

Barrie Sheldon (Independent) - PCC Candidate for West Mercia

Thank you for making contact and taking an interest in the Police and Crime Commissioner election.

Since December 2012 I have been working with the current Police and Crime Commissioner Bill Longmore as his deputy and when we were writing our police and crime plan shortly after the last election one of our strategic principles was to ensure that victims remain at the heart of the Criminal Justice System.

We made a promise to enhance and sustain victim services and that is what we did from the outset by providing much needed funding to key victim service providers. The Commissioner became responsible for funding victim services in April 2014 and now receives the funds that used to be allocated by the Ministry of Justice. For West Mercia this is just over £1 million and the bulk goes to Victim Support, and also provides important funding for Women's Aid, West Mercia Rape and Sexual Assault Centre, and Axis Counselling in Shropshire.

We have already adopted a commissioning approach to ensure that victim services are improved to make the best use of the funding provided (value for money), and also to provide financial security for our victim service providers. Services have been enhanced and additional services have been introduced for families, men, and children.

We are pleased to see the numbers of victims coming forward increasing considerably which is due to a number of factors including confidence in the Criminal Justice System, and this of course has put further demands on our victim service providers. We have formed close working relationships with the providers and as the demand has increased we have been able to provide extra funding to ensure that victim's needs are met.

We are also very pleased to have a state of the art Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in both Worcestershire and Shropshire, where workloads have also increased. We work closely with the Health service and are currently developing other commissioning opportunities to improve services.

If elected as the next Commissioner I intend to ensure that victims remain at the heart of the Criminal Justice System, and it is my intention to continue to both sustain and enhance victim services. I know that the Force is currently developing its strategic approach to violence against women and girls involving all of our key victim services partners and I am confident that this will strengthen current arrangements.

yours sincerely

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