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| Job Title: Witness Care Officer | |
| Job Evaluation Number | A863 |

JOB DESCRIPTION

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| Job Title: Witness Care Officer | Location: Berkshire |
| Job Family: Business Support | Role Profile Title: BB3 Police Staff |
| Reports To: Team Leader – Witness Care Unit | Band level: 3F |
| Staff Responsibilities (direct line management of): Nil | |

a. OVERALL PURPOSE OF THE ROLE: Defines the role, put simply, why it exists.

The overall purpose of the role is to: Conduct the day-to-day delivery of Victim and Witness Care in accordance with the principals of The Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) Act as point of contact for the Crown Prosecution Service, the Police and other Criminal Justice Agencies from charge to conclusion. Work as part of a team to improve witness satisfaction and reduce the number of ineffective Trials.

b. KEY ACCOUNTABILITY AREAS: Define the important aspect of the role for which the job holder is responsible for results or outcomes

The key result areas in the role are as follows:

1. Act as single point of contact for an allocated caseload of victims and witnesses throughout the lifetime of the court case. Take responsibility for decisions around the method and frequency of contact and appropriate referral to partner agencies in line with the Victim's Code, Witness Charter and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
2. Conduct a tailored needs assessment with each victim and witness, managing their individual needs and expectations to identify special measures that may include; arranging Live Links between Police Stations, Courts, Council Offices and overseas secure locations. Manage financial requirements with the CPS for authorisation to arrange and book appropriate transport and accommodation to allow witnesses to give evidence and increase confidence in the Criminal Justice system.
3. Collaborate with support agencies including; the Witness Service (regarding pre-trial visits / support at court), Victim First Hub, specialist staff (IDVAs / ISVAs), other victim care partners and Police Officers to ensure bespoke support and safeguarding plans are developed and implemented for victims and witnesses before, during and post-trial, to enable evidence is given.
4. Work with victims during and after the court process. Proactively undertake detailed conversations with Victims in 'Guilty Plea' cases about Restorative Justice (RJ) to identify suitability for this service. Complete quality referrals to Thames Valley Restorative Justice Service (TVRJS) as required, to provide quality outcomes for victims and reduce re-offending.
5. Utilise relevant computer systems to record / update victim and witness information to ensure effective communication is maintained with relevant CJ agencies throughout court cases. Update Officer's duties on DMS when required.
6. Liaise with CPS Lawyers, Administration teams, Case Progression Officers, Police Officers, Police Staff and Court Listing staff regarding victim and witness issues and difficulties. Ensure effective case progression takes place and, where appropriate, issues are escalated quickly and efficiently.
7. Provide advice and support to investigating Officers / staff regarding victim and witness care, including special measures, intermediaries, Victim Code and witness Charter compliance.

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c. DIMENSIONS: Include matters as key result areas that make the greatest demands on the role holder, seasonal pressures, items processed, the number of customers and/or level of authority to make financial decisions or commit other resources

Further Comments:

Required to gather, verify and assess all appropriate and available information to gain an accurate understanding of the victim code of practice compliancy/ non-compliancy. Considers a range of possible options before making clear, justifiable decisions sometimes under intense pressure.

Required to adapt rapidly to upcoming development, particularly around technology and working practices, in the constantly evolving environment of change within Criminal Justice.

Acts on own initiative to address issues, showing a strong work ethic and Upholds professional standards whilst acting confidentially. These can involve persuading emotional witnesses to attend court at short notice (less than 24 hours) when legally required.

Liaising with CPS Lawyers, Administration teams, Case Progression Officers, Police Officers, Police Staff and Court Listing staff regarding victim and witness issues and difficulties to ensure effective case progression takes place and, where appropriate, issues are escalated expeditiously.

d. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ROLE

Expertise: Concerned with the level of administrative, professional and/or technical expertise (knowledge and skills) needed to perform the role effectively; may be acquired through experience, specialised training, and/or professional or specialist education and training.

| <i>The knowledge or skills required in the role are as follows (essential or desirable):</i> | <i>E/D</i> |
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| 1. Good standard of education with a minimum of 4 GCSEs grades A-C/9-4 or equivalent including Numeracy and Literacy | E |
| 2. The ability to communicate calmly and effectively with a wide range of internal / external customers and partner agencies in stressful and pressurised situations. Ability to negotiate / influence anxious, distressed or angry customers. | E |
| 3. Ability to work on own initiative, manage own workload and work to non-negotiable deadlines whilst making decisions within agreed guidelines. Experience of prioritising workloads after assessing individual need and organisational risk. Managing own workload and working to non-negotiable targets | E |
| 4. Proven experience of using MS Office (including Word & Excel) and ability to learn new IT systems. Proven ability to input, update and retrieve system information. | E |
| 5. Ability to work effectively as part of a team with excellent problem solving skills | E |
| 6. Resilient, reliable and able to cope in a pressured environment with the ability to remain calm and accurate in a variety of situations. | E |
| 7. Previous experience of working in a customer service environment or in a role requiring direct contact with customers | E |
| 8. Knowledge / experience of the Criminal Justice System and / or willingness to gain understanding of relevant Government initiatives i.e. Vulnerable and Intimidated Witness, Narrowing the Justice Gap, and of partnership and/or multi agency working and GDPR / MOPI | E |
| 9. Understanding or willingness to learn and apply the following: Victim Code of Practice, Witness Charter and the Police Witness Protocol. | E |