



WILTSHIRE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD
Criminal Justice System: working together for the public



PROGRESS REVIEW

2018-2019

*Our **vision** is that the people of Wiltshire and Swindon feel confident that justice is delivered fairly, swiftly and sensitively to all.*

*Our **purpose** as a Board is to support one another to deliver the WCJB vision and to hold each other to account. Working together we achieve more.*

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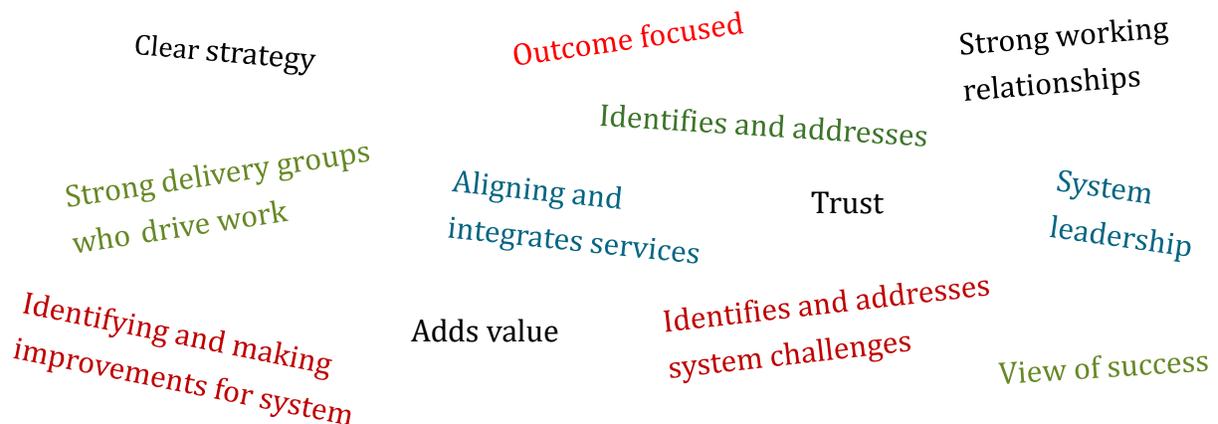
INTRODUCTION

The Local Criminal Justice Board for Wiltshire (WCJB) brings together agencies with responsibility for delivering criminal justice services across our area. The criminal justice landscape is complex and no single agency is responsible for the system as a whole. It is vital that criminal justice agencies are unified in their ambition and work together, to improve outcomes both for victims of crime and people who offend and deliver justice in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Background

On 8th March 2018 the WCJB held a partnership planning day in order to identify key areas for focus and establish a plan to measure progress. This plan was drawn up and agreed by the board in May 2018.

On the planning day it was agreed that the following statements are the traits of a high performing Criminal Justice Board.



A number of key questions were raised;

- How is WCJB doing against these?
- Can we demonstrate that the WCJB is moving in the right direction achieving the following?
- Do we understand demand and implications on victim and CJS?

Board members were approached prior to the development of the review to ascertain their perception of the WCJBs performance. It was noted that progress has been made against the values listed above. Commitment to the board remains strong with good attendance from partners and collective engagement to support discussions.

The WCJB focus of the last 12 months has significantly centred on the need to prioritise system improvements, pulling together existing efforts and adding value to them. This has linked in with the development of the vision that the PCCs are becoming more of a system coordinator to enable and support collaboration by bringing together services and setting out a plan for the whole system.

Planning Day Outcomes

Three key priorities were identified

- Improve the service provided to victims, witnesses and the most vulnerable
- Reduce re-offending and rehabilitate
- Provide an effective and efficient Criminal Justice System

Under each of these priorities a number of work strands were developed to support the board to achieve these priorities. These were published in the WCJB plan.

This report, prepared by the WCJB Business Managers, looks to review progress against the activities that were identified in the plan as well as whole system development which allows for flexibility to respond to emerging priorities as they arise.

EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS

Victims and Witnesses

The WCJB Victims, Witnesses and Most Vulnerable Group (VWVG) are the key delivery arm for this priority, the board is well attended by partner agencies who bring their expertise to aid constructive discussions.

Over the past 12 months a review of Victim and Witness support services available has been completed and, following successful procurement, two providers have been identified, Victim Support for over 18s and Youth Action Wiltshire for under 18s. The split age group approach enables improved service pathways and the ability to achieve priority referral routes between associated specialist support services. Youth Action will also provide witness/peer support, confidence building and mentoring as additional services. Referrals will still come through the police for both of these services although victims can go directly to the providers independently. Capacity within the Horizon service has been also increased to further enhance quality and to enact improvement developments, for example, collating and assessing victim experiences and feedback to inform support going forward.

Restorative Together also supports the delivery of these priorities and report that restorative justice (RJ) training is now being introduced into initial training for recruits and specials. To date, level one training has been delivered to 571 police officers and staff with a further 30 officers and staff self-referring and completing the level two training. This training is delivered alongside other professionals from the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) and Her

Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) for example. The RJ team continue to develop the volunteer programme and currently have 29 volunteers who work on cases to achieve a restorative outcome. To date, Wiltshire Police have delivered 414 out of court community resolutions with a restorative element from a total of 453 cases.

Partnership working is embedded in the strategic approach, the PCC has supported joint commissioning with statutory partners for domestic abuse and sexual violence services. Service and contract reviews are regularly undertaken with a view to ensuring continuous improvement. From October 2018 a new specialist service provider has been commissioned to provide a range of support in the Sexual Assault and Referral Centre (SARC). The Specialist Domestic Abuse Court Group continue to monitor court performance for DA cases, implementing any necessary process changes to improve. This group is also working to the national DA Best Practice Framework which includes compliance with the SDAC components. Furthermore a DA Court Observers Pilot was also supported by the Board and its review by Bath Spa University will be summarised and presented at the July WCJB.

The working group tasked to reduce the impact of the late movement of Crown Court trials on Victim and Witnesses report that at their last meeting there were only 11 cases to review in comparison to 70 when the group first formed. Timely communication and increased information sharing as to specific vulnerabilities has led to listing officers being better informed and therefore able to move the most appropriate cases.

Ministry of Justice held a Victims Code of Practice (VCoP) national workshop to progress establishing a framework for compliance. Wiltshire PCC Victim lead attended and Wiltshire are keen to be a pilot site. The workshop acknowledged the challenges in measuring compliance and will focus on 5 key entitlements initially. Wiltshire will keep closely linked in

with the development of a revised version of the Victim Code to be published towards the end of the year.

Nineteen key actions were identified in the WCJB Plan to support the delivery of this priority. The current status is that three have been achieved and continue to be monitored, and thirteen are active and ongoing. Three remain outstanding to be commenced, these include outcomes from the Lammy Report which is identified as an areas for development later in this report. Also the implementation of s28 pre-recorded evidence for vulnerable children is awaiting national rollout.

Reducing Re-offending

To date, the board has progressed this priority thematically specifically on Accommodation, Mental Ill-Health and improving Integrated Offender Management (IOM) rather than through a dedicated sub group. An individual case study deep dive into housing has been undertaken and then a subsequent accommodation focused partnership group meeting chaired by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Outcomes included identification that a large proportion of the supervised caseload, particularly within the CRC are recorded as having no suitable accommodation. This meeting raised the profile of accommodation concerns and the need to refresh and develop the communication channels which have deteriorated over time. It has been agreed to re-establish an Offender Housing Forum to discuss to address these issues and support the reduction in homelessness.

In relation to mental ill-health the board identified a pilot programme running in other areas and sought to obtain greater detail on whether its approach would be suitable for the Wiltshire area. This led to the Community Sentence Treatment Requirement (CSTR) Programme Lead

attending the board and answering questions. The local situation was explored and further discussions with NHS England are due to take place in order to progress this further. Closer ties have been established with Health partners, in particular Public Health and the sharing of data sets is being explored to identify shared opportunities for collaboration.

Work to revitalise and develop IOM has been made by Police, NPS, CRC and OPCC. A relaunch of IOM with revised referral criteria, performance and resourcing is taking place in May 2019. Over the coming months IOM will be trailing the new arrangements and develop evidence for improvement in pathway support for the WCJB.

A South West Regional Reducing Reoffending Board has been established and this will provide more levers to tackle offending. The second meeting is scheduled for June where proposals of strategy, performance and alignment to local boards will be discussed.

Reducing reoffending has been a challenging work stream to generate momentum. The significant local challenges to probation services has meant there has been significant disruption in the system. Despite this, relationships have improved significantly and focusing on specific operational areas has started to build confidence. With the current momentum, the emerging regional agenda and the investment by the PCC in a Reoffending Commissioning Manager, it is now the right time to formalise this work. A paper will be discussed at a future WCJB outlining how to establish a Wiltshire Reoffending Board and coordinate much of the above work.

Of the thirteen key actions identified in the WCJB Plan to support the delivery of this priority, six are active and ongoing and seven have not been started for the reasons already outlined.

Effective and Efficient Criminal Justice System

The Wessex Criminal Justice Efficiency Board acts as the decision forum for the resolution of multi-agency issues arising from the effective delivery of justice across the region. The scope of this work stream is extensive and the Efficiency Boards subsidiary groups (QADG, PTPM, Video and Digital) enable focus to be brought on specific matters as they arise.

There has been particular work completed to shape the framework for monitoring the impact of bail legislation changes on Victims and Witnesses and we are awaiting the technology QLIK SENSE to progress this further.

Specific work has been identified to address a range of key performance measures that are not at expected levels through the QADG and also understand the implications on service delivery following the closure of Chippenham Magistrates Court.

Work continues to develop through the Wessex CPS/Police tri-force disclosure action plan which was signed off in Autumn 2018. This was created following publication of the joint HMCPSI “Making it Fair” Inspection Report and aligned to the CPS/NPCC National Disclosure Improvement Plan. Monitoring the impact of this action plan will be done through peer reviews and police file quality returns. A training programme has been developed for officers across Wiltshire who now manage the disclosure process

The digital agenda has been broad and challenging for agencies to keep pace with and this resulted in a combined letter being sent nationally to request direction on where best to focus

resources appropriately. A central government response has been received and a meeting is being organised with senior officials to discuss this matter further.

The WCJB partners are ahead of the curve in relation to their use of video enabled justice. This remains a challenging issue nationally but one that is very much the direction of travel with regard to the court reform programme.

Despite the broad challenges faced by the efficiency agenda, partners remain confident that we have a good grasp in the Wiltshire and Swindon area.

The WCJB plan identified ten actions to support delivery in this area, eight of which are active and on-going. The two that require development relate to the Lammy Report outcomes and understanding the impact of the Bail Act changes both of which are noted later in this report.

Other

Over the past 12 months the WCJB have reflected on national strategies such as the Serious Violence Strategy and Serious and Organised Crime Strategy, proposing questions based on these documents for discussion. The board has also kept pace with the challenges arising from Brexit negotiations and plans for contingency should a no-deal situation arise.

Ongoing assessment of the WCJB risk register has enabled identification, scoring and mitigation of the risks pertinent to the boards business.

Over the last 12 months the WCJB have looked to develop the way the board view and discuss performance across the whole criminal justice system. This has resulted in an outcome

focused dashboard being established and presented to the board with an interactive presentation to drive conversations between partners and monitor success against the strategy.

In September 2018 the board signed up to the Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy which reflected on the learning from the Hillsborough disaster and its aftermath. This document acknowledges the importance supporting victims and the bereaved following an incident and place public interest above agency reputation, displaying accountability, transparency and integrity in the work we do in Criminal Justice.

FORWARD PLAN

Future Areas to Develop

The ongoing evolution of the Victims and Witness work stream has led to planning a July workshop where the new chair is looking to organise a refresh of the group's priorities, attendees and clarify the scope of the group. This will look to incorporate the feedback following the research piece on Domestic Abuse Court Observation.

A disclosure conference planned to further raise awareness on Disclosure issues.

A housing needs assessment remains outstanding and will be progressed by the developing Offending Housing Forum.

There is further work to do in driving forward the WCJB focus and in particular evidencing outcomes and specifically in relation to vulnerability but the groundwork over the last 12 months has enabled us to be more aligned with partnering Criminal Justice Boards.

Areas Still Requiring Attention

In September 2017 the Lammy Review highlighted the disproportionality of BAME groups represented in the criminal justice system. Further work by the WCJB should be done to progress the findings of this report in the Wiltshire and Swindon locality.

Recommendation – consideration for a BAME working group to consider identifying Wiltshire areas for action

Progress has been hampered in respect of monitoring the impact of the bail act changes due to the absence of an available data set. Therefore we are unable to be satisfied that we are collectively providing the same level of service to victims and witnesses since the change. This has been echoed by a national request for information from the Criminal Justice Board.

Recommendation – WCJB to continue to identify and challenge the Police to develop reliable information