organisations during the reporting period.

Lancaster District Community and Voluntary Solutions: Volunteering Support	
Outcome: VCFS organisations are working together to deliver services/share costs and resources (continued)	
At least 50 VCFS individuals report improved knowledge, confidence and skills	See above Success Measure '5 training sessions...' benefitting 56 individuals.
90% of organisations responding to a survey report a high level of satisfaction with this service	Specific survey information was not available for the reporting period but numerous feedback quotes were provided expressing a very positive view of the service.
Outcome: VCFS capacity to deliver services in the district is improved by increased levels of volunteer support	
Success Measure	Comments
Production of an up-to-date marketing plan with a minimum of 6 promotional/marketing activities per year	12 marketing activities were carried out during the reporting period, including drop-in sessions, presentations to students, hosting the Lancaster Volunteer Awards and attending local events.
By the end of year 3, an average of 300 up-to-date volunteering opportunities available on the District database at any one time	The average number of volunteering opportunities available on the database was 251 for the reporting period.
By the end of year 3, 150 volunteers provided with entry-level training	The proposed 'Step Up to Volunteering' initiative did not receive the anticipated take-up, so the volunteering strategy has been revised, with 50 volunteers receiving training.
Outcome: impact of welfare reforms and economic challenges is mitigated	
Success Measure	Comments
33% of volunteers signposted/placed in Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) provide services for individuals impacted by welfare reforms and economic austerity	Information was not available for the reporting period but will be provided at the end of year 3.
Outcome: quality of life for individuals in the District is improved by access to important services	
Success Measure	Comments
Each year at least 100 VIOs (providing front-line services) are supported with good practice development/capacity building support	The information collected for this measure has changed to include only 1-to-1 support given to organisations specifically around volunteering, where previously it was combined with more general support; during the reporting period 13 VIOs received 1-to-1 input.
By the end of year 3, an evidence based policy event is run to influence partners to support the future development of volunteering	To be completed by end of year 3.

Lancaster District Community and Voluntary Solutions: Volunteering Support	
Outcome: cost and resources required to recruit and manage volunteers are reduced	
Success Measure	Comments
95% of VIO survey respondents report a positive impact upon their own costs and resources	This information was not collected during the reporting period.
The service receives a high level of client satisfaction	Specific survey information was not available for the reporting period but numerous feedback quotes were provided expressing a very positive view of the service.
Outcome: local people and communities are engaged in what happens in their areas	
Success Measure	Comments
200, 250, 300 (per year respectively) individuals are signposted/placed with a VIO	A change to the Do-It website has resulted in decreased use of the site, with 224 individuals using the site to access volunteering opportunities during the reporting period.
1000 individuals per year visiting a Volunteer Lancaster website	1,936 page views occurred during the reporting period.
An annual Volunteer Achievement Award ceremony	The Lancaster Volunteer Awards are held by LDCVS annually.
By the end of year 2, an action plan for developing volunteering opportunities including profiles of volunteers locally, identifying gaps in respect of groups that are currently under-represented in the volunteering community	This is undergoing development along with a wider LDCVS strategy and business plan.
Age UK Lancashire	
Outcome: impact of welfare reforms is managed well	
Success Measure	Comments
Older people report being aware of the changes and the impact on them following contact with the service	The recently-introduced feedback process indicates 25 clients reported receiving useful benefits advice that met their expectations.
More older people claim the benefits they are entitled to	61 benefit checks were conducted with new clients during the reporting period, resulting in an annual total of £236,222 successful benefit claims and only two claims rejected.

Age UK Lancashire

Outcome: quality of life for individuals in the District is improved

Success Measure	Comments
Older people report increased independence	41 clients reported that their independence has increased along with an improvement in their health and wellbeing.
Older people report decrease in social isolation	47 clients reported a decrease in social isolation; this was often due to the funds claimed through welfare benefits enabling travel and other social activity.
Number of older people receiving advice and information	The organisation supported 317 clients during the reporting period including 171 new customers, many of whom received support with multiple issues.

Outcome: efficiency of advice and information is improved

Success Measure	Comments
Evidence of working collaboratively with other advice providers to ensure clients have access, choice and control	Age UK work alongside various other local agencies including Welfare Rights, Job Centre, CAB, the Pension Service, Lancaster City Council housing and benefits departments, Lancashire Fire and Rescue, Lancashire Police.
More volunteers are recruited and trained enabling the service to support more people	There is currently one active volunteer supporting the Information & Advice Support Worker, particularly with completing welfare benefit claim forms. The part-time (14 hours per week) nature of the Information & Advice Support position means further recruitment and management of volunteers is not viable at this time.
The service receives a high level of client satisfaction	There were no complaints received during the reporting period and survey evidence shows a high level of positive feedback.

Outcome: advice and information providers are working together to deliver assured and effective services

Success Measure	Comments
Referral proves in and out of the service is improved	The introduction of the Personal Advisor Service offered an opportunity to improve referral processes and increase the scope of support provided.

Outcome: advice and information providers are working together to deliver assured and effective services

Evidence of a holistic approach to each client	The Engagement, Personal Advisor and Information & Advice teams work closely together to provide a holistic approach to assessing and meeting clients' needs.
Evidence of working as part of the CAN partnership	The partnership with CAN ceased due to the end of the ASTF funding during the reporting period.

LESS

Outcome: quality of life for individuals in the district is improved

Success Measure	Comments
Energy efficiency advice is delivered to at least 200 homes in the district each year, benefitting over 400 people per year.	151 households have received advice during the year to date via visits, calls, one-to-one and written advice. The period April - September represents by far the quietest period for referrals due to the summer months.
20 bill clinics are run per year delivering money saving advice.	Held bill clinics and complementary sessions with CAB, providing advice and support to nearly 50 people, helping them to save over £6,000 per annum in total.
At least 40 people receive utility bills advice saving them an average of £140 per year.	Bills clinics are generally held in October / November details of which will be available by the end of year 3. Only one household received a reduced bill (for a saving of £247) in this reporting period, however the previous period assisted 106 households so a much higher return would be expected during the winter period.
Vulnerable people receive independent advice on energy saving and tariffs, and report that they are empowered to take action on their energy bills.	Improved the tracking of support provided to vulnerable households - including multiple interventions and how to address these - with a view to integration with the CAN online referral system
Increase in referrals of vulnerable people to other agencies for specialised advice such as benefit entitlement.	
Outcome: advice and information providers are working together to deliver assured and effective services	
Success Measure	Comments
10 training sessions per year are delivered to community organisations working with vulnerable people.	Training opportunities are reduced during the summer months and so only one session was delivered during the reporting period, however 27 sessions were delivered during the previous period and more will be delivered by the end of year 3.
Advice and Information providers in the district report feeling more confident and informed about energy efficiency grants.	LESS has expanded its work across North Lancashire setting up a referral system for the whole county as part of the 'Cosy Homes in Lancashire' scheme and the latest tables on fuel poverty provided by the Department of Energy and Climate Change has seen a significant improvement, with the Lancaster district no longer being in the Top 10 worst areas. Changes in government policy and direction on the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme is causing some uncertainty with funders, in particular. A LESS consultancy report on Green Deal and ECO for Lancashire Authorities has been published.
Advice and information providers in the district know how to recognise fuel poverty and can refer people to the Home Energy Service.	

LESS

Outcome: efficiency of advice and information services is improved

Success Measure	Comments
Number of agencies successfully collaborating on referral system.	LESS collaborated with 7 other agencies during the reporting period: the Wellbeing Service, North Lancs CAB, HIA, the Housing Standards team, DISC, Lancaster CVS and the NHS.
Outcome: impact of welfare reforms is managed well	
Success Measure	Comments
Local people report that they feel better equipped to manage fuel bills and experience reduced levels of fuel debt and poverty.	Not reported for this period
The service receives a high level of client satisfaction.	Not reported for this period

North Lancashire Citizens Advice Bureau

Outcome: impact of welfare reforms is managed well

Success Measure	Comments
Work with at least 10,000 clients in year 3	During the reporting period (Q1 2015/16 April to July only) the service worked with a total of 1,755 unique clients face to face, by telephone or email. There were also 2,780 unique visitors to the service's website representing a 39% increase on the previous year.
Increase total volunteer numbers to 150 by year 3	6 new volunteers proceeded to training (from 16 enquiries) during the reporting period.
Outcome: quality of life for individuals in the district is improved	
Success Measure	Comments
Improvements achieved in terms of advice, support and referral processes, informed by the findings of the Health and Wellbeing survey	The telephone Advice Line service is now available from 9am to 5pm during the week, alongside a new One Service strategy to drive continuous improvement across areas within the organisation. The increased traffic to the advice website is a result of a site update in December 2014.
At least 40% of volunteers who move on go on to education and/or employment.	50% of volunteers who left the service went into employment, education or training.

North Lancashire Citizens Advice Bureau	
Outcome: advice and information providers are working together to deliver assured, effective and efficient services	
Success Measure	Comments
All CAN partners hold the Advice Service Alliance General Help Quality Mark	A decision has been made to use the Skills for Justice Quality Standard rather than the ASA Quality Mark. Each of the 35 new members of staff & volunteers are on target to attain this accreditation.
Emergencies dealt with across partnership within one working day.	100% of emergencies were dealt with within one working day through the online referral process.
Repeat clients accessing the bureau decreased by 10% – (proxy measure around “getting it right first time” by linking into partners agency support for wider needs.)	Not reported for this period.
Completed/successful referrals increased by 100%	The report does not state a percentage increase for referrals due to the annual nature of the measure, however 70 referrals were received during the reporting period.
100% increase in partnership grant applications/bids to bolster local service provision	As above, this is an annual measure so the percentage increase was not specified, however one new grant application was submitted during the reporting period with a further four bids in the planning stage.
Outcome: the most vulnerable members of society are supported	
Success Measure	Comments
48% of clients are from the district’s six most deprived wards (Poulton, Harbour, Heysham North, Skerton East, Skerton West, Westgate).	39.9% of clients lived in the six most deprived wards during the reporting period.
100% of clients assessed as an emergency receive assistance within one working day.	Assessment of clients was carried out within one working day on 100% of clients, with 100% of emergencies dealt with within one working day through the online referral process.
Polish and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) engagement increases from 7.4% to 9% of the total number of clients.	10.5% of clients were of Polish or BME origin during the reporting period.
Outcome: quality of information provision is improved	
Success Measure	Comments
Maintain a score of 80% or above in Citizens Advice Quality of Advice Assessment.	The highest rating of ‘green’ is achieved each month.
Achieve Specialist Quality Mark Accreditation.	Achieved, with renewal to occur September 2016.

Samaritans	
Outcome: impact of welfare reforms is managed well	
Success Measure	Comments
Numbers of callers signposted to other organisations	Information awaited at the time of writing – will be reported by the end of year 3.
Anecdotal and anonymous feedback from people experiencing distress due to financial worry	There has been a notable increase in the number of callers experiencing distress through financial difficulties, mostly to do with benefits and a substantial number who have taken out and having difficulty repaying pay-day loans.
Outcome: quality of life for individuals in the district is improved	
Success Measure	Comments
The service improves its accessibility to people in need	Dealt with over 5,000 calls which is consistent with the previous year due, in the main, to the way in which the national telephone distribution system and 'cloud' software works to keep to a minimum the chance of a caller not getting through to a Samaritan representative. The system has been a success and is making more efficient use of volunteers time but callers can come from outside of the Lancaster district, as well as in - no record is kept of this information to protect confidentiality.
An increase in the number of calls handled by the centre	The overall trend of the calls received represents an increase in the number of callers with 'multiple problems', mainly around money worries and issues with benefit cuts leading to debt which, in turn, is causing health issues and people increasingly struggling to "see a way out". Lancaster has become a 'texting' branch which required all staff to be trained.
Outcome: efficiency of advice and information services is improved	
Success Measure	Comments
Evidence of ongoing improvement of service via the internal Samaritans quality assurance processes	The overall trend of the calls received represents an increase in the number of callers with 'multiple problems', mainly around money worries and issues with benefit cuts leading to debt which, in turn, is causing health issues and people increasingly struggling to "see a way out".
Outcome: advice and information providers are working together to provide assured and effective services	
Success Measure	Comments
An increase in the numbers of new partnerships formed with other local organisations	The local branch worked closely with Network Rail following a national review which identified Lancaster as a 'suicide' hotspot. Training developed locally with Network Rail locally has subsequently been engaged by Samaritans at a national level.

Victim Support	
Outcome: impact of welfare reforms is managed well	
Success Measure	Comments
An increase in the number of outreach meetings held	Outreach work has also been undertaken with HM Prison Lancaster Farms with a change in focus on adults, rather than youth offenders, with 'listeners' training being enhanced to help them consider different issues they might be approached about. This was one of a series of twelve outreach meetings that the local branch holds in the community each year.
Retention of core funding in the transition from national to local (PCC) commissioning to secure the service in Lancaster District	An increased risk for Victim Support was the new process for securing funding following a change in control of Criminal Justice by the Police & Crime Commissioners which now requires organisations to bid for financial support. This change meant that the local branch had to bid for the provision of domestic abuse services in Lancaster and, like other organisations, led to a review of the existing organisation and management structure. This has resulted in improved and more coordinated work with the Youth Offending teams and the introduction of new and extended services that are important locally.
Increase in partnerships formed within a) criminal justice sector and b) other welfare organisations e.g. Health, Housing and Social Care	Partner in the Victims' Services Alliance - a network of third sector agencies - who are committed to working together to improve services to victims of crime, their families and others who have been affected. This is achieved through collaboration; influencing and engaging with government and key decision makers, sharing of ideas, resources and good practice across the member organisations. The Alliance aims to bring together a sector that has been historically disparate, creating a new partnership to underpin the development of services and representation of victims' interests.
An increase in the range and number of collaborative services and projects delivered by formal and informal partnerships	
Outcome: quality of life for individuals in the district is improved	
Success Measure	Comments
Number of clients providing positive feedback on service provision	Of the number of cases dealt with (see measure below) around two-thirds of clients said they were 'very satisfied' and a quarter 'satisfied' with the service received.

Outcome: efficiency of advice and information services is improved	
Success Measure	Comments
An increase in number of cases managed	Number of cases increased to almost 900 community cases and over 500 Witness cases of which around two-thirds of clients said they were 'very satisfied' and a quarter 'satisfied' with the service received. There was also an increase in the number of cases referred to other agencies and organisations to nearly 350. In line with national trends, crimes of violence represented the largest number of crimes with domestic violence crimes increasing. Whilst the numbers of victims being supported has reduced slightly, the seriousness of cases are increasing and are longer term and more complex requiring intensive use of resources.
Improvement in the range of service delivery methods, particularly IT and new media related	Additional volunteers have been recruited and trained and specific training has been provided in safeguarding vulnerable victims; homicide support, sexual and domestic violence, disability awareness and Race / hate crime awareness.
Outcome: advice and information providers are working together to provide assured and effective services	
Success Measure	Comments
An increase in the number of organisations working in partnership with Victim Support	Victim Support allocated resources to support the start-up Victims Services Alliance and has facilitated its growth and development since. The Alliance offers membership to all organisations working with victims of crime providing a platform for stronger collaboration and a united voice for improving services to victims of crime. Its objectives include:
An increase in the number of 'signposted' referrals to partnership organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together for the improvement of services to victims, victims' families and others affected, through the sharing of knowledge, information and good practice across member organisations; • Provide a forum for networking across member organisations, with swift communication of key information; • Support and strengthen the position of victims in the criminal justice process; • Seek to be a united voice for victims, including influencing and engaging with government and wider stakeholders; • Work together in a positive and respectful way to improve outcomes for victims, victims' families and for others affected <p>Victim Support is also a partner in the Hate Crime Network which focus on the needs of victims affected by hate crime. The network comprises of a consortium of organisations working on the behalf of victims and families affected by crime, including Citizens Advice Bureau, Disability Hate Crime Network, menCap; Mind; Equality Advisory Support Service, Faith matters. The of the Hate Crime Network is to bring these, and other, organisations together in a structured and supportive network, to share information and facilitate stronger partnership working, acting as a united voice to improve services to victims.</p>