

Minutes

30th September 2020: 10.00 – 12.30

Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

David Lloyd, Police and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
 Chief Constable, Charlie Hall, Herts Constabulary
 Sara Miles, Herts Criminal Justice Policy Manager, OPCC
 Kevin McGetrick, Head of Commissioning & Victim Services, OPCC
 Christopher Barclay, Criminal Justice Research and Performance Analyst, OPCC
 Catherine Akehurst, T/Chief Supt, Herts Constabulary
 Neeve Bishop, Head of Herts Local Delivery Unit, National Probation Service
 Nick Smith, Head of Service, Youth Justice, Herts County Council
 Jenny Coles, Director of Children's Services, HCC
 Tom Moreton, Deputy Director, BeNCH CRC
 Jaswant Narwal, Chief Crown Prosecutor, CPS Thames and Chiltern
 Beth Stamp, Operations Manager for Beds, Cambs & Herts Crown Courts, HMCTS
 Bethan McPhee, Executive Assistant, OPCC (Secretariat)

Apologies:

Assistant CC Genna Telfer, Herts Constabulary
 Paul Millan, Noble Solicitors
 Diane Hayward, Legal Aid Agency
 Ian Miller, HMCTS
 Anthony Roche, MD, North Hertfordshire District Council
 Sharn Elton, East and North Herts CCG
 Natalie Robinson-Chatterley, HMCTS

Guests:

Claire Beard, CPS
 Emma Conduct, HMPPS
 Ella Thomas, MoJ

	Item	Updates
1.	Introductions & Apologies	<p>The Chairman welcomed board members and guests to the group. Introductions to the following guests were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claire Beards from CPS for agenda item 6 on rape outcomes. • Emma Conduct from HMPPS. Emma is the female offender lead for the region. • Ella Thomas from the Criminal Justice Leadership Team at MoJ. • Beth Stamp – Operations Manager for Beds, Cambs & Herts Crown Courts having taken over from Natalie Robinson-Chatterley. <p>Apologies were noted.</p>

2.	Chair's Introduction	<p>The Chair made reference to the last Board meeting in June and the fact that it has been a busy summer since then with Black Lives Matters protest locally – highlighting disproportionality in the system, and more recently the Extinction Rebellion protests.</p> <p>Concerns have remained over the summer and now into Autumn regarding the courts and the backlog of cases. The Chair has expressed his concerns both locally and nationally about the challenges and the knock-on impact on victim and witness attrition, and on public confidence in the CJS.</p> <p>The Chair introduced guests today:</p> <p>Ella Thomas gave an overview of the work at the MoJ: Highlights of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at how to bridge the gap between local and national CJS. • Looking at new ways of working together to create a two-way flow of communication. • CJS Strategic Command Group met last week. It has been decided to continue to meet weekly and they will report back any interests via recovery update via LCJB Managers. • The Senior Officials are taking forward work commissioned by CJB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conducting end to end review ○ Cross CJS strategies across engagement ○ Continuing discussions on spending review bids ○ These will involve engagement at local levels. <p>Emma Conduct, HMPPS overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants to gauge the local picture in how we are working with women in Herts and the responses to that. • To understand the pathways for women entering the CJ system. Police, diversion work, court experience, community provisions. • Have attended a few mtgs in Herts – there could be more community provisions for women. Has started looking at setting up joint initiatives – to strengthen community ties. • We don't yet understand enough about some of the individuals in Herts – we need to understand what the women in Herts need from us. • Need time to review what the priorities around this group are – still focusing on recovery at the moment. <p>Transitioning cases from youth to adult services was discussed and noted that this is a difficult age group in which to establish a safe environment and appropriate resources - sometimes given the levels of vulnerability for this group, such as exploitation.</p> <p>Chair highlighted the focus for women in Herts. Suggested that ahead of the next meeting – a paper could be prepared to discuss what we could do going forward.</p> <p>It was noted that when doing this piece of work, women from different communities need to be considered - cultural needs, language barriers, different BAME groups. There are big gaps in services for women in some communities.</p>
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3.	Minutes from last meeting and Review of Action Log	<p>The minutes of the last meeting held in June, were acknowledged to be a true and accurate reflection of the discussion:</p> <p>The outstanding actions in the Action Tracker were discussed and reviewed.</p>
4.	Performance & Recovery	<p>Recovery pack and planning: Flow through the CJS presentation was circulated in advance. Discussion about what would now enhance the pack and support local recovery planning. More detail behind the data would be helpful, e.g., how long have cases been waiting, how many complex cases remain, how many cases involved defendants remanded in custody and how many cases involve defendants under 18s.</p> <p>Ella Thomas said that she would go back to the team and to colleagues in HMCTS and share this feedback.</p> <p>Crime levels have now returned to normal. The volume and crime mix have changed from lock down period in spring. Result is that they are seeing an increase in RUIs in general – not just in young people.</p> <p>Chris Barclay discussed the Crown Court backlog and modeling the trial data available. In discussion that followed it was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumptions and variables are based on existing data. • Probably too conservative with the estimates. • Complex cases will need looking at. These trials will take much longer than 3-5 days. • A wait time of 2-3 years is not acceptable. <p>Beth reported to the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Albans – are looking at 3rd trial room to be opened imminently. • That concerns are understood. • Colleagues have been working on capacity. <p>Ella noted that nationally all risks and concerns need to be considered. Victim attrition is a priority in discussions currently taking place.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted that they are all working towards the same goal and aired his frustration that at the centre of all of this, there appears not to be any real understanding that this could change the system and people’s confidence in criminal justice.</p> <p><u>Items escalated by PPMG:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Victims & Witness attrition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Important to keep this on the agenda. ○ Concerns around the backlog and the dates being fixed going into 2022. ○ Looking at S28 rollout in Herts & Beds – recording of victims evidence in new cases and the playback of this. 2. File Quality – Impact on Performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acceptance around file quality. ○ Once cases are in the system – case needs to be able to stand up. ○ File Quality unit has been set up in Herts – and will continue to work through this.

		<p>3. Digital equipment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are courts equipped digitally to have effective hearings. ○ There is a need to FastTrack digital equipment into court rooms. <p>HCJB Performance Dashboard This dashboard was circulated to the group in advance of the meeting:</p> <p><u>Highlights of which:</u> Guilty plea at first hearing in Mags are up Guilty plea at first hearing in CC is down</p> <p>Conviction rates were discussed. It was highlighted to the group that with regards to DA and Rape cases – we wouldn’t want to have 100% conviction rate – this would show we were risk adverse.</p> <p>Rape – Director upon the launch of RASSOU 2025 Strategy, made reference to all the good work being done across Herts, Beds & Cambs. That transparency and honesty about some of the difficult cases and challenges, and having processes in place is significant. Significant progress is being made in this area.</p> <p>DA – more difficult to measure, both in mags and CC – often linked with other offences. Victim attrition is a problem in these particular cases.</p>
5.	Racial Disparity in the CJS	<p>T/Chief Supt Akehurst shared a presentation with the group.</p> <p>Chair highlighted that whilst there is clarity on there being disproportionality in the system – we don’t know why. Next steps will be important - looking at the data in more detail, pulling out data and looking at areas for further action.</p> <p>Culture of agreement should be to challenge each other. Raising disproportionality should be owned by everybody - to challenge one another when it’s seen.</p> <p>The group were told that within the CPS, discussions around this have started. It needs to be on the agenda all of the time. This is not a single issue. It is ongoing. There was acknowledgement in the value that it is now being discussed. Continuity of partnership was highlighted as being vitally important.</p> <p>Chair agreed and highlighted some of the difficulties in hearing the voices amongst the Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.</p> <p>The group were told that there is a strong service user forum in probation. That they speak regularly to service users in the CJ system – so would have access to some individuals who would be willing to talk about these issues.</p> <p>Lots of work being done across HCC as part of the community wide strategy. Action: Jenny Coles to ask the HCC Equalities Manager to contact Sara Miles to discuss.</p>
6.	Rape outcomes	<p>Claire Beards, CPS gave an overview on the work of RASSOU.</p>

		<p>The Chair thanked Claire for the presentation and commented that there is good work being done here, and for as long as there is joint working happening, progress will be made.</p> <p>The reporting is very different from the cases received in the CPS. Cases get reported – they may not have got anywhere near close to prosecution. Important to see what does get through to the CPS and gets charged.</p>
7.	AOB	None
8.	Future agenda items	<p>Future agenda items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probation Reform Program – Stephen Johnson Proctor (NPS Eastern Region Director) • Integrated Offender Management • Female offenders
	Date of Next meeting	Thursday 17th December, 13.00-16.00