



Case Study: WMP: Operation Satchel



Statement Taking



11 weeks

Why?

Support historical operation by completing statements.

How?

Highly experienced investigation officers to solely focus on obtaining accurate statements.

Outcome:

The 84 actions were managed by RSG and were given back at the end of the project, reducing workload and actions. Identified further intelligence and risks.

47

Statements completed in the first part of the project

64

Statements completed

76%

Project completion

In November 2017, West Midlands Police (WMP) engaged Red Snapper Group (RSG) to obtain up to 80 statements in a proof of concept initiative. This initiative was developed by RSG to support investigations to enable an efficient and effective service in terms of quality, timeliness and value for money.

The proof of concept supported the WMP Public Protection Unit (PPU), which had a significantly high number of investigations, involving children.

RSG supported Operation Satchel, an historical child abuse investigation, dating back to 2006. All the statements were obtained from General Practitioners, medical professionals, and healthcare workers across the West Midlands region.

Terms of Reference

The Detective Superintendent from WMP PPU agreed to engage RSG on the project. The plan was to complete as many of the statements as possible within 8 weeks. At the conclusion of the project, which included the Christmas and New Year period, RSG managed to obtain 64 statements over an 11 week period.

Deployment

The project was managed by a Project Manager who had the responsibility for resource allocation, planning, assigning and management of project costs. RSG assigned four experienced Investigation officers within the West Midlands region. Each were highly experienced and vetted police practitioners with investigative backgrounds with a good understanding of the statement-taking and exhibit handling process that WMP adhere to in terms of quality and standards. The RSG Investigation Officers were provided with proof of identity cards to provide reassurance to the witnesses.

Pre-Deployment Refresher Training

Prior to the project launch, the selected Investigation Officers received refresher training from Red Snapper Learning on the protocols for making contact with witnesses and referring issues and matters which may occur, and to ensure they possessed current knowledge on structured statement-taking that may be applied for as outlined in Criminal Procedure Rules r. 27.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, section 9 Magistrates Court Act 1980, section 5b and the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999. The overarching theme was Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults as outlined in the Every Child Matters and Working Together to Safeguard Children - A Guide to Interagency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children (March 2005) and 2015.

Quality Assurance

A Quality Assurance Manager was appointed to review each completed statement prior to submission to the Action Manager and Senior Investigation Officer to ensure they met the required standard. A process was put in place for statement(s) which were deemed to not meet a base line standard, these were referred back to the statement-taker for remedial action.

Management

Each of the Investigation Officers were tasked with completing approximately 20 statements each, over the project period. The Investigation Officers were provided with information of the GPs, medical practitioners and healthcare workers. Investigation Officers managed their own work schedule to obtain the statements as early as possible, pending the availability of the witness.

Management Information

Regular update reports were provided by the Project Manager to WMP which consisted on the project performance, risks and projections.

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Operation Satchel is one of the largest investigations within West Midlands Police at present. As part of this investigation Red Snapper were asked to locate a large number of professional witnesses and obtain statements. This was a significant task that would have been resource intensive and prolonged the investigation without the support provided by Red Snapper. From agreeing the terms of reference for deployment through to the debrief at conclusion I found Red Snapper to be professional, informed and effective in delivering an investigative service. The officers deployed provided high quality work and represented West Midlands Police to an equally high standard. The periodic update reports and availability of the project manager allowed for progress to be tracked and assessed throughout. This also provided a natural opportunity for feedback and quality assurance of the work provided. I would be happy to use this service again and recommend it as a viable resourcing option for investigative leads.

Paul Drover

Detective Chief Superintendent
West Midlands Police