

THE KENT NEWSLETTER

March 2011

Chief Executive visits the South East Region



Javed Khan, Victim Support's Chief Executive has been visiting many offices throughout the UK since his appointment in October 2010, to get an understanding of Victim Support and the Witness Service and to meet staff and volunteers.

His visit to the South East was to Norman House in Ashford and the Crown Court in Maidstone. Staff and volunteers came from all over the south-east to meet him in Ashford. He managed to speak to most of the staff and volunteers and had a meeting with the senior management team for an hour.

Denise Dupont, Divisional Manager said, "It was good to meet him, he was very personable. Staff and volunteers found him easy to talk to and he addressed concerns people had about Victim Support in the future."

At Maidstone Crown Court, although he was short of time due to unforeseen circumstances with transport, he managed to see the TV link room, two different sized courts and the witness waiting room. He talked with Shirley Collier, the volunteer's rep and staff. Maureen Utting, Co-ordinator said "He was amazed at how small the witness waiting room is. I told him that the room might be small but the service was the best in the world! Javed was genuinely interested in what the volunteers did."

Javed said "It was an absolute delight and pleasure to meet so many staff and volunteers during my first visit to the South East region. I learnt a great deal from the conversations we had, all of which re-affirmed for me the breadth of passion, energy and commitment we have across the region. I look forward to visiting other parts of the South East in 2011"

Forthcoming training for Kent

Forth coming training for Kent volunteers and staff all training will be at Norman House, Ashford if you are interested in training contact you line manager or your co coordinator.

April 21st Managing Difficult Behaviour (1 day) for Staff, Community Volunteers & Witness Service Volunteers

April 26th Racism Refresher (1day) for Witness Service Volunteers

April 27th, May 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th Core Training (5 days) for Witness Service Volunteers

May 5th, 12th, 17th Hate Crime (3 days)** NEW COURSE ** for Staff & Community Volunteers

June 16th Serious Sexual Violence Refresher (1 day) for Community Volunteers

June 8th, 9th, 15th Serious Sexual Violence (3 days) for Community Volunteers

June 22nd Serious Sexual Violence Awareness Day (1 day) for Witness Service Volunteers

July 6th DA Refresher (1 day) for Community Volunteers

July 7th, 14th, 20th Domestic Abuse (3 days) for Community Volunteers

July 13th Domestic Abuse Awareness Day (1 day) for Witness Service Volunteers

July 26th, 28th, and August 2nd, 4th, 9th, 11th Core Training (6 days) for Community Volunteers

A friend and super colleague



Lin has left Victim support after many years of dedicated work for Kent.

Maureen Utting said "I have known Lin for almost 25 years from when I joined VS in May 1986. I have worked very closely with her, firstly when she was Co-ordinator of VS Swale when I was Co-ordinator at Medway. She and I were on the committee which was formed to investigate the possibility of starting a scheme at Maidstone Crown Court, which obviously evolved, and once it was formed and I was appointed as manager I often went to VS Swale to talk about the new scheme. There was always wine at the end of my speech.

I am not sure if this was to be sociable or if Lin thought, the volunteers would need it after listening to me!

We went to a conference at Warwick many times together and the above photo proves how hard we worked there! Some of you will recognise one or two others. I think in that particular year we had our own alternative agenda one afternoon and had to go into Stratford to search for victims! I am sure we found some in a pub.

Together we have seen many staff come and go, numbers reduced and many local offices close. There have been six county chairs and huge amalgamation within Kent.

I consider myself very fortunate to have worked with Lin. She has been a super colleague, a supportive supervisor and confidante and above all else a friend. I will miss you and your great sense of humour." These sentiments are echoed by staff and volunteers throughout Kent.

A message from Lorraine Horlock,

Hi to all the staff and volunteers in Victim Support, but especially those in the Witness Service.

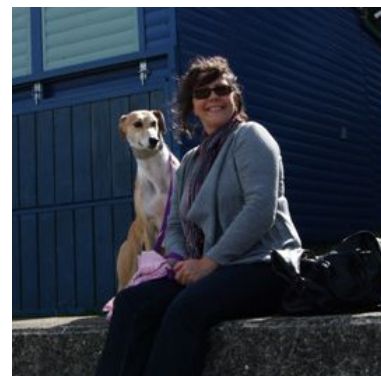
As my post has been made redundant I am leaving Victim Support and by the time you read this I will have left. I would like to say a big thank you to you all but most especially the fantastic Witness Service volunteers, most of whom I have trained. I am so proud of you and the fantastic work that you do. I have seen firsthand the work that you do, dealing with difficult and emotional issues every time you come to court. Cuts in Criminal Justice agencies have put more pressure on us, particularly around the listing of trials, and you have all risen to the challenge really well.

In Kent we are top again for witnesses who have been completely or very satisfied with the service that Kent WS offer – 98% that's really brilliant.

However apart from these statistics, I have observed volunteers who know what they are doing, who stay with the Witness Service for years, who absolutely believe in what they are doing and who also work together as an amazing, supportive team. I also know volunteers come in on extra days, at short notice or who come in when they are very busy in their personal lives and this is something I thank you for. I am so proud to have been looking after the Witness Service and leave it in a healthy way. When I attend meetings around Kent all other agencies speak very highly of the Witness Service in Kent – especially police and CPS staff who have direct contact with us and the service we are offering. I am privileged to have had a most fantastic job for the last 13 years, where I have woken up and wanted to go to work everyday. There are not many people who are lucky enough to be able to say that about their working life so I know I am very lucky. Good bye and good luck to you all, Lorraine.

An amazing person , who will be missed by us all

Without the work that Lorraine has given to the Kent Witness Service we would not be where we are today, one of the best in the country. All of the staff and volunteers would like to say a special thank you to Lorraine for the support, help and the dedication she has given to us all. May we all wish you the best in the future. If you do join another team, they will gain an amazing person. You will be missed by us all.



A welcome to Robin Peters



Robin joins Victim Support as the Regional Trainer for Kent. He has worked in hotels for some 15 years to Deputy General Manager level. Whilst living in Edinburgh – worked as an NVQ Assessor for Hospitality candidates, diversified into the NTO Network as well as a Commercial Trainer for Stonebow, part of People 1st – training in such places as the Scottish Prisons & Tennant Caledonian Breweries. He latterly spent the last 8 years as Group Training Manager for Marston Hotels (now Q Hotels) - followed by time as full time carer for his late father.

Robin said “I am grateful to so many VS staff who have made me so welcome and shared their immense knowledge and passion for what they do, especially to Maureen Utting and her team in the Witness Service in Maidstone for sharing their knowledge, humour and compassion! Also Maggie Pordage and her team in the VCU at Norman House – for being so patient and helping an IT novice get to grips with their ‘pipelines!’” There are more training days to be announced soon

Congratulations

to Maggie Pordage for achieving her AMA Level 3 in Management on the 14th of September 2010

Kent Trading Standards and Kent Police asking for your help

There has been an increase in the theft of copper, lead, & iron due to the current high value. Reports have been received that thieves are purporting to be reputable traders and parking their vans (sometimes sign written) outside a property and then climbing on to the roof and removing lead and other metals. If you see any suspicious activity of this nature, please report it to Trading Standards via Consumer Direct on 08454 040506 or to the Police on 01622 690690. If you are able to note the registration number of the vehicle, this would be very helpful.

Please do not approach the people involved. If you believe a crime is in progress dial 999.

Kent Trading Standards is also aware of a male currently operating in the Broadstairs area knocking on doors offering to do work or stating that he has done work for the householder and needs paying. The work has not been done and this man will take cash or cheques. We are aware of consumers handing over several thousands of pounds. On occasions he has used a boy of approximately 9-10 years of age to revisit the properties asking for more money. The man may call at properties very early in the morning. He states that he has done gardening work and roof cleaning. Kent Trading Standards would like to hear from any consumers who may have had a similar situation with such a person knocking at their door, or who may have seen or heard of an elderly neighbour who has been visited by this man or child.

Kent Trading Standards has also received a report of an unknown individual claiming to be calling from a well known double glazing firm. The caller offered to do whatever work the consumer, in the Sevenoaks area, wanted for only £250. The bona fide double glazing company confirmed with the consumer that the unknown person was nothing to do with their business.

Please be wary when dealing with traders calling at your door. Consider carefully whether you do want the goods or services offered. In most cases if you agree to buy anything costing over £35 from a trader at your door, the law gives you a 7 day "cooling off" period to change your mind. The trader must give you a written cancellation notice if you agree to have any work done. Failure to give this notice is a crime. If you are considering work in or on your property it is always best to get at least a couple of quotes from traders. You can find reputable traders on the "Buy With Confidence" good trader scheme run by us. Our officers vet all traders on the scheme for trustworthiness and to ensure they comply with consumer protection laws. Or, ask for recommendations from friends or family.

To report any concerns you have or for details of Buy With Confidence traders call Trading Standards via Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06. You can also visit www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk for a list of traders. If you have any concerns about a doorstep caller or a telephone call you have received then please report it to Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06.

East Kent Child Witness Service

Every so often, the staff at Shepway's Civic Centre hold a dress down day when they can wear jeans or other casual clothes to work. Staff in the public areas still have to wear uniform or smart clothes but in the back office, those who dress down make a donation and the money raised goes to a good cause.

Cllr Susan Carey, Chairman of Shepway District Council nominated the East Kent Child Witness Service to receive the donations on the most recent dress down day.

Susan said, "I too dressed down for the day (although it's hard to look dressed down in a gold chain). She was joined at the Civic Centre by two local EKCWS volunteers John, Sylvia and co-coordinator Patsy.

It was half term week so many of the staff were on leave, nonetheless the welcome sum of £115.03 was raised.

The East Kent Witness Service and EKCWS also enjoyed a sumptuous Christmas high tea at The Grand on 28th Jan '11. The ambience was complete with a log fire, Christmas crackers, candelabra and a pianist. The Mayor of Folkestone and his wife joined the volunteers for the afternoon and thanked them for all the work they do supporting victims and witnesses in the district. The event was arranged by The Grand's general manager, Robert Richardson as part of his ongoing support for the East Kent Child Witness Service. Our gratitude and thanks go to Robert for giving us the opportunity to thank our volunteers in a manner befitting all their hard work and commitment.



My name is Maggie Pordage

I am the new Senior Service Delivery Manager for Kent. Many of you will know me from my previous role as Senior Victim care officer in Kent.

I have a wealth of experience that I brought with me when I joined Victim Support in 2009. From 2001 I worked with Home-Start Shepway as a domestic violence coordinator, where I managed volunteers and staff, along with case management, Freedom Programme and specialised in children's welfare around Domestic violence. My main areas of achievements are around implementing new processes to achieve better performance.

After taking redundancy in 2008, I moved to France for a year to renovate a property we had previously bought. I came back to England in April 2009 where I was given the opportunity to work for Victim Support.

I have now been in my new role since 17/01/2011 but have also been continuing my old role until the VCU finally closes on the 25th March 2011. This will be a very sad day for all my team of VCOs and me as we have become a very close team and have achieved so much in such a short time.

Ideas achieved that enable the performance of the unit to be increased are now being implemented in the new unit of Shoreham and I am very proud of the successes we have all achieved together.

I would like to take this opportunity to say fond fare well to Eloise Newman, Denice Lake, Joe Cornell and Rebecca A very who will all be leaving over the next couple of weeks before the 1st of April. I cannot express enough how sad I am and how much I will miss everyone. Eloise and Joe are making the move to Shoreham; Eloise will be making a permanent move while Joe will be commuting for 3 days a week. Denice will be taking redundancy and Becky, after being made redundant has a new job to go to. I know that they will all succeed in what ever they are doing in the future.

I look forward to the challenges ahead and working with all staff and volunteers within Kent and South East. There are more changes ahead with continuation of re-structure of the non VCU staff and appreciate that more change can be unsettling and frustrating for some of you but there is room for much improvement in what we do.

Jan Turner, Bridget Blackford-Read and David Grinter all remain with us as Volunteer community managers. David has joined the team and will be in post from the 21/03/2011. Lesley has been promoted to the new SSDM court side and takes up her new role on the 28th March. Maggie Pordage. Senior Service Delivery Manager

If you have any news or would like to comment on the Kent newsletter please contact: Norman House
tel. 08453 899527

victim support helpline is 0845 30 30 900