

**WEST MIDLANDS POLICE
AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER**

**NON-CONFIDENTIAL
NOTICE OF DECISION
008/2015**

Contact Officer: Alethea Fuller

Telephone Number: 0121 626 5366

Email: a.fuller@west-midlands.ppn.police.uk

Prisoners Earnings Act element of 2015-2016 Victims Commissioning Budgets

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Responsibility for commissioning locally most of the emotional and practical support services for victims of crime that are provided by the voluntary and community sector transfers to Police and Crime Commissioners on the 1 April 2015. These services help victims to cope with and recover from the impacts of crime.

The Prisoners Earning Act (The PEA) commenced on 26th September 2011. It enables prison governors to impose a levy of up to and including 40% on wages over £20 per week (after tax, national insurance, any court ordered payments and any child support payments) of prisoners who have been assessed as being of low risk of absconding or re-offending and allowed to work outside of prison on temporary licence, in order to prepare for their eventual release.

Ministers decided that all the funds generated by the imposition of the levy would be paid to voluntary organisations, and prescribed Victim Support for this purpose. It has been used to provide direct, practical, paid for services such as emergency vouchers for food, enhanced home security and professional counselling.

The Ministry of Justice has devolved the total PEA allocation of £1million for 2015-16 to Police and Crime Commissioners and the fund is included in the Victims Fund grant allocations which come into effect on 1 April 2015. For the West Midlands the allocation is £48,839 and the Commissioner will continue to allocate the PEA to Victim Support in order to continue to provide practical support to victims of crime.

DECISION

I approve the allocation of £48,839 to Victim Support through the devolved PEA allocation from the Ministry of Justice.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in this decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for the West Midlands Office for Policing and Crime. Any interests are indicated below.

Signature.....David Jamieson.....

Date.....26 March 2015.....

NON - CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. Responsibility for services for victims of crime transfers to Police and Crime Commissioners on the 1 April 2015. They will take on responsibility for commissioning locally most of the emotional and practical support services for victims of crime that are provided by the voluntary and community sector in their area. These services help victims to cope with and recover from the impacts of crime. Cope and recover are the outcomes which services for victims should be aiming to achieve as far as possible.
2. Across the country, local commissioning is replacing the old system of grant-funding by the Ministry of Justice, although some services will still be commissioned nationally, including the witness service, homicide service, BRAKE, trafficking service, rape support and some victims' helplines. £22 million of the core budget has been allocated for these national services.
3. The total MoJ budget for commissioning services at both the national and local level consists of £50m core victims' services budget and up to a further £50m of additional revenue to be raised from offenders through the Victims Surcharge, and increases to the value of penalty notices for disorder and motoring fixed penalty notices.
4. PCCs will be responsible for commissioning both a 'non-specialist' overarching victim referral mechanism including onward support and more 'specialist' services for victims of crime in the West Midlands, including Restorative Justice services.
5. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) will retain responsibility for commissioning certain specialist services.

The Prisoners Earnings Act

6. The Prisoners Earning Act (The PEA) commenced on 26th September 2011. It enables prison governors to impose a levy of up to and including 40% on wages over £20 per week (after tax, national insurance, any court ordered payments and any child support payments) of prisoners who have been assessed as being of low risk of absconding or re-offending and allowed to work outside of prison on temporary licence, in order to prepare for their eventual release.
7. Ministers decided that all the funds generated by the imposition of the levy would be paid to voluntary organisations, and prescribed Victim Support for this purpose. It has been used to provide direct, practical, paid for services such as emergency vouchers for food, enhanced home security and professional counselling.
8. The Ministry of Justice has devolved the total PEA allocation of £1million for 2015-16 to Police and Crime Commissioners and the fund is included in the grant allocations which come into effect on 1 April 2015. For the West Midlands the allocation is £48,839 and the Commissioner will continue to allocate the PEA to Victim Support in order to provide practical support to victims of crime.

9. Victim Support currently use the PEA budget to provide services such as counselling, interpreters, child or other care costs, and transport.

10. The funding must be spent on practical support for:

- Victims of the most serious crime
- The most vulnerable victims
- Those who are repeatedly and persistently targeted

11. Examples of practical help that is commissioned:

- Financial help - vouchers for food, heating, clothing, spectacles or other immediate need such as replacing white goods.
- Counselling - provided by professionally qualified, paid counsellors.
- Transport - for a fixed period if needed, including transport to work, school or hospital, or through the area where the crime took place.
- Childcare or other carer's costs - for a fixed period or specific purpose, eg for an elderly relative, to give respite to a victim of serious crime, or while a parent attends a medical appointment.
- Interpreter services
- Removal costs - for example for victims of domestic abuse, abuse or harassment.
- Security systems - for example, security lighting, lock-fitting services and burglar, panic and personal alarms.
- Repairs to homes - for example to doors.
- Glaziers
- Cleaning services
- Emergency Accommodation
- Graffiti removal
- Any other practical support that is deemed to be within the provisions of the PEA.

12. The PEA will continue to support victims of the most serious crime to receive practical assistance when needed, in order to support or change their circumstances.