



HM Government

Victims Strategy

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Victims Strategy

Presented to Parliament
by the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice
by Command of Her Majesty

Published September 2018

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Foreword from the Prime Minister

Becoming a victim of crime is a deeply traumatic experience for anyone, often leaving scars – physical or mental – that linger for many years after the event.



Becoming a victim of crime is a deeply traumatic experience for anyone, often leaving scars – physical or mental – that linger for many years after the event.

Such a trauma must never be compounded by an individual's experience of the criminal justice system. Rather, as we made clear in our manifesto, all victims of crime have a right to know that the state is on their side. That their complaints will be taken seriously. And that their views will not only be heard, but actively listened to and acted upon.

Over the past eight years, we have done much to make sure that happens, for example by introducing the Victims' Panel and by shining a much-needed light on crimes that were for too long allowed to happen out of sight and out of mind – for example child sexual exploitation and modern slavery.

Building on that progress, this strategy is the latest step in making sure victims receive the support they need throughout their experience of the criminal justice system.

In creating it we have listened to victims and their families, looked closely at the problems they faced and worked with them to find solutions. While there is no such thing as a typical crime or a typical victim, it is clear that many victims have had experiences that fell short of what we would like to see.

We have heard from victims who found the criminal justice system impossibly difficult to navigate and understand: from people who were never told the outcome of a case they were involved in, and from victims who reported a crime and followed all the instructions they were given, but were not told about entitlements such as the right to make a Victim Personal Statement or challenge an unduly lenient sentence.

Tackling such problems and ensuring that victims of crime are supported at every stage of the criminal justice system is what this strategy is all about. And, because rights are meaningless without the means to enforce them, the strategy also sets out how we plan to enshrine victims' entitlements in law.

Because, while fighting crime and keeping people safe and secure is among the first duties of any government, it is not enough simply to catch and punish offenders: we must also support their victims.

We must make it easier for people who have suffered a crime to cope, recover and move on with rebuilding their lives. By looking

at the criminal justice system through the eyes of the victim, this strategy will do just that.

It is a significant step forward both for the system and for victims themselves – and one that will make a very real difference to countless lives for many years to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T.M.' with a stylized flourish.

**The Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Prime Minister**

Foreword from the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice

Most of us don't come into direct contact with the criminal justice system. On the rare occasion we do, it will probably be because we have been a victim of crime.



After every crime, and behind every crime statistic, there are real victims and families left picking up the pieces – physically, psychologically and financially. How we support victims is a mark of the kind of country we are. Every victim's journey is different. For some, it is short and quickly behind them. For others, it is a journey that can last for years and take over their lives. Whatever the nature of the crime, people want to know there will be the right support available.

This Victims Strategy consolidates years of progress we have made and builds on the important milestones already reached to improve the rights, support and experience of victims. Through this work, we have a much better understanding of the needs of victims. The creation of a Victims' Commissioner was one important aspect of that and I pay tribute to the current Victims' Commissioner, Baroness Newlove, for her input to the strategy and her ongoing work in the interests of victims and witnesses. Other important reforms include the establishment

of a Victims' Panel, as well as the Modern Slavery Act and bringing forward legislation on upskirting. Taken together, this work means the voice of, and protections for, victims are stronger now than they ever have been. In 2017, the tragedy of Grenfell as well as the terrorist attacks in London and Manchester brought into sharp focus the way we treat victims.

It is clear that many victims still do not have clear enough information and the right support they need at the right time. Too many are let down by their experience of the justice system and feel their voice is not being heard. Crime and the needs of victims are also changing. Our response must change too. Whilst overall crime has been falling, violent crime is rising. There are more reports of sexual offences, with victims feeling more able to come forward. And we are seeing increases in fraud and cyber-crime, which now account for just under half of all crime in England and Wales.

Our reforms on offender rehabilitation will help to prevent crime and future victims. But we must also make sure the support is there for people who have a crime committed against them.

The message from victims is clear: they want to be treated fairly, properly and with dignity. They want clear, timely and accurate information. They want the opportunity and the support to make their voice heard. That's why this strategy sees crime and the justice system through the eyes of

victims. It puts forward a package of measures that will further improve trust in, and a victim's experience of, each stage of their experience. It will ensure victims are offered the support they should be and they have clear, reassuring and empowering information about the justice process. Where support for victims needs to be backed up in law, we will look to legislate.

The strategy also highlights extra funding for specialist support to meet the needs of victims of particularly pernicious crimes that are on the rise such as violent assaults and sexual and domestic abuse. For the parents who have lost a child to knife crime, for the person who has been living for years with the burden of being sexually abused and has finally come forward and broken their silence, for the elderly couple swindled out of their life savings online: their grief and anguish should not be compounded by grievance and anger towards a system that should support them.

Whatever the crime, and whatever path and outcome a victim's journey takes, this strategy will build on the progress we have made to help victims in the immediate aftermath of a crime and ensure they can be an active and properly supported participant in the process of seeing justice delivered.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Gauke'.

**The Rt Hon David Gauke MP
Lord Chancellor and Secretary
of State for Justice**

Executive summary

This cross-government Victims Strategy sets out a criminal justice system wide response to improving the support offered to victims of crime and incorporates actions from all criminal justice agencies, including the police, CPS and courts.

This strategy builds on the good progress we have made over the past few years to ensure victims have the right help in the aftermath of a crime and are properly supported in the process of seeing justice delivered.

Our vision is for a justice system that supports even more victims to speak up by giving them the certainty that they will be understood, that they will be protected, and that they will be supported throughout their journey, regardless of their circumstances or background.

In **Chapter 1**, we set out our key, overarching commitments. These include:

- ▶ Strengthen the Victims' Code, and consult on the detail of victim focused legislation, including strengthening the powers of the Victims' Commissioner, and delivering a Victims' Law.
- ▶ Hold agencies to account for compliance with the Victims' Code through improved reporting, monitoring and transparency.
- ▶ Develop the detail on the role of the Independent Public Advocate for bereaved families who have lost loved ones in extraordinary and tragic events.
- ▶ Abolish the rule which denied compensation for some victims who lived with their attacker prior to 1979 and consulting on further changes to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme.

In **Chapter 2**, we set out how we will improve support for all victims of crime, whether or not they report the crime. This includes commitments to:

- ▶ Increase spending from £31m in 2018 to £39m in 2020/21 to improve services and pathways for survivors and victims of sexual violence and abuse who seek support to and from Sexual Assault Referral Centres.
- ▶ Develop a new delivery model for victim support services, coordinating funding across government.
- ▶ Expand and extend support available to families bereaved by homicide, including bringing in new funding for advocacy support for families bereaved by domestic homicide.
- ▶ Spend £8 million on interventions to ensure support is available to children who witness domestic abuse.
- ▶ Pilot the 'Child House' model in London, whereby multiple services are brought together in a child-friendly environment to minimise additional trauma.

In **Chapter 3**, we set out how we will improve victim support after a crime has been reported. This includes commitments to:

- ▶ Introduce improved police training, including new guidance on conducting interviews and collecting evidence, and a trial of body worn cameras to take Victim Personal Statements.
- ▶ Increase the number of Registered Intermediaries, communication experts helping vulnerable victims and witnesses give their best evidence at police interview and at court, by 25%.
- ▶ Increase opportunities for victims to engage in alternative solutions to court.
- ▶ Improve overall victim communication, including when explaining decisions not to prosecute and on the right to review Crown Prosecution Service decisions.

In **Chapter 4**, we set out how we will better support victims during the court process. This includes commitments to:

- ▶ Improve the court environment, with new victim-friendly waiting areas and a new court design guide focussing on accessibility for the most vulnerable.
- ▶ Free up court time in the magistrates' court by dealing with crimes with no identifiable victim (e.g. fare evasion) outside court hearings.
- ▶ Continue to use video links to allow vulnerable victims to provide evidence away from the defendant and courtroom altogether.
- ▶ Encourage take up of pre-trial therapy by launching new guidance and a toolkit for prosecutors and therapists.

In **Chapter 5**, we set out how we will make sure victims understand a court's decision, the implications for them, and for the offender. This includes commitments to:

- ▶ Review and consider extending the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme so victims and the public can have sentences reconsidered by the Court of Appeal.
- ▶ Reform the Victim Contact Scheme, making it easier to opt-in, introducing more frequent communication, and greater use of digital contact methods
- ▶ Improve Victim Liaison Officer training, especially in supporting victims during parole hearings and in making a Victim Personal Statement.
- ▶ Review and consider whether any improvements need to be made to entitlements for victims of mentally disordered offenders.

Introduction

Most people do not have everyday experience of the justice system. When they do, it is usually because they have been a victim of crime.

When this happens, their experience with the justice system can, unfortunately, be stressful, confusing and come to dominate their life. Serious criminal cases can take years before being resolved, with lives ruined, relationships damaged, and careers put on hold. Lower level offending can cause communities to splinter, whilst blighting society as a whole.

The nature of crime is rapidly evolving. Technology has become an enabler for criminality, leading to new crimes such as upskirting, and a rise in other offences such as stalking. Fraud and cyber offences now account for nearly half of all crime in England and Wales. More victims are coming forward to report crimes that have traditionally been under-reported and seek support. For example, demand for support services from male victims of sexual violence has risen 176% in three years.¹

The support we offer victims must keep pace with these changes. No one should feel that they cannot report a crime, or that their voice won't be heard. No one should have to deal with the trauma of crime alone.

The fundamental aim of our legal system is to ensure that justice is done. This means making sure those who are innocent are acquitted and the guilty convicted. In England and Wales, our adversarial system means that a case is brought against someone by the State, rather than a victim. But whilst a victim is not a legal party in the process, dealing with cases justly also means respecting their interests. A victim's journey through the justice system – whatever the path and outcome – should not result in them becoming a victim of the process, as well as the crime.

No one department, agency, or emergency service can alone provide the services victims rightly expect to receive. We must ensure all work together. That is why, for the first time, we have published a cross-government Victims Strategy; a document setting out both new policy, and bringing together existing funding commitments made by various government departments.

In developing the strategy, we have engaged extensively with victims, victims' groups and representatives such as the Victims' Commissioner. This has ensured the strategy is informed by those who have had direct experience of being a victim, as well as those with frontline expertise. You can find more information about our approach and the stakeholders we have engaged with in Annex 1.

Progress made

This strategy marks the latest milestone in improving the support for victims and builds on important progress over the last few years:

- ▶ In 2006, the Code of Practice for Victims established for the first time in law services that must be provided to victims of crime in England and Wales by criminal justice agencies.
- ▶ In 2010, the first Victims' Commissioner was appointed. The statutory position was set up to champion the interests of victims and witnesses and encourage good practice in their treatment.
- ▶ 'Getting it Right for Victims and Witnesses' was published in 2012 and set out the government's approach for making sure victims and witnesses get the support they need.

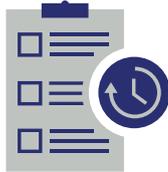
Further progress includes:

- ▶ the creation of the Victims Panel to represent the voice of victims in government policy making;
- ▶ wider provision of special measures for vulnerable and intimidated witnesses many of whom are victims;
- ▶ seeking new laws and stronger powers to protect and support survivors of domestic abuse;
- ▶ creating new offences to protect more victims and bring offenders to justice including: revenge porn, coercive or controlling behaviour, and sexual communication with a child.
- ▶ strengthening the evidence base on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people's experiences of personal safety by publishing the LGBT Survey Research Report 2018 and introducing an action plan to ensure LGBT people feel safe in their homes, communities and online.
- ▶ strengthening the legal powers for tackling money laundering and recovering criminal assets, in addition to publishing an action plan on asset recovery to disrupt criminal networks and compensate victims for their ordeals.
- ▶ In addition, across government there has been a focus on tackling crime to avoid people becoming victims in the first place. This has been demonstrated in recently published strategies, such as the Serious Violence Strategy (April 2018), CONTEST, the counter-terrorism strategy (June 2018) and ongoing work on the Hate Crime Action Plan and Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy in 2018.

The story so far

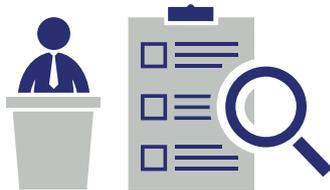
2006

The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales comes into effect, having been established by the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. The Code states what each criminal justice agency must do for victims and the timeframe in which they must do it.



2010

The first Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales is appointed. Their role is to promote the interests of victims and witnesses, encourage good practice in their treatment, and regularly review the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.

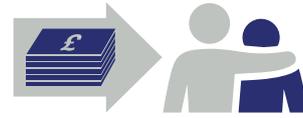


2014

The government establishes the Victims Panel, to represent the voice of victims in government policy making.

2015

The Victims' Code is revised



2007

The Victim Surcharge is introduced. This is a surcharge levied on all individuals convicted of a crime. Revenue raised from the surcharge is ring-fenced to fund emotional and practical support for victims.

JANUARY

The government consultation on 'Getting it right for victims and witnesses' is launched, setting out the government's proposed approach to ensuring that victims and witnesses get the support they need.

OCTOBER

The EU Directive for Victims of Crime 2012/29/EU is passed. This requires all EU countries to establish minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime. The UK fulfils these obligations through the Victims' Code.

NOVEMBER

Police and Crime Commissioners are introduced to replace the old system of police authorities. They are allocated local funding to commission emotional and practical support services for victims of crime in their area.



2018

The Victims Strategy is published and provides a national, cross-government framework to make fundamental improvements for victims.

Figure 1

Over the past 15 years there has been significant progress in improving the victim experience and we have a better understanding of victims needs and we are better equipped to provide victims with the tools they need to cope and recover. It is vital that we build further on the progress we have made to ensure that we are doing all we can to support victims – making sure we are keeping pace with the changing nature of crime and crimes being reported, and that we can deal with the pressures this places on the system.

What victims need

TIMELY AND ACCURATE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

This can help victims to cope with the impact of crime. If victims aren't provided with appropriate information and updates, this can lead to dissatisfaction with the criminal justice system and in some cases victim disengagement.



FAIR TREATMENT DURING THE JUSTICE PROCESS

Quality of service contributes to victim satisfaction. Victims want to feel that they have been treated fairly, and to be properly informed of the aid they may be entitled to.



EFFECTIVE MULTI-AGENCY WORKING

Partnership working, where several agencies work together from the same location, can be less confusing for victims and ensure that information is shared more efficiently. Collaboration between the right agencies can also contribute to effective prevention strategies.



PROFESSIONAL, TARGETED VICTIMS' SERVICES

Quickly identifying victims' needs means that services are targeted at those who most want and need them. Victims find it helpful if this primary point of contact is a trained professional with good knowledge of the criminal justice system, and the compassion and empathy to provide moral support.



Figure 2

Challenges to overcome

The nature of crime is changing

Over recent decades, we've seen a fall in overall levels of crime, a trend that now looks to be stabilising. However, the types of crime being committed are changing, which means our response in the way we tackle them and support victims must change too.

Across government, we are responding to emerging pressures by focusing efforts on prevention and rehabilitation of offenders, addressing the underlying causes of crime and developing new ways to reduce the impact it has on wider society.

There has been an increase in high harm violent crime

Despite crime having fallen since the mid-1990s, there has been a recent increase in some higher harm violent offences recorded by the police.³ In the

year ending March 2018 there was a 16% increase in knife crime in England and Wales⁴ and the rate of violence against the person offences recorded by the police was similar in England and Wales at around 24 per 1,000 of the population.⁵ In 2018 we have seen a spike in the murder rate in London.⁶ Offences involving firearms increased by 31% between 2013/14 and 2016/17,⁷ but we have seen a far smaller increase at 2% for the year ending March 2018.⁸ These crimes can have a devastating impact on victims, their families and their communities. Spikes in certain types of crime can also introduce new pressures in the type of support required by victims. For example, we are seeing an unprecedented rise in acid attacks and the use of other corrosives as weapons. These types of incident require specialist medical support. In London, attacks have more than doubled since 2014 with other attacks most notably in Essex and the West Midlands.⁹

Government action:

- ▶ We are addressing the rise in serious violence through the **Serious Violence Strategy** which strikes a balance between prevention and law enforcement.
- ▶ We are moving forward with the **Offensive Weapons Bill** which will introduce new powers to tackle knife crime, acid attacks and the risk that criminals could obtain powerful firearms.

More people are coming forward to report crimes that have traditionally been under-reported, creating more demand in the system

There have been significant increases in sexual offences recorded by the police, for example:

- ▶ In the year ending March 2018, there was a 23% increase in reported sexual offences in England compared to the previous year.¹⁰ Sexual offences against children contributed to more than a quarter (27%) of this increase.¹¹
- ▶ In Wales there was also a 39% increase in police recorded sexual offences and the rate (per 1,000 in the population) was similar to that for England at around 2.8.¹²
- ▶ In the year ending March 2017, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated a 27% increase in the reported rape of male victims over 16 compared to the previous year.¹³

It is good that more victims have the confidence to come forward, and we are working with police to ensure that the number continues to increase; but we recognise the increased demand this puts on the system. The CPS prosecutes sexual offence cases where there is sufficient evidence to do so, and those

convicted of serious sexual offences will continue to face lengthy custodial sentences.

Specialist support services for male victims of sexual offending have reported demand rising 176% within the space of three years.¹⁴ Similarly, in line with the government's efforts to tackle modern slavery and increase reporting, in 2017, there was a 159% increase in recorded modern slavery offences, and prosecutions of defendants as being involved in modern slavery also increased by 54% between 2015 and 2016.¹⁵

Domestic abuse remains pervasive but under-reported. An estimated 1.9 million adults reported being subjected to domestic abuse in the CSEW in the year ending March 2017.¹⁶ The rates of police recorded domestic abuse offences are similar in England and Wales at 8 and 9 per 1,000 of the population respectively.¹⁷ And, tragically, 82 women and 13 men were killed by a partner or former partner in 2016/17 in England and Wales.¹⁸ While the reporting of these crimes to the police is increasing, the majority of domestic abuse victims (as measured by CSEW) do not report anything to the police.¹⁹

The changing nature of crime

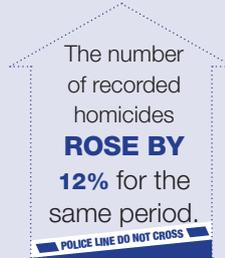


Over recent decades, we've seen a fall in overall levels of crime, a trend that now looks to be stabilising. The latest Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) estimates **SUGGEST 1 IN 5 ADULTS EXPERIENCED CRIME** in the year ending March 2018.

HIGH HARM VIOLENT CRIME HAS INCREASED



Police recorded knife crime **INCREASED BY 16%** in England and Wales in 2017/18 compared to the previous year.



The number of recorded homicides **ROSE BY 12%** for the same period.



In London, acid attacks **HAVE MORE THAN DOUBLED** since 2014, with other attacks in Essex and the West Midlands.

MORE PEOPLE ARE COMING FORWARD TO REPORT CRIMES THAT HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN UNDER-REPORTED, CREATING MORE DEMAND IN THE SYSTEM



In the year ending March 2018, reported sexual offences **WERE UP 24%** compared to the previous year.



Recorded hate crime **HAS RISEN EVERY YEAR** since data tracking began in 2012/13.



In the year ending March 2017, police in England and Wales recorded **2,255** modern slavery offences, a **159% INCREASE** on the previous year.

DOMESTIC ABUSE REMAINS A PERVASIVE BUT UNDER-REPORTED CRIME



CSEW data suggests that an estimated **1.9 MILLION ADULTS** experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2017.



The reporting of domestic abuse crimes is increasing, but still the **MAJORITY OF VICTIMS** (as measured by the CSEW) do not report the crime to the police.

MAJOR INCIDENTS HAVE SHOWN THAT A CROSS-GOVERNMENT RESPONSE IS REQUIRED TO SUPPORT VICTIMS

36 PEOPLE LOST THEIR LIVES in terrorist attacks in London and Manchester in 2017, and **71 PEOPLE DIED** as a result of the Grenfell Tower fire.



THE ROLE THAT TECHNOLOGY PLAYS IN CRIME IS RAPIDLY EVOLVING



Technology now plays a **BIGGER ROLE** in stalking and emerging crimes such as 'upskirting'.



Fraud and cybercrime accounted for **NEARLY HALF** of all crime in England and Wales in 2017.

Figure 3

Taking action on domestic abuse:

The Government's response to the domestic abuse consultation will be published later in 2018, bringing together legislative change in line with the Queen's Speech commitment, non-legislative action across government, and £20 million of dedicated funding to ensure that we tackle these appalling offences.

We are also seeing an increase in recorded hate crime. The police figures have risen year on year since the data series began in 2012/13, with the 2016/17 figures representing the greatest rise yet (29% compared with

the previous year, 2015/16).²¹ These police recorded figures reflect changes in policing activity and crime-recording practices as well as more victims coming forward to seek support and justice.

Tackling underreported crimes:

- ▶ The Strategic Direction for Sexual Assault and Abuse Services
- ▶ Modern Slavery Strategy and independent review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015
- ▶ Hate Crime Action Plan
- ▶ Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy for England and National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence for Wales

Recent major incidents have highlighted that no one department or service can meet the support challenges alone

2017 saw a series of terrorist attacks in the UK and abroad that have affected UK citizens. 36 people lost their lives in terrorist attacks in London and Manchester and hundreds more people have been affected by these incidents across the UK. In addition, 71 people died as a result of the Grenfell Tower fire and a 72nd resident from the Tower passed away earlier this year. The ongoing criminal investigation into the causes of the Grenfell Tower fire means the victims are entitled to the same support in the Victims' Code as other victims of crime.

These events demanded a cross-government response to support the victims and their families and are examples of the ongoing challenges of dealing with major incidents.

No one department or service could meet the support challenges alone, both because of the volume and the complexity. We set up a cross-government Victims of Terrorism Unit, and a cross-government Grenfell Victims Unit. In both cases the role of the Unit was to coordinate the responses and support provided by a wide range of statutory and non-statutory agencies in the public and voluntary sector, at national and local level.

We will ensure we are fully prepared in the event of future major incidents. We have carefully considered reviews and Victim Support's recommendations on future support following the 2017 terror attacks. We have also looked to Bishop James Jones' review of how bereaved families were treated following Hillsborough, which identified improvements around ensuring families and victims were properly supported.

Responding to major incidents:

We have set up cross government hubs to coordinate work to support victims of terrorism and those affected by the Grenfell Tower fire.

Technology's role in crime is rapidly evolving

We must keep up with the way technology is being used to commit crimes. Technology has played an increasing role in stalking as well as emerging crimes such as upskirting and the taking of other illicit photos.

Fraud and cyber-crime combined now account for just under half of all crime in England and Wales as estimated by the Crime Survey for England and Wales for the

year ending March 2018, and findings from the survey suggest that less than one-fifth (13%) of incidents of fraud either come to the attention of the police or are reported by the victim to Action Fraud.²² Research suggests that fraud can have a profound emotional and psychological impact on victims and that a sympathetic response to reporting as well as clear information on the support services available is important to victims.²³

We are keeping up to date with technology by:

- ▶ Making upskirting a criminal offence
- ▶ Publishing a new Serious and Organised Crime Strategy
- ▶ Developing plans for a world class fraud and cyber-crime court in partnership with the City of London Corporation

Overarching improvements to victims' experience

A victim's journey

Every victim's journey is different. That is why it is vital that we respond to their particular needs, regardless of whether they reported the crime. It is also crucial that victims are able to access clear, accurate and timely information to support them through the criminal justice process.

Key legislation is already in place to support victims on this journey:

- ▶ The Victims' Code is one of the most important documents for victims of crime, as it sets out in law the services and information they are entitled to receive as they interact with the criminal justice system.
- ▶ The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme (CICS) is a statutory scheme that provides government funded compensation to victims of violent crime.
- ▶ The Victims' Commissioner is a statutory office holder whose role is to promote the interests of victims and witnesses; encourage good practice in the treatment of victims and witnesses; and keep under review the operation of the Victims' Code.
- ▶ We want to build on this legislation to benefit all victims of crime, and make overarching improvements to victims' experience.

The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

The Victims' Code (the Code) is a Government document that tells victims what support and information they should, by law, get from criminal justice agencies in England and Wales such as the police and courts, but also other organisations named in the Code.

The Code also tells those agencies and organisations, known as "service providers", what they must do to ensure victims receive that support and information. Examples of information and services that victims should receive are:

- ▶ a clear explanation of what to expect from the criminal justice system.
- ▶ updates on the investigation such as whether someone has been arrested and is charged for the crime.
- ▶ a 'needs assessment' to find out what support the victim should get, followed by referral to relevant victim support services.
- ▶ the opportunity to make a victim personal statement to explain how a crime has affected them.

The Code also requires that all victims are treated in a respectful, sensitive and professional manner without discrimination of any kind.

The Code sets out the 'enhanced' services that should be provided for the following victim categories:

- ▶ victims of the most serious crime (bereaved family members and victims of domestic violence, hate crime, terrorism, sexual offences, human trafficking, attempted murder, kidnap, false imprisonment, arson with intent to endanger life and wounding or causing grievous bodily harm with intent).
- ▶ persistently targeted victims (targeted repeatedly over time, particularly if deliberately, includes victims of sustained harassment and stalking).
- ▶ vulnerable and intimidated victims (e.g. including under 18s, adults with mental impairment or disorder, fear or distress about testifying in court will affect quality of evidence).

These services include shorter timescales, requiring service providers to seek consent before providing certain services, and Special Measures for eligible victims who are giving evidence as witnesses in court.

What are the challenges?

There are issues with awareness, understanding and delivery of the Victims' Code

Despite its importance, many people are not aware that the Victims' Code exists and find it difficult to understand what it means for them.²⁴ In the year ending March 2017, only 18% of victims were aware of the Code.²⁵ We also recognise concerns that entitlements in the Victims' Code may not always be delivered, but a lack of data and reporting makes it difficult to identify where the key issues are and the Code is not consistently monitored or enforced.

Ensuring that compensation keeps pace with our changing understanding of crime

The CICS, which is administered by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA), sets out the circumstances in which a victim of violent crime may be awarded government funded compensation. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) has made a number of recommendations about changes to the CICS and to CICA's operations for victims and survivors of sexual abuse.

The criminal justice system can be confusing and overwhelming for victims

There can be many stages on a victim's journey through the criminal justice process, which brings them into contact with different people at different times. We know this can be difficult for victims to understand and navigate. It can be overwhelming and, at worst, traumatising if victims have to repeat their story multiple times.

Information is not always clear and accessible

Many victims will not have prior knowledge of how the criminal justice process works and the support that is available to them. We have heard from victims that they consider the provision of information on the key stages of the criminal justice system and information on the types of support services available to be one of the most important entitlements under the Code. A lack of accessible, timely and accurate information can lead to victim disengagement.²⁶ Given the multiple points of contact in a victim's journey, it can be hard for them to find clear, consistent and accurate information that's relevant to them.

Media intrusion

While we recognise the importance of the freedom of the press, recent major incidents have highlighted the negative impact media intrusion can have on a victim's ability to cope and recover from crime. Victims of the Manchester arena attack felt overwhelmingly negative about how the media behaved in the aftermath of the bombing. People talked about feeling 'hounded'; some victims were accosted at hospitals and several highlighted the distress caused by camera crews outside their homes.

To address these challenges, we will:

Strengthen the Victims' Code

Amend the Victims' Code to address the Code's complexity, accessibility and language and consult on a revised version. We will also update entitlements in the Code so they are better reflective of victims' needs. We have outlined some of the changes we intend to make to the Code in the relevant chapters of this Strategy.

Create a short, user-friendly overview of the Code

to summarise the key points all victims need to know. We will produce an online and a hard copy summary and work with our partners to make sure it is widely available.

Hold agencies to account for compliance with the Victims' Code through improved reporting, monitoring and transparency on whether victims are receiving entitlements. This goes hand in hand with amending the Code to make sure that the entitlements victims receive are the right ones in the first place. At a local level Police and Crime Commissioners will be responsible for regularly monitoring and identifying issues through local criminal justice partnership arrangements so they can determine effective local intervention. The Criminal Justice Board and Ministers will receive reports to monitor delivery at a national level and address cross-cutting issues with national service providers.

Bring forward proposals for a consultation on the detail of the Victims' Law. We will consult on the detail of the legislation, but we want to strengthen the enforcement of the Code to make sure victims receive the services they are entitled to, and criminal justice agencies are held to account if they don't. The Victims' Commissioner is a vital voice for victims, and the consultation will explore increasing their powers to better hold government to account.

Improve access to compensation

Abolish the rule which denied compensation for some victims who lived with their attacker prior to 1979 and consult on further changes to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. This will include considering how the scheme can better serve victims of child sexual abuse, exploring the recommendations made by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), and victims of terrorism.

Improve how we handle victim compensation claims. CICA have already introduced new staff guidance for dealing with applications from child sexual abuse victims to ensure that grooming by offenders is taken account of. CICA have also boosted their customer service team, and now offer dedicated caseworkers to applicants in particularly complex and difficult cases.

Speed up the process of securing compensation. CICA have introduced a new case management process, aiming to have a first decision ready in 80% of cases within 12 months, while new digital processes have already cut some applications by up to 30 days. A new streamlined customer journey has also been introduced for victims of sexual assault or abuse that do not need a medical prognosis to resolve their applications swiftly, with clinical psychologists brought in to speed up applications for victims suffering from mental injury.

Simplify the criminal justice experience and streamline support

Launch a consultation on an Independent Public Advocate (IPA) to help bereaved families following a major tragedy. No family should have to struggle to navigate and participate in inquests, investigations and inquiries following major incidents, such as Hillsborough. Uncovering the truth matters acutely to those affected by major incidents, and it is vital that the voices of the bereaved are heard. We understand that families need dedicated support to make themselves heard following major incidents.

Improve victims' interactions with the criminal justice process by reducing the number of different people they have to engage with. There are a number of people that support victims during the criminal justice process and these roles vary according to a victim's needs, the stage of the process they are in or the type of crime they have experienced. This includes Family Liaison Officers, Independent Sexual Violence Advisors, Witness Care Officers and Victim Liaison Officers. We will also review the role of victim supporters and advocates as part of the review of the Victims' Code.

Roll out a new framework to improve criminal justice response and support for domestic abuse cases. It includes a multi-agency approach to risk management and safeguarding procedures; best practice on the use of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors throughout the process; trained and consistently deployed staff across all agencies; and proactive witness services with pre-trial familiarisation visits and use of special measures.

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme (CICS) is a government funded scheme to compensate victims of violent crime in Great Britain.

The scheme makes awards to victims who suffer a serious physical or mental injury as the direct result of a violent crime.

No award can fully compensate victims for what they have suffered or lost – it is society's way of recognising that they have been a victim of violent crime.

Injury payments range from £1,000 to £250,000 depending on the severity of the injury. Additional payments for loss of earnings or other expenses can also be made. In fatal cases, payments can be made to qualifying relatives of the deceased and to pay for funeral expenses.

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority, an Executive Agency of the Ministry of Justice, administers the scheme independently of government and decides all claims.

In 2017/18, the Authority made decisions on over 40,000 applications for compensation, and paid out £154 million to victims of violent crime.

Improve the quality and accessibility of information

Develop an online hub for victims so all the information they need – such as how the justice system works, where they can find support, and how to provide feedback – is easy to access and understand. **We have refreshed the information on GOV.uk that is relevant to victims**, such as the overview of the Victim Contact Scheme, so that the information is up to date and easier to understand.

Improve the information sent to victims and how it is communicated. We have outlined specific improvements in the relevant sections of the Strategy but the changes include providing clearer and more sensitive explanations for decisions and actions, consistency of tone and language and offering the victim more choice in how they receive information. We want to give victims more choice in how they receive information whether explained to them by someone, online or through more traditional methods of communication such as a letter.

Strengthen the regulatory system for the press to tackle media intrusion

Update data protection expectations and give teeth to the guidance the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) already provides for journalists. A new ICO media redress guidance will also direct people online to accessible and equitable redress without the costs and liabilities of going to court. The ICO will also conduct a statutory review of media compliance with the new law over the next four years, and every five years after that. In 2018, **we published guidance for victims of major incidents dealing with media interest and intrusion.** We will look to expand this guidance to wider victims recognising the media interest in many other cases such as sexual offences, so victims know their rights and where to get support.

The press also has a new, stronger and better funded regulator, Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO), which regulates 95% of print media in the UK. IPSO will now offer compulsory low-cost arbitration which ensures ordinary people can obtain redress against the media. **IPSO are also developing an organisational major incident plan** that will be automatically triggered after any event leading to mass casualties, and guidelines for editors and the public covering reporting of major incidents. **IPSO will raise awareness of its Private Advisory Notices system** under which IPSO can issue industry-wide notices to make editors and journalists aware of people's concerns and what the Editor's Code says about how they should behave.

A key function of the **Independent Public Advocate** will be to support and facilitate bereaved families' engagement with those responsible for investigating the disastrous events that resulted in the deaths of their loved ones.

The IPA will help ensure that the voices of the bereaved are heard and understood and will see the bereaved effectively engaged with investigators who understand and are responsive to their needs. We are determined that experiences such as those of the Hillsborough families are never repeated.

The consultation seeks the views of the public and all those with an interest in this important role on our proposals for:

- ▶ Providing clarity on the types of events that will warrant the support of the IPA and on the nature of the support that will be provided.
- ▶ Identifying all those people who should have the support of the IPA.
- ▶ How best to ensure the IPA is available whenever and wherever a disaster occurs.

Summary of key issues	Action
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Strengthening the Victims' Code

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| ▶ Many people are not aware that the Victims' Code exists and find it difficult to understand what it means for them. | ▶ Amend the Victims' Code. |
| ▶ Victims may not always receive the entitlements in the Victims' Code and there is a lack of data to evidence where the key issues are. | ▶ Consult to test the revised Victims' Code. |
| | ▶ Create a short, user-friendly overview of the Code in hardcopy and electronic. |
| | ▶ Introduce improved reporting, monitoring and transparency to strengthen compliance with the Victims' Code. |
| | ▶ Bring forward proposals for a consultation on the detail of the Victims' Law, including strengthening compliance and the powers of the Victims' Commissioner. |

Improving access to compensation

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| ▶ Access to compensation does not reflect our understanding of the nature of crime. | ▶ Abolish the rule which denied compensation for some victims who lived with their attacker prior to 1979. |
| | ▶ Consult on further changes to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. |
| | ▶ Introduced guidance and training for dealing with compensation applications from victims of child sexual abuse. |
| | ▶ Offer dedicated caseworkers to compensation applicants in the most complex cases. |
| | ▶ Introduced a case management process and fast-track option for sexual abuse victims. |

Simplifying the criminal justice experience and streamline support

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| ▶ The criminal justice process is difficult to understand and to navigate. | ▶ Launch a consultation on the role of the Independent Public Advocate. |
| ▶ Victims of major incidents can struggle to take part in inquests, investigations and inquiries. | ▶ Reduce the number of people victims engage with. |
| | ▶ Review the role of victim supporters and advocates as part of the review of the Victims' Code. |
| | ▶ Rollout new framework to improve criminal justice response and support for domestic abuse cases. |

Improving the quality and accessibility of information

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| ▶ A lack of accessible, timely and accurate information can lead to victim disengagement. | ▶ Develop an online information hub for victims. |
| | ▶ Updated key information on GOV.uk. |
| | ▶ Improve the quality of communications. |

Strengthening the regulatory system for the press to tackle media intrusion

- | | |
|---|---|
| ▶ Victims can feel hounded by the media and this can limit their ability to cope and recover. | ▶ Expand guidance for victims on dealing with the media from major incidents to other victims of crime. |
| | ▶ Update data protection expectations and give teeth to the Information Commissioner's Office guidance for journalists. |
| | ▶ Develop new ICO media redress guidance. |
| | ▶ ICO to conduct a statutory review of media compliance the new law over next four years and then every five years. |

Some of the changes we will make to the Victims' Code

- ✔ Make it clearer, more accessible for victims and better reflective of their needs, including improving explanations of entitlements.
- ✔ Improve the information available to victims to enable them to access both commissioned and independent support services.

Support available whether or not victims report a crime

A victim's journey

For many, the experience of being a victim doesn't stop after a crime has been committed. Crimes can have a significant impact on a victim's physical and emotional well-being, leading to long-lasting trauma, job loss or financial difficulties. Many offenders have also been victims of crime. Receiving the right support, at the right time, can help break the cycles of both victimisation and offending.

What happens at this stage?

The Victims' Code requires the police to refer victims to appropriate support services, but victims can also access these services directly. Victims are entitled to these services whether they have reported a crime or not, and at any time, including after the conclusion of the investigation and prosecution.

The majority of support for victims is commissioned locally by Police and Crime Commissioners, based on local demand and priorities. Some services have been nationally commissioned, including high impact crimes requiring specialist support, such as the Homicide Service. Others have received a combination of national funding and local funding, such as rape support services. Services offered by statutory bodies, such as the National Health Service, are equally as important in ensuring victims receive appropriate support.

What are the challenges?

Accessing the right support at the right time can be difficult

Victims may use emotional, practical, therapeutic and clinical services as part of their recovery,

through a number of different agencies and third sector organisations. We know that a lack of consistent information, and an uncoordinated approach can make this process frustrating, reducing the positive impact of these services.

The changing nature of crime and victim needs have impacted upon the availability of support

The current support landscape is complex. Funding comes from multiple parts of government and different commissioners are responsible for the provision of disparate services. This makes it difficult for both services and commissioners to respond quickly to emerging crimes and changing needs, meaning that support is not always available as and when victims need it.

We also need to better recognise the connections between offenders and victims in our services. Many offenders have been victims of crime (at least 60% of women in prison report being a victim of domestic abuse) and have complex needs which have acted as barriers to getting the support they need.²⁷

Variations in the quality of support

The support available to victims should always be of a consistently high quality. Providing PCCs with commissioning responsibilities has enabled services to adapt to local victim needs. However, there is a lack of consistent standards and best practice isn't always shared. While there are many examples of high-quality, victim-centred care, we also recognise that there are variations in the support available.



Voice, a new hub for victims services, opened in Northamptonshire last year.

General support for all victims and witnesses, as well as specialist support for victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse, is now available all under one roof, meaning victims can get the right support for them quickly, easily and in one place.

In Nottinghamshire, consultations with victims with protected characteristics revealed that they typically didn't report crime to the police, or access mainstream support services, and instead sought support from trusted community organisations.

This led to the development of the **Community Points** model. Local organisations receive training and quality assurance from Nottinghamshire Victim CARE so that they can support victims who don't want to access mainstream services, and signpost them towards the specialist help available.

To address these challenges, we will:

Increase availability of services through more joined up and sustainable funding

Work across government to better align funding for victim support services. The current funding landscape is complex – with funding from multiple pots of government money going to a range of both local and national commissioners. We will coordinate and combine funding, to increase its impact.

Review the effectiveness and spending on services for victims of child sexual abuse, meeting one of the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

Increase spending from £31m in 2018 to £39m in 2020/21 to improve services and pathways for survivors and victims of sexual violence and abuse who seek support to and from Sexual Assault Referral Centres. We will work to ensure better service integration between statutory services like the NHS and the third sector to provide joined-up and life-long care and support for those who have suffered sexual assault and abuse. This will create better support and information and reduce the need for victims to tell their story multiple times.

Improve support for victims of sexual violence. We will fund national rape services for a minimum of two years, and explore further local commissioning of services by PCCs to improve support for victims of sexual violence. We will also work with the police to increase awareness of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) for LGBT victims, and consider how to improve support for those identifying as non-binary and intersex people. We will also develop commissioning guidance and work

with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners to improve best practice sharing.

We will work with PCC areas to ensure they are well positioned to commission services that meet the specialist needs of sexual violence and exploitation victims.

Increase funding by £200k over two years to provide further advocacy support to families bereaved by domestic homicide.

We want to ensure that all bereaved families, who consent, are provided with specialist advocacy support.

Widen the support offered by the Homicide Service. Currently, this supports families nationally who lose relatives through murder and manslaughter, with a separate fund for families bereaved prior to the service being set up in 2010. To ensure the best support is available for all families, from April 2019 the Homicide Service will be extended to include families bereaved by murder and manslaughter prior to its establishment.²⁸ **We are also building and developing a secure online community space** for bereaved families to improve peer to peer support.

Spend £8 million to improve support for children who witness domestic abuse. Further information will be provided in the government's response to the Domestic Abuse consultation, which will be published by the end of 2018.

Spend £18.8m on domestic abuse accommodation services in England, including refuge, in 2018-2020. These are critical for victims to move on to safety and independence. We are committed to helping local authorities ensure that no victim is turned away from the support they need and are carrying out a review of how domestic abuse services are locally commissioned and funded across England.



Many PCCs have created **single points of contact** for victims,

co-locating services to improve co-ordination and reduce the need for the victim to re-tell their story.

Victims First Northumbria (VFN) provides a one stop shop for victims where they receive updates on their case, co-ordination of victim care, options for restorative justice and support going to court and throughout the process.

As well as providing referral pathways to local specialist services, Independent Sexual Violence Advisors, the joint Police/CPS Witness Care Unit and the restorative justice specialists are co-located. Call-handlers and front-line police officers refer victims to VFN who work with the victim to create a Personal Recovery Plan.

Cambridgeshire has an end to end support service through Victim and Witness Care Co-ordinators. One victim of assault said: "It has been really good to have one point of contact for the victim care side of things and the court updates. Previously I had so many different people it was hard to keep track of everything. Being able to speak to a single contact who can provide not just practical support but emotional support was priceless. It had a very positive impact on me and certainly set me on my way to getting my life back on track."

The Victim and Witness Hub co-locates mental health nurses, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors, domestic abuse outreach workers, staff from the court-based witness service, a specialist support worker for young people, restorative justice co-ordinators and a team of community volunteers.

Improve access to services through better integration and signposting of support services

Work with Police and Crime Commissioners to develop a framework within England and Wales, setting out the support arrangements that should be in place in the event of a major crime incident such as a terrorist attack. This will help ensure that wherever the crime occurs, and wherever the victims and families live in England and Wales, they will be referred to the support they need.

Update the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, so that every school in England has access to the information they need to support children who are victims of crime and can take action sooner. The Keeping Learning Safe Guidance for Wales will also be updated to take account of development in safeguarding policies. Schools have a key role to play in safeguarding children and making sure that where children are victims of crime they are referred to appropriate support services to help them cope and recover.

Pilot a 'Child House' model to better support child victims of sexual abuse. The model brings multiple services together in a child-friendly environment to minimise additional trauma for victims. Building on a first pilot in County Durham, we are testing a further two-year pilot in London in 2018.

Encourage local integrated approaches to providing support for victims that joins up local criminal justice agencies and support provision. We are working with the London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime on an innovative new service to bring together elements of the support provided to witnesses before a trial with the range of victim support services commissioned in London with the aim to create a more seamless service.

Break the cycle of reoffending and revictimization by identifying solutions so offenders who are victims of crime receive the support and care they are entitled to. As part of the Female Offender Strategy, we are investing £3.5m in community provision for women in the criminal justice system. We are exploring options to develop a victim pathway for female offenders in England. Similarly, in Wales, we will use trauma-informed approaches to support female offenders who are also victims and consider how we can intervene early for women who disclose they are victims of domestic abuse at the first point of contact with the justice system.



The Weaving the Web project is creating empowering

online services that extends the reach of sexual violence support to survivors of sexual abuse across the country.

Through pooling the expertise held by women working with survivors, and survivors themselves, Rape Crisis England and Wales have developed a platform from which a range of specialist online services will be provided, complementing and enhancing existing services. This will potentially reduce waiting times for support, and ensure survivors can access high-quality services that are right for them, in the right place and at the right time. The platform and online services are due to be launched by October 2018.

Ensure that services provide victims with a quality service, based on their needs

Pilot the Economic Crime Victim Care Unit, a new service to support vulnerable victims of fraud and cyber crime in Manchester and the West Midlands to help prevent repeat targeting by fraudsters. The service provides tailored fraud prevention advice and signposting of support services to help vulnerable victims whose crimes are not being investigated to cope and recover.

Improve support for victims of modern slavery and exploitation. Create new places of safety for victims, enforce standards for safe houses, and improve the support provided for victims as they return to the community. Victims will be able to access specialist support quickly, and will be less vulnerable to future exploitation. We have announced an **additional £2m for Independent Child Trafficking Advocates**, specialist professionals who support children to navigate the complex systems of social care, immigration and criminal justice. We have also **launched an independent review of Modern Slavery Act 2015** to ensure legislation keeps in step with this evolving crime.

Support acid attack victims by using the specialist burns care pathway which includes access to psychological care, rehabilitation and outreach support.

Refresh the Hate Crime Action Plan, including new measures to train police officers and staff to address the needs of hate crime victims. This will include improving their knowledge of the local support available for victims.

Take further action on sexual violence, domestic abuse, stalking and so-called ‘honour-based’ violence in a refreshed Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. Over this Parliament, we have committed £100m in dedicated central Government funding to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls.

Introduce uniform standards and a new framework of indicators for our centrally funded services, for PCCs and for Sexual Assault Referral Centres, to improve confidence in commissioned services, and better understand how funding is being used. It is crucial that we make sure the services we fund are high-quality and meeting the needs of victims.

Summary of key issues	Action
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Increasing availability of services through more joined up and sustainable funding

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Funding for support comes from multiple parts of government and different commissioners are responsible for the provision of interconnected services.▶ It is difficult to respond quickly to changing needs and new issues, meaning that support is not always available as and when victims need it. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Align government funding for victim support services.▶ Review spending on child sexual abuse services.▶ Increase spending from £31m in 2018 to £39m in 2020/21 to improve services and pathways for survivors and victims of sexual violence and abuse who seek support to and from Sexual Assault Referral Centres.▶ Fund national rape services for a minimum of two years and explore local commissioning of services by PCCs.▶ Increase awareness of Sexual Assault Referral Centres for LGBT victims, and consider how to improve support for those identifying as non-binary and intersex people.▶ Increase funding by £200k over two years for advocacy support for families bereaved by domestic homicide.▶ Widen support offered by the Homicide Service.▶ Build and develop a secure online community space for bereaved families to improve peer to peer support.▶ Spend £8m to improve support for children who witness domestic abuse.▶ Spend £18.8m on domestic abuse accommodation services in 2018-2020. |
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Improving access to services through better integration and signposting of support services

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Lack of consistent information on what support is offered to victims.▶ Different organisations provide different types of service to victims, and the services are not as integrated and coordinated as well as they could be. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Develop a framework for support arrangements in the event of a major incident.▶ Revised Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance (England) and Keeping Learners Safe guidance (Wales).▶ Pilot the 'Child House' model to better support child victims of sexual abuse.▶ Develop locally integrated approaches including a new service in partnership with the London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime.▶ Explore options to develop a victims pathway for female offenders. |
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Ensuring that services provide victims with a quality service, based on their needs

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Lack of consistent standards, and best practice is not always shared. There is variation in the quality of support available to victims. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Pilot the Economic Crime Victim Care Unit.▶ Create places of safety for victims of modern slavery.▶ Launched a review of Modern Slavery Act 2015.▶ Spend £2m on Independent Child Trafficking Advocates.▶ Improve support for acid attack victims.▶ Refresh the Hate Crime Action Plan.▶ Refresh the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.▶ Develop commissioning guidance and improve sharing of best practice.▶ Introduced uniform standards and framework of indicators. |
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Some of the changes we will make to the Victims' Code

- ✔ Provide clearer information on how the victims' personal data will be shared between agencies and support services with clear explanations of how victims may opt-in or out.

Sam's story



In September 2016 following a night out, Sam, a professional DJ from Manchester was raped at a 'after party' by two men he'd met that night. Having returned to the flat he shared with his girlfriend the following morning, a traumatised Sam reported the rape to the Police and shortly after returned to his home town of Newark where he suffered an emotional breakdown and was diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In a desperate bid for help and supported by his family, he contacted Survivors Manchester with the hope of gaining support to cope with the aftermath of his horrific ordeal. Sam travelled back to Manchester to undertake an assessment and shortly after began engagement in the Trauma Informed Therapy service, partly funded by the Ministry of Justice.

Sam openly admits that had it not been for Survivors Manchester, he wouldn't be here today and as part of his recovery and wanting to give something back to the organisation that supported him, Sam has shared his story with the team to use in training in a bid to encourage other men to break their silence and as a result has reached a global audience. Sam tirelessly campaigns for the voices of male rape victims/survivors to be heard and in recognition, Sam was announced as a Survivors Manchester Ambassador in October 2017.

Vera's story



Vera is an 89 year old woman suffering from dementia who was a victim of attempted fraud. She received a phone call from a male pretending to be from her bank asking her to withdraw a substantial sum of money that would be collected from her house. The banking staff intervened when she tried to withdraw the money and she was referred to the Economic Crime Victim Care Unit (ECVCU). ECVCU identified she had been a victim of fraud on three other occasions and was being persistently targeted by an individual posing as a police officer.

A safeguarding referral was made and withdrawal limits have been made on her bank account to prevent future losses. A Truecall device was fitted to prevent fraudsters from making telephone contact and CCTV fitted. To date this has prevented further victimisation and other health and welfare needs are now being met by a multi-agency safeguarding team.

If a victim reports a crime

A victim's journey

Confidence in the different criminal justice agencies responsible is key to victim engagement. Recent Crown Prosecution (CPS) data suggests that in 2017/18 nearly 29% of cases that failed to secure a conviction did so due to a victim or witness stopping engagement.²⁹ This includes where a victim fails to attend court, withdraws their support for the prosecution or retracts their evidence. Victims need support and information so they remain confident and engaged and have the tools so they can understand and challenge decisions.

What happens at this stage?

The police have a number of obligations to victims under the Victims' Code. They are often the first point of contact for a victim after a crime has been committed, and must provide the victim with the information, help and services they are entitled to.

Under the Code, police must identify any vulnerability surrounding the victim and put in place appropriate safeguards, including enhanced entitlements. They must consider what additional support a victim may need during the investigation, interview, and at court.

Under the Code, victims are also entitled to receive information about restorative justice; a process that brings victims and offenders into communication. It can provide a means of closure and enable the victim to move on. It also allows victims to be heard and have a say in the resolution of offences, including agreeing rehabilitative or reparative activity for the offender.

Whether to investigate a crime is a matter for the police. The police must tell the victim if they decide not to investigate, or subsequently halt an investigation. If the police do investigate, they must tell victims when a suspect has been arrested, interviewed under caution, released without charge, or charged with an offence. If a suspect is released without charge, victims should be provided with an explanation as to why.

If a suspect is identified, it is usually the CPS (but sometimes the police) who decides whether the suspect should be charged. As part of the public interest test under the Code for Crown Prosecutors, the prosecutor will consider the impact the offence has had on the victim. If they are dissatisfied with a decision not to prosecute, victims may be entitled to seek a review of that decision.

What are the challenges?

Victim satisfaction with the police is variable

Some victims find the police to be the most positive aspect of their journey through the criminal justice system. For example, specially trained Family Liaison Officers that support bereaved families receive consistently good feedback.

However, there is no consistent training across forces in dealing with victims, particularly where specialists skills are required, such as domestic and child sexual abuse.



West Mercia and Warwickshire victims' services

restorative justice staff met with the local Muslim Welfare Association to discuss restorative justice as a means to deal with local hate crime incidents and attended the mosque to offer introductory Restorative Justice training to them.

As well as using restorative justice as a criminal justice response, this area also uses informal restorative processes to build relationships within a group or community; preventing or minimising the likelihood of conflict or harm occurring, rather than solely in response to an incident of harm. This might be a more appropriate process in a situation where many people have been harmed and many are responsible for harm, within a particular community (for example, to resolve conflicts between rival gangs).

The service has recruited and trained a young-adult Muslim volunteer to help facilitate restorative justice. This has begun to achieve positive results for victims. In addition, police Equality and Diversity Advisors in both policing areas have been trained to deliver restorative justice and use restorative approaches when working with different communities.

Victims are not always being offered their entitlements from the Victims' Code

The Victim Personal Statement (VPS) is one of the Code's key entitlements, providing the opportunity for victims to express how a crime affected them. Yet the Crime Survey for England and Wales found that for the past few years only around 15% of victims said they were given the opportunity by the police to make one.³⁰ Also, there is evidence that only 4% of victims were aware that restorative justice had been offered (where an offender had been identified).³¹

Victims' needs are not being assessed early enough or in the right way

Vulnerable victims who are entitled to enhanced services are not always getting the right support. The CPS Victim and Witness Satisfaction Survey (2015)³² found that vulnerable victims and other victims entitled to enhanced services were more likely to report being treated disrespectfully.³³ Similarly, earlier research suggested that not all those entitled to enhanced services were identified early or even identified at all.³⁴ Victims' needs can change over time and the current system does not provide enough opportunity for professionals to reassess these needs so victims are prepared for court.

Lack of consistency in how victims are supported after they report a crime

Police must offer to refer victims to specialist support to help them engage fully with the criminal justice system. We know that referrals are not always offered and information about all relevant services is not always provided. A recent report by the Victims' Commissioner

indicated that not all those eligible were being offered Registered Intermediaries (communication experts who help vulnerable victims and witnesses such as children or people with mental health issues), and that waiting lists can be up to four weeks.³⁵

Lack of accessible, timely and accurate information

This can cause victims to feel removed from the criminal justice process and withdraw their support for the prosecution. Victims do not always receive regular updates and key information from Witness Care Units and other responsible agencies. In the year ending March 2017, just under 35% of victims according to the CSEW felt they were kept very or fairly well informed by the police about their case.³⁶ Where a decision is taken not to proceed with the case, or if the case does not go to court, victims are not always provided with a timely explanation and what their options are to challenge the decision. Where an explanation is provided, it can sometimes be hard to understand.



The Hate Crime Thematic Report highlighted the work

West Yorkshire Police has done with partner agencies to encourage reporting and ensure that hate crimes and incidents are investigated appropriately.

West Yorkshire Police works with strategic partners to offer alternative reporting routes for victims both at a national level through reporting services such as Tell MAMA, Community Security Trust and StopHate UK, and at a local level through hate crime reporting centres across West Yorkshire. The local centres were established with local authorities and partners and are regularly reviewed to ensure they are in the right locations for communities.

The force's use of a Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process in Leeds for hate crime received particular praise. Although traditionally used for crimes such as domestic abuse, extending its use to hate crime, and incorporating Victim Support, has helped to safeguard the most vulnerable victims.

To address these challenges, we will:

Improve victim's experience of the police and CPS

Improve police training on working with victims. The police are committed to embedding a consistent approach to dealing with victims across all crime types, recognising that each victim is an individual with differing needs and vulnerabilities. The College of Policing will review the National Police Curriculum and develop a central set of learning resources to support learning in relation to victims and witnesses. Police forces should then use this resource as the basis for any relevant locally based training.

DA Matters is an innovative programme that has been developed by the College of Policing with SafeLives. The focus is on uncovering evidence of coercive and controlling behaviour, responding effectively, and most importantly how to make victims safe. It includes training for first responders and Domestic Abuse champions, a workshop for senior managers, but also reviews to assess changes in practice and attitudes. It has so far been adopted by 10 Police areas and is in the process of further roll out.

Provide timely and clear information to victims. We will give victims more choice in how they are communicated with, whether they want to speak to another person or communicate by email or text message. We will make sure that information is accurate and timely and we will clarify the role and responsibility of criminal justice agencies in the updated Victims' Code.

In the LGBT Action Plan, amongst several other safety commitments, the CPS committed to working with LGBT stakeholders and specialist

press to raise awareness of successfully prosecuted cases involving LGBT victims to increase confidence in reporting crimes, as well as, committing to working with partners to improve the recording and monitoring of equalities data for LGBT victims of domestic abuse, rape and hate crime. Additionally, the Government has committed to bring forward proposals to end the practice of conversion therapy in the UK.

Increase opportunities for victims to engage in alternative solutions to court. Out of court disposals allow the police to deal quickly and proportionately with low-level offending without victims having to go to court. The National Police Chief's Council have agreed that all police forces, when feasible, will move to a new framework for conditional out of court disposals. That way, police can discuss with, and take into account, the victim's views on the conditions that are set (e.g. compensation, a formal apology and/or a restorative justice process). Explaining the options and what they mean in a clear and sensitive way is crucial to making this approach work.

Develop measures so victims are offered their entitlements under the Victims' Code

Improve the delivery and accessibility of victim entitlements. We will use new technology, such as body-worn police cameras, to give victims a choice in how and when they provide a VPS. We have introduced new guidance for criminal justice agencies which includes key information to explain what a VPS is, and how it can be used and updated. We will make the responsibilities of all criminal justice agencies, including the police, clearer in the Victims' Code.



In Wales, police forces and PCCs are developing innovative solutions to ensure victims can access the support they need in rural communities.

The Dyfed-Powys police force set up Goleudy (Welsh for 'lighthouse'), an inhouse service that provides Victim & Witness Support Officers for each of the region's counties. It offers home visits and uses outreach venues in rural communities to reduce the burdens of travel and expense. This ensures that victims can access support wherever they live.

South Wales Victim Focus, run by Victim Support, offer practical and emotional support services which are free, confidential and available whether or not the crime has been reported and regardless of when it happened. Immediate and long term help and support is offered over the phone or face to face by three local teams.

North Wales Police offer a bilingual service across North Wales and have welsh speaking volunteers and staff within their rural communities who offer on-going emotional support to victims. They offer home visits as well as support from local outreach centres such as libraries or community centres. Their staff travel to and from rural areas to meet the needs of victims wherever possible.

Gwent Police have a 'Farmwatch Officer' who liaises with rural communities. Connect Gwent is their multi-disciplined victim hub with key partners such as Victim Support and Health.

Improve the quality of explanations around decisions not to prosecute. The CPS is changing their process to ensure victims are provided with a clear explanation of why a decision was made, and so that victims understand their rights to challenge the decision. We will improve how we communicate to victims, explaining how victims can access the right to review scheme in a much clearer and simpler way. We will also tighten compliance with timescales to ensure the process for vulnerable victims receiving information on their cases is more in line with that for other participants.

Require PCCs to make sure that restorative justice services are available in their areas, victims know how they might access them and the services they commission are safe. This will enable more victims to make an informed choice, at a time that is right for them and to be assured that the process will be led by skilled practitioners who can make the appropriate risk assessments to safeguard all participants in the process and so prevent revictimization. In Wales, we are developing a stronger restorative justice approach to youth justice and female offending. It will involve extensive engagement with victims of crime to ensure that it is delivered in an appropriate and effective manner.

Assessing victims needs early and in the right way

Recruit more Registered Intermediaries to ensure all victims who need their support are able to access one and can provide their best evidence as a

result. We will increase the number of Registered Intermediaries by 25% in 2018. We have also introduced a new training programme and are increasing the amount of continuing professional development programme and to enhance the support they are able to provide.

Launch refreshed police guidance on interviewing and supporting victims. This guidance will, for the first time, outline the role the police have in assessing and referring victims to support services, as well as the value of support provisions in helping victims give evidence. This will ensure vulnerable victims are identified as early as possible, and special measures arranged to help a victim give their best evidence in court. Getting this right at the victim's first point of contact with the justice system means they are more likely to stay engaged and see their offender brought to justice. We will also consider whether enhanced entitlements need to be revised in the Victims' Code.

Review Witness Care Units, to simplify the process for victims and witnesses. We will clarify roles and responsibilities and introduce core standards to ensure a consistent service is offered, regardless of where a victim lives. This will help reduce the number of people in contact with victims and improve needs assessments. We will also improve the quality of the information provided to victims from the police and CPS on the role of the Witness Service to encourage more referrals, and increase the participation in pre-trial visits.

Summary of key issues	Action
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Improving victim experience with the police

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ There are some really positive interactions with the police, but there is no consistent training across forces in dealing with victims, particularly where specialist skills are required, such as domestic and child abuse. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The College of Policing to review the National Police Curriculum and develop a central set of learning resources to support learning in relation to victims and witnesses.▶ Rollout DA Matters training for police forces.▶ Introduce new process to offer victims, where appropriate, more choice in how they receive information on their cases.▶ Raise awareness of successfully prosecuted cases involving LGBT victims and improve equalities data for LGBT victims of domestic abuse, rape and hate crime.▶ Support police forces to move to a framework for conditional out of court disposals, with victim's views taken into account on conditions set. |
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Developing measures so victims are offered their entitlements under the Victims' Code

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Victims are not always being offered their entitlements, including the opportunity to make a Victim Personal Statement and participate in restorative justice.▶ Victims do not always receive clear information about their rights to review a police or CPS decision. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Provide victims with more choice on how they make their Victim Personal Statement.▶ Introduce new guidance for criminal justice agencies to provide practical advice to assist when explaining the Victim Personal Statement process to victims.▶ Introduce national quality assurance process to ensure victims are provided with clear, concise and easy to understand information about the decision to stop their case and, where applicable, their right to seek a review under the Victims' Right to Review.▶ Require PCCs to make sure that restorative justice services are available in their areas.▶ Developing a stronger restorative justice approach to youth justice and female offending in Wales. |
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Assessing victims needs early and in the right way

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Victims who are entitled to enhanced services are not always receiving them.▶ Vulnerable victims and those entitled to enhanced services are not always being identified by the police. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Recruit 25% more Registered Intermediaries and improve training.▶ Introduce refreshed guidance for police interviews with victims.▶ Introduce new guidance for Witness Care Units to improve the information provided to victims on the role of the Court Based Witness Service. |
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Some of the changes we will make to the Victims' Code

- ✔ Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all criminal justice agencies, including the Police and CPS.
- ✔ Consider whether enhanced entitlements need to be revised.
- ✔ Tighten compliance with timescales to ensure the process for vulnerable victims receiving information on their cases is more in line with that for other participants.
- ✔ Provide clearer information on a victim's right to ask for a review of the police or CPS decision not to proceed with a case and support in this.

Rebecca's story



An anonymous female sent an enquiry to a victim support service asking if she could talk to someone about “ongoing sexual abuse”. A staff member sensitively responded and it soon came to light that the female was only 16 years old. Being especially concerned about reference to ‘ongoing’ abuse, the manager of the service encouraged the girl to phone in and eventually to meet in person.

The girl who introduced herself as Rebecca disclosed that she was being sexually abused by her adoptive father. Although she had moved away from home and was with a guardian, there was potential for the abuse to happen again. After much communication and relationship building, Rebecca agreed to get in touch with a child social worker and decided to report the crime to police. Because she reported the crime, the police were able to put safeguarding measures in place to keep her safe. She now feels that she has a support network and is glad she decided to reach out to the service. She is engaging with an Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) service to take the case to court.

Natasha's story



Natasha momentarily left some of her belongings on the street when moving house, this is when the offender stole two of her bags. Among the stolen goods were Natasha's laptop and items of sentimental value, including rosary beads from her deceased mother. The offence was seen by Natasha's neighbour who reported it to the police. The offender was arrested and received a community sentence.

The offender wanted to make amends, and so a restorative justice process was recommended. Natasha was still very upset by the offence and did not want to meet the offender, but agreed to receive a restorative letter from him. The offender then worked closely with a support worker and was encouraged to try to retrieve the stolen property. He eventually located some of the victim's belongings, including the rosary beads, and wrote the victim a letter in which he explained how and why he had stolen the items.

Natasha accepted the letter and asked the officer to tell the offender she forgives him and thanks him for getting her property back. The offender has not re-offended in the year since he first engaged with restorative justice, which is the longest period (aside from time spent in custody) that he has not offended in his adult life.

The court process

A victim's journey

Going to court can be daunting. Criminal trials can be complex and they may be heard months or even years after a crime has taken place.

If an offender is found guilty, victims may want to tell the judge the impact that crime had on them.

Many victims will be vulnerable or intimidated, and need extra assistance to make sure they give their best evidence. We also recognise that victims may go through the family or civil courts at the same time as the criminal court process. We want to minimise the impact of going to court on victims by making improvements to the support available, as well as responding to their practical needs.

What happens at this stage?

When a victim is to give evidence as a witness, they should be assessed to see whether they need support to give their best evidence. They should be able to visit the court before the trial to familiarise themselves with the building and the courtroom.

Victims should be informed of the date, location and outcome of any criminal court hearings in their case. Wherever possible, victims should be seated in an area separate from the suspect and their family and friends.

If the defendant is found guilty, victims are entitled to say whether they would like to have their Victim Personal Statement (VPS) read aloud or played (when recorded) in court. It is at the court's discretion whether they will be permitted to do so.

What are the challenges?

A complex court system with little information

In 2016, the Public Accounts Committee highlighted that despite

the justice system relying on victims and witnesses coming forward to give evidence, over half would not be prepared to do so again.³⁷

How we communicate with victims is crucial and it needs to be more sensitive to victims' circumstances. There can be a lack of information on how the case is progressing, how the court system works and what is expected of victims through the court process. The VPS is a key entitlement for victims, but victims do not always get the opportunity to read their VPS in court, and the process for doing so is not always clearly explained.

The practicalities of going to court can be difficult

Victims can wait a long time for their case to go to trial and trials can be lengthy. Going to court can have practical challenges for victims too, such as managing childcare, transport and employment. Judges must balance the needs of all parties in the case to ensure a fair trial, and may not always be able to work round victims' requirements.

The court environment can be challenging

Some courts have separate entrances for victims and defendants, as well as a dedicated victims' waiting room, but others are less well-equipped. The court environment is particularly challenging for young witnesses and victims with specialist needs. Research suggests that young witnesses are often fearful of giving evidence due to the formal nature of the courtroom, a lack of understanding of court processes and fear of facing the accused.³⁸ We know many victims coming to court are having to spend too long in unfriendly waiting areas before giving evidence.³⁹



Specialist Training for Advocates

Inns of Court

College of Advocacy (ICCA) has developed specialist training for all advocates who question witnesses in cases of a serious sexual nature involving vulnerable adults and children. The 'Advocacy and the Vulnerable' course was launched in September 2017.

The course covers a range of skills that advocates need to adopt to ensure a vulnerable witness does not feel overwhelmed or under pressure, so that they can give their best evidence to the court.

The course helps advocates develop appropriate language when they are cross-examining witnesses and ensures advocates have a broad understanding of current case law, special measures and the use of intermediaries, so vulnerable witnesses can participate fully in the trial process. Training is both recognised and highly valued by relevant experts who work to support victims' rights and with organisations such as the NSPCC.

The training programme delivers the manifesto commitment: "Publicly-funded advocates will have specialist training in handling victims before taking on serious sexual offences" and goes beyond that commitment. Training is available to all advocates, not just those working on publicly funded cases.

Specialist needs are not always being recognised

Victims have access to a wide range of special measures to help them give their best evidence in court. However, it is not clear if everyone who is eligible is being identified by the relevant agencies. In addition, some victims are discouraged from accessing pre-trial therapy in case it damages the prosecution's case, and victims can fear the impact public knowledge of their case could have on their private lives.

To address these challenges, we will:

Make the court environment more victim friendly

Improve the court environment. We have consulted on the future strategy for reform of the court and tribunal estate and Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) will publish a response later in the year. Alongside this we will publish a new Design Guide that provides the standards for refurbishment and re-development of current and future potential court and tribunal buildings. Accessibility is a key principle of the new guide and it will make clear that providing separate entrances and waiting areas for victims and witnesses will be a requirement for all buildings where criminal and family cases will be heard. We have introduced model waiting rooms at five sites in England and Wales to assure victims that if they attend court, they will not encounter the defendant, or their associates, outside the courtroom. We will continue to work to provide comfortable, secure, and child-friendly waiting areas.

Streamline victim interaction and improve information

Modernise and digitise our courtrooms. We will create a shared digital system for all criminal justice agencies that will hold case information, enabling easier and more consistent communication with victims and witnesses. There will be a single view of case progress, and a single record of the needs and preferences of victims and witnesses. Victims will have direct access to this platform so they can view and be notified about progress in their case.

Introduce a new tone of voice for written and spoken court communications. Communication will be based on the principles of listening, explaining and guiding to make sure that people are given simple, consistent and accessible information. We are also introducing a new feedback system to hear directly from victims and witnesses and understand where further improvements are required.

Record and monitor when Victim Personal Statements have been made. This information will be passed on to the victims and may well help victims to understand how their VPS has been used and reassure them that their experience has been taken into consideration by the court.

Improve support for victims with specialist needs

Use video links to allow vulnerable victims to provide evidence away from the defendant. There are now over 2,000 operational video links, including witness links in magistrates' and Crown courts in England and Wales. There are also remote links in each court region, allowing victims to give evidence at a time and place convenient for them, away from the defendant and increasingly away from the court room altogether. We are also developing a new protocol for remote video link sites which will include guidelines on making more of the facilities child friendly.

Roll out pre-recorded cross-examination for vulnerable witnesses, and test it for victims of sexual offences and modern slavery offences, in Crown Court centres in England and Wales.

Pre-recorded cross-examination was initially rolled out from December 2013 in Leeds, Liverpool and Kingston upon Thames Crown Court centres, for child witnesses under 16, or witnesses vulnerable by reason of physical, or mental disability. A process evaluation in the pilot courts in 2016 found several benefits for witnesses as well as an increased number of early guilty pleas and a reduced number of 'cracked' trials. Although it is possible that some of this difference may be attributable to recording practices in the pilot. A 'cracked' trial occurs when, on the trial date, the defendant offers acceptable pleas or the prosecution offers no evidence; no further trial time is required, but the court time allocated is wasted.⁴⁰

Review guidance to raise awareness of the ability to apply for reporting restrictions for witnesses requiring anonymity or protection. A court has the power to ban the publication of material identifying an adult witness in criminal proceedings (other than the accused) if the court believes the quality of the witness's evidence or cooperation with the case could be diminished by fear of public identification. This may help encourage vulnerable victims to take their case forward.

Launch new guidance on pre-trial therapy to reduce the perception amongst victims, therapists and prosecutors that it will damage the prosecution case. We are also launching a new toolkit for therapists and prosecutors on the support that an individual suffering from a mental health condition will require.

Protect child witnesses through an updated Young Witness Protocol. This sets out shorter timescales for the police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the courts where a witness under 10 is giving evidence, reducing the length of time a child is in contact with the justice system, and reducing the possibility of them forgetting key evidence. This follows a joint review of the protocol by HMCTS, the CPS and the police.

Improve access to special measures. Early approval of special measures can help reassure a victim and prepare them for court. We will build on ongoing work to support vulnerable victims of acid attacks to encourage prosecutors to make special measures applications for eligible witnesses as early as possible. We have also developed a protocol for trials which involve members of the deaf community to ensure appropriate support measures are in place. This will be extended to include trials where victims and witnesses require alternative and augmentative communication methods to give evidence.

Record and monitor applications for special measures and enhanced entitlements, so we can ensure everyone who is entitled to support is able to apply to the court for whichever measures will enable them to give their best evidence.

Provide better support with the practicalities of going to court

Listing is a judicial function, and where possible, in accordance with the current Criminal Practice Directions, a fixed trial date is provided for cases which involve vulnerable and intimidated witnesses (including but not limited to sexual offence and domestic violence cases) and witnesses under 18 to minimise the stress of attending court.

Free up court time in the magistrates' court: Crimes with no identifiable victim, such as traffic offences and travelling on a train without a ticket, are already increasingly being dealt with outside the courtroom and decided on the papers by a single justice assisted by a legal advisor. We will ensure that magistrates' courts' time is focused on the more serious and complex cases, involving vulnerable victims and witnesses. Serious violence cases are moving through the court system quicker. Since late 2014 and March 2018 outstanding cases for violence against the person offences have decreased by 38%.⁴¹ Timeliness has also improved for murder cases, where the time from first hearing in the magistrates to completion in the Crown Court is down by 22% since 2012 (fallen from 308 days in 2012 to 239 days in 2017).

Develop a new model for in court support linked to Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) reform programme. We will ensure that court staff with victims in their care have the right training and victims are getting the support they need through the court experience.

Protections available for vulnerable witnesses in court

Special measures can help reduce the stress of attending court for vulnerable and intimidated witnesses and help them give their best evidence.

These measures include: live video links, video recorded evidence-in-chief and screens around the witness box. Witnesses can also give evidence with the aid of an intermediary (a communications expert), give evidence in private, and have judges and barristers remove their wigs and gowns. Special measures apply to both defence and prosecution witnesses but not the defendant, and they are subject to the discretion of the court.

If the quality of evidence given by a vulnerable adult witness may be diminished by fear or distress at the possibility of public identification, the criminal courts can impose a reporting restriction. This provides the witness with lifetime protection from being identified in the media, prohibiting publication of identifying details such as names, addresses, or photos. The court must be satisfied that the restriction is likely to improve witness cooperation and evidence quality. Automatic reporting restrictions apply for victims of a sexual offence.

Summary of key issues	Action
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Making the court environment more victim friendly

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| ▶ Some courts have separate entrances for victims and defendants and dedicated victims' waiting room; others are less well-equipped. | ▶ Publish and implement court estates design guide. |
| ▶ Young victims and witnesses with specialist needs can find the environment challenging. | ▶ Introduced model waiting rooms at five sites. |

Streamlining victim interaction and improving information

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| ▶ Communications with victims can lack empathy and understanding. | ▶ Develop new digital platform to improve sharing of consistent information. |
| ▶ There can be a lack of information on how the case is progressing, how the court system works and what is expected of victims through the court process. | ▶ Introduce new tone of voice for communication with victims. |
| ▶ Victims do not have an easy way to feedback on their experience. | ▶ Introduce new feedback system for victims. |
| | ▶ Record and monitor when Victim Personal Statements have been made. |

Improving support for victims with specialist needs

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| ▶ It is unclear if everyone who is eligible for Special Measures is identified. | ▶ Use video links to allow vulnerable victims to provide evidence away from the defendant and rollout new protocol. |
| ▶ Some victims are discouraged from having pre-trial therapy. | ▶ Rollout pre-recorded cross-examination of vulnerable witnesses to Crown Courts. |
| ▶ Victims can be fearful of the impact of public knowledge of the case. | ▶ Review guidance to raise awareness of the ability to apply for reporting restrictions for witnesses requiring anonymity or protection. |
| | ▶ Launch pre-trial therapy toolkit. |
| | ▶ Launched an updated Young Witness Protocol. |
| | ▶ Raising awareness, use of and encourage early applications for special measures. |
| | ▶ Extend protocol ensuring appropriate support is in place for deaf witnesses. |
| | ▶ Record and monitor applications for special measures and enhanced entitlements. |

Providing better support with the practicalities of going to court

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| ▶ Victims can wait a long time for their case to go to trial and trials can be lengthy. | ▶ Continue to free up magistrates' court time by dealing with crimes with no identifiable victim outside court hearings. |
| ▶ There are practical challenges of going to court, including childcare, transport and employment. | ▶ Develop a new model for in court support to ensure that court staff have the right training. |

Some of the changes we propose to make to the Victims' Code

- ✔ Clarify that early applications for special measures for witnesses should be made whenever possible.
- ✔ Review what the Code says about victims' entitlement to access pre-trial therapy.
- ✔ Review enhanced entitlements.
- ✔ Clarify the role of the Court Based Witness Service in providing pre-trial court visits and support.
- ✔ Review of the process for victims to receive information on available special measures, share their preferences, and be informed of the outcome of any application.
- ✔ Provide clearer information for victims on what to expect at court and how to access practical assistance.
- ✔ Review of the process for informing victims of the use of their VPS during the sentencing process.
- ✔ Amend Code to take account of the new complaints and feedback system.

Kwame's story



Kwame was a victim of harassment. When he came to court he was supported by the Court-based Witness Service. He said the warm friendly welcome greatly helped remove the stress out of facing the person who threatened and harassed him and his family.

From the start he felt safe and secure in the knowledge that the court process is a safe space. He was grateful for the advice, support and comforting welcome he received which he said was a pleasant surprise during a difficult time.

Sue's story



Sue was a victim of domestic violence and has a disability. On one occasion her ex-partner hit her and put his hands around her neck. She believed he would hurt her if she reached out for help. Her neighbours rang police and her ex-partner was charged. The case went to criminal court.

An Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) contacted Sue and ensured that she was kept up to date with the status of the case, and that her safety was prioritised. Sue was given special measures which meant she gave evidence by video link. The IDVA remained in court until the conclusion of the case to ensure Sue was updated of the outcome as quickly as possible. The IDVA liaised with the police/CPS to make sure that a restraining order was applied for and that the information was robust and detailed enough to effectively protect Sue.

The IDVA attended sentencing and worked with court partners to ensure the process was kept under review. Sue felt supported at every stage of the process and felt safer as a result of engaging with the service.

Hiten's story



Hiten is was a survivor of childhood abuse, which included being raped by a family member at the age of 12. This experience caused him to suffer severe anguish and anxiety as an adult. It was a long time before he found the confidence to tell the authorities what had happened to him all those years ago. As a result of him reporting the crimes, the perpetrator was brought to trial. Hiten was assessed by a Registered Intermediary who made recommendations to the court about his communication needs. He gave evidence in court behind screens with a Registered Intermediary standing beside him in the witness box.

The Registered Intermediary had visited the court with him prior to the trial and during the trial facilitated communication between him and the court, advising the court on how to simplify questions to meet his needs. The Registered Intermediary helped Hiten to remain calm and give his best evidence. The perpetrator of the abuse was found guilty by the jury and sent to jail for 14 years. Hiten sobbed in the court room when the verdict was delivered but feels that he can now move forward with his life knowing that it is never too late for someone to be brought to justice.

After court

A victim's journey

Whatever the outcome of a trial, victims should be provided with timely, accurate information about their case and the support to which they are entitled. This includes ensuring victims understand the court's decision, the implications for them, and for the offender. It also means that victims should be kept up to date about future case developments, such as whether the offender is seeking an appeal, or when an offender is eligible for release from prison. We want to make the system as transparent as possible and ensure that victims have a voice in the process.

What happens at this stage?

Victims should be informed by the Witness Care Unit about the outcome of the trial including, where available, a summary of the decision. They may also inform victims about the type of sentence that can be imposed, and the guidelines courts must consider in reaching a decision. If a sentence passed in the Crown Court appears to be unduly lenient, anyone can ask the Attorney General to review it under the Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme (ULS). The Attorney General has the power to refer certain cases to the Court of Appeal for review. Victims should be informed by Witness Care Units if the offender is seeking an appeal, and when and where that appeal is to be held.

The Victim Contact Scheme (VCS) is offered to victims of violent and sexual offences where the offender receives a prison sentence of 12 months or more. If victims opt-in, they receive information about key stages of the offender's sentence from a Victim Liaison Officer. This includes if an offender is due to move to open conditions, if they are eligible for release, and if a Parole Board hearing is to take place. Victim Liaison Officers must take a proactive approach to contacting victims, following up their initial letters with a telephone call and a face-to-face meeting as appropriate.

Victims who opt-in can give their views on licence conditions, and will be informed of any licence conditions relevant to them. If the prisoner is eligible for parole, the victim can make or update their VPS which will be sent to the Parole Board, and if there is to be an oral hearing victims can attend and present this statement.

The Worboys case made clear that we must improve the way we communicate with victims. Since then, we have committed to increasing the transparency of the parole process. One immediate step has been to

change the rules to allow the Parole Board to explain its decisions to victims, media and the public. Since this change, the Parole Board has received over 850 requests for summary decisions. There is ongoing work to review and improve the parole system, with a particular focus on whether there is scope to make further improvements for victims going through the process. We have consulted on proposals to create a mechanism for Parole Board decisions to be reconsidered in certain circumstances and we have also undertaken to review all the Parole Board rules. Victims of sexual or violent offences committed by mentally disordered offenders, as specified in legislation, can also choose to be on the VCS and will receive information who are detained in a hospital can also choose to be on the Victim Contact Scheme and will receive information such as when the patient is being considered for discharge. They can also make representations about the conditions attached to the offender's discharge, such as preventing the offender making contact with the victim.

What are the challenges?

Court outcomes are not always explained as clearly as they could be

Not all victims are informed of the outcomes of their cases and, when they are, the quality of the explanation can be improved. We are also aware that victims do not always understand the implications of a sentence, such as how long an offender will be in prison. Moreover, where a case has led to an acquittal, victims must be better informed about what this means and the options available to them. Victims are not always aware of the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme.

Victims are not kept up to date during the parole process and their role in the process is not clearly explained

After the Worboys case, we knew we had to improve communication with victims during the parole process.⁴² Our review found that victims⁴³ were confused about the purpose of the VPS in a parole context, including how to submit one and how it is considered during the licence conditions process. We know that some victims have concerns about disclosing a VPS to the offender, and that this may deter them from making one.

Some victims also do not think their VPS is taken into account in the parole process, and want it to be easier to present their VPS at parole hearings. The Worboys case also demonstrated that victims are not always provided

with accurate, timely information on how to join the VCS.

There is a difference in the support available to victims of mentally disordered offenders compared to other victims

In the recent report, 'Entitlements and Experiences of Victims of Mentally Disordered Offenders', the Victims' Commissioner expressed a number of concerns, including that these victims receive variable information and support compared to other victims who are eligible for the Victim Contact Scheme.⁴⁴

To address these challenges, we will:

Ensure victims are aware of and understand the court decision

Improve explanations of court decisions so they are clear and easy to understand. This includes if there is an acquittal. If the offender is given a custodial sentence, then victims need to know what the sentence means and how long it will be until the offender is likely to be released from prison.

Keep the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme under review

to ensure victims or the public can ask the Court of Appeal to reconsider certain sentences that may not reflect the severity of the crime. The scheme provides victims, along with members of the public, the opportunity to challenge sentence lengths. We will raise awareness of the scheme and how the process works to ensure that every victim is aware of this opportunity. We have expanded the scheme to bring terrorism offences into scope, and are considering further extension, potentially for additional harassment, sexual, and indecent images offences.

Review support for victims after acquittal, including referrals to post trial support. Building

on current National Standards of Support in place following an acquittal for bereaved families in homicide cases, we will ensure families are provided with opportunities to discuss issues arising from the trial and any future investigation or prosecution. We will amend the Victims' Code to explain what happens after an acquittal and victims' entitlements.

Improve communication and engagement with victims during the parole process

Improve the Victim Contact Scheme. We are improving information about the Scheme so victims understand the benefits and how to join it. We will make the opt-in process more straightforward. We also know communication with victims must be better. We are testing new ways of alerting victims of case developments, including digital communications to provide victims with more choice on how they are communicated with.

Roll out revised training for Victim Liaison Officers (VLO) to make sure they have the necessary information and skills to support victims. As part of this, we will introduce a new template and train VLOs to help victims when giving their views about what licence conditions offenders should be subject to on release. The new approach will also make it easier to track victims' requests for licence conditions and ensure they are properly considered.

Allow more victims to deliver their VPS at parole hearings.

Unless there is good reason otherwise, such as safety or security issues, we will presume victims who want to can read out their VPS, or have it read out on their behalf. We propose to include the presumption as an entitlement in the Victims' Code.



In October 2014, Lighthouse Integrated Victim

and Witness Care went live, as a brand new department within Avon and Somerset Constabulary. Lighthouse continues to offer an enhanced service to vulnerable, intimidated or persistently targeted victims of crime and anti-social behaviour, and victims of serious crime.

Lighthouse teams ensure that each victim receives the tailored support and service they need locally to them. Each team has Victim and Witness Care Officers and co-located multi agency partners. These include Independent Domestic Violence Advisors, Independent Sexual Violence Advisors and Victim Support. They are working with the NPS to explore how Victim Liaison Officers could be co-located with other agencies within their area to allow greater collaboration and provide a better experience for victims.

All cases are referred into the service through the police and allocated to a Victim and Witness Care Officer (VWCO) who will remain with them throughout the criminal justice process. The VWCO will coordinate referrals to support services that may be of benefit and act a single point of contact for any questions or queries victims may have.

Explore whether there is scope to restrict the information the offender receives about a victim's request for licence conditions. We will also make sure victims are informed at an early stage of their right to request non-disclosure.

Improve support for victims of mentally disordered offenders to help them cope and recover

Address any improvements that need to be made to entitlements for victims of mentally disordered offenders in the updated Victims' Code. In particular

we will examine whether the Victims' Code could provide greater clarity on why victims of unrestricted offenders receive information directly from Hospital Managers and what information they should receive.

Explore making trial judges' sentencing remarks available to the relevant Tribunal when they are considering the discharge of a restricted patient. This will ensure the Tribunal has more detailed information regarding the risks a restricted patient presents, clarity on any aggravating features of the index offence and whether any other offences were taken into account.

Sophie's story



Sophie was sexually abused on multiple occasions by her uncle between the ages of approximately four and ten years old.

As a result of the abuse, she suffered years of anxiety, guilt and social isolation. At the original trial, the offender pleaded guilty to all of the charges and received a sentence of a three year Community Order and five years on the Sex Offenders Register.

This left Sophie feeling that her uncle had 'got away with it', and that her bravery had not been worth it. The sentence was referred to the Attorney General's Office as potentially unduly lenient and, upon review, the Attorney General agreed with the referral.

The case was heard again at the Court of Appeal just over one month after the referral, and the judge increased the sentence to a total of four years and six months imprisonment.

Summary of key issues	Action
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Ensuring victims are aware of and understand the court decision

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Not all victims are being informed of the outcomes of their cases and, when they are informed, the quality of the explanation could be better. ▶ Victims do not always understand what the sentence means and the implications. ▶ Victims lack awareness of the Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme exists and how the process works. ▶ Victims could be better informed about what acquittal means and their options. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review guidance provided to Witness Care Units to improve the quality of explanations of court decisions to victims. ▶ Keep the scope of the Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme under review. ▶ Consider a further extension of the Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme, particularly for some additional harassment, sexual, and indecent images offences. ▶ Review guidance provided to Witness Care Units to improve referrals to support services post trial, including following an acquittal. |
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Improving communication and engagement with victims during the parole process

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Victims are confused about the purpose of the Victim Personal Statement (VPS) in a parole context. ▶ Victims are concerned about the requirement to disclose the VPS to the offender, and in some cases this has deterred victims from making a VPS. Some victims also do not think that their VPS is taken into account in the parole process and want it to be easier to present their VPS at parole hearings. ▶ Victims are not always provided with accurate, timely information on how to join the Victim Contact Scheme. Victims on the scheme do not always receive timely, sensitive information on when parole hearing will take place and the implications. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Improve information about the VCS and make the opt-in process more straightforward. ▶ Explore ways to make it easier to track correspondence with victims and to introduce different ways of alerting victims. ▶ Roll out new training for VLOs, to make sure they have the necessary information and skills to support victims. ▶ Develop a template for representations about victim-related licence conditions. ▶ Move to a presumption that victims can read out their VPS at parole hearing, unless there is a good reason otherwise. ▶ Explore restricting the information the offender receives about the reasons for a victim's requests for licence conditions. |
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Improving communication and engagement with victims during the parole process

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There is a difference in the support available to victims of mentally disordered offenders compared to other victims. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Improve the processes by which victims of mentally disordered offenders are given information and the support provided. ▶ Make trial judge's sentencing remarks available to the Mental Health Tribunal. |
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Some of the changes we propose to make to the Victims' Code

- ✔ Review of the process for informing victims of the offenders' sentence and what it means.
- ✔ Make it clear in the Victims' Code what the entitlements of victims of mentally disordered offenders are and explore as part of the review whether improvements need to be made.
- ✔ Reflect work to improve victims' experience of the parole process including:
 - ▶ Provide a more comprehensive description of the VPS and its purpose in a parole context.
 - ▶ Include a presumption that, unless there is good reason otherwise, victims who apply to attend the oral parole hearing to read their VPS, or have it read out on their behalf, can do so.
 - ▶ Clarify the Victim Liaison Officer's role.
 - ▶ Clarify what victims are entitled to after an acquittal.

Our approach

In developing this strategy, we have engaged extensively with victims, victims' groups and representatives, academics, frontline services and criminal justice agencies. We have also considered relevant evidence and research. It has been important to us to speak directly to those who have experience of being a victim as well as those with frontline expertise. This has helped us to build a deeper understanding of the difficulties that victims face and highlighted the complexity and variety of their needs.

In 2014 we established the **Victims' Panel** to represent the voice of victims in government policy making. The Panel advises and assists the Ministry of Justice to support victims of crime. It is chaired by the Victims Minister and members include those who have experienced crime, leading academics and experts in providing support to victims. Members have been appointed to represent a wide range of skills and experience relating to victims. The Panel meets on a quarterly basis to discuss victims' issues and act as a critical friend to developing Government policy. For Government to develop effective victim policies and reform, it is vital we engage directly with victims and people who work with victims and we are committed to the continuation of the Panel. We will continue to consult with the Panel on all victim-related policy issues, including the review of the Victims' Code. The Panel has been crucial in the development of this strategy.

In addition to the Panel, we set up the **Victim & Witness Advisory Group** in 2017, a smaller group to provide expert advice and challenge from leading stakeholders representing victims. This group has largely focused on topics related to the Victims Strategy. Membership consists of Baroness Newlove, the Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses; Dame Vera Baird DBE QC, Police & Crime Commissioner for Northumbria, Claire Waxman, London Victims' Commissioner; and Diana Fawcett, Chief Officer of Victim Support. The group meets on a monthly basis and will continue to provide strategic advice and guidance on key victims issues to address in the Victims Strategy and the future consultation.

The Criminal Justice Board (CJB), which is responsible for oversight of reforms to the criminal justice system is chaired by the Justice Secretary and attended by representatives from the criminal justice system, including the Home Secretary and Lord Justice Leveson, considered the issue of compliance with the Victims' Code in detail in April 2018. Their recommendations have informed the direction of the strategy on this issue.

We have worked closely with the **Welsh Government** to ensure the strategy represents all victims and recognises Welsh-specific progress and priorities. The **All Wales Criminal Justice Board** has agreed that victims should be one of its three priorities, with a particular focus on the following themes in the year ahead:

- ▶ Review the operation of Specialist Domestic Violence courts (SDVC) in Wales with a view to identifying areas of improvement for victims of domestic abuse/violence;
- ▶ Improving the operation of remote video links for vulnerable and intimidated witnesses.
- ▶ Investigate and act upon, the reasons why victims drop out of the criminal justice system leading cases to fail; and
- ▶ Raising the use of victim impact statements as a means of providing a victim voice in court.

In our visits, we wanted to understand what works well and where best practice is delivering sustainable and tangible benefits for victims. Our survey of PCC areas identified several which have developed hub models and co-located services to provide victims with a single point of contact, for example; Avon & Somerset, Cambridgeshire and Northumbria. There are others who have developed new models for improving compliance with the Victims' Code, for example Cumbria, which together with Victim Support and Safer Cumbria, developed a Quality Assessment Framework for the services they commission.

Our approach

We have also visited a number of support services, both those funded directly by the Government and those that are funded through PCCs. We wanted to know how these service providers are working in practice, how they are meeting the needs of victims and what lessons we could learn. The visits and information gathering helped to build our deeper understanding of the difficulties that victims face and highlighted the complexity and variety of their needs which has enabled us to take a holistic approach in devising the strategy.

We facilitated a series of **workshops** with support services, criminal justice agencies and academics to scope out, test and refine our thinking. We have used their sector knowledge and expertise to help guide the direction of the strategy, particularly with regard to compliance with the Victims' Code.

We have presented at and attended external events and groups, including the **London Victims Board**, **Westminster Briefing events** and the **Association of Police and Crime Commissioner's Victims Group**.

Moreover, we have joined up work across government through a Victims Strategy Board with representation from a range of government departments and criminal justice agencies. We believe that only a truly collaborative approach to aligning our aims, our work and our overall ambition for victims will help achieve our goals.

We ran an **online questionnaire** to understand more about victims' views on the entitlements in the Victims' Code. In particular, we wanted to know what entitlements victims valued most and where they felt improvements need to be made. Whilst this engagement was not truly representative it proved extremely useful in helping to inform our initial thinking and provided a starting point for the work we are undertaking in respect of improving monitoring of compliance with the Victims' Code.

With the help of the **Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC)** we also conducted a survey to better understand how compliance with the Victims' Code was being monitored at a local level and to ascertain what, if any, steps were being taken forward locally to drive improvement in performance. Subsequently we met with a number of areas to discuss the work they were doing in this space and we will continue with and expand this engagement as part of our ongoing work on improving monitoring of compliance with the Victims' Code.

As we implement the strategy, we will continue to engage with victims and those that support them so we get the delivery right, one example of this is the future criminal courts model which has user-led design at its core.

Through our engagement we identified the following guiding principles that have informed the development of the strategy:

Empower victims and strengthen their entitlements

- ▶ Ensure victims receive the services they are entitled to and that those entitlements reflect their needs.
- ▶ Make sure victims' voices are heard.
- ▶ Treat all victims in a respectful, sensitive, tailored and professional manner without discrimination of any kind.

Improve support for victims who interact with the criminal justice system

- ▶ Help victims feel ready to go through the criminal justice process and supported to make the choice.
- ▶ Support victims to feel in control when they engage with the criminal justice system.
- ▶ Help victims understand how to participate in the criminal justice process and keep them updated throughout.
- ▶ Improve integration throughout the whole of the criminal justice process.

Provide consistent, joined up, needs led support for all victims of crime

- ▶ Ensure the provision of consistent emotional and practical support.
- ▶ Provide support that is needs led.
- ▶ Provide clear, consistent and accurate information on where to find support.

Equalities statement

We have considered our equality obligations in accordance with s149 Equality Act 2010.⁴⁵ We believe that the commitments in the strategy are not directly discriminatory as they would not result in victims being treated less favourably because of their protected characteristic.⁴⁶ We believe our proposed changes will be positive for victims generally including those with protected characteristics.

Our initial assessment of the data suggests that the Victims Strategy as a whole may disproportionately impact on victims with certain protected characteristics. We do not, however, consider that the work strands outlined in the Victims Strategy will

result in unlawful indirect discrimination for people with or without these protected characteristics. Even if it were established that in some cases these effects constituted a particular disadvantage, implementation of the reforms represents a proportionate response to ensuring effective enforcement and contributes to providing more protection for victims of crime overall, as well as victims of specific types of crime.

In addition to this, Equalities Statements have been, or will be, produced for specific strands of work undertaken by the MoJ⁴⁷ and other government departments that are referenced in the Victims Strategy.

Glossary

Adversarial system – System of trial where the judge (and jury as appropriate) is impartial and legal representatives for the parties to the proceedings (the prosecution and defence in criminal trials) present their case challenging each other's version of events.

Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) – National body that supports Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), and other local policing bodies across England and Wales.
<http://www.apccs.police.uk/>

College of Policing – Professional body for the police service in England and Wales.
www.college.police.uk.

Court of Appeal – The Criminal Division of the Court hears appeals from proceedings in the Crown Court.
<https://www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/court-of-appeal-criminal-division>

Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) – Deals with compensation claims from victims of violent crime in England, Scotland or Wales who have been physically or mentally injured.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/criminal-injuries-compensation-authority>.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme (CICS) – Government funded scheme, administered by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA).
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/criminal-injuries-compensation-a-guide>.

Crown Court – The court where criminal proceedings are heard before a judge and a jury.
<https://www.gov.uk/courts/crown-court>.

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) – Prosecutes criminal cases, on behalf of the Crown, that have been investigated by the police. The CPS is independent of the police and government.
www.cps.gov.uk.

Family Liaison Officers (FLO) – Police officer trained to work with bereaved families providing support and information about the investigation, and gather information for the investigation.

Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) – Administers the criminal, civil and family courts and tribunals in England and Wales.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-courts-and-tribunals-service>.

Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) – Where available, a victim's primary point of contact
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-violence-and-abuse#independent-domestic-violence-advisers>.

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) – Looking into serious concerns that some organisations had failed and were continuing to fail to protect children from sexual abuse.
www.iicsa.org.uk.

Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) – Regulator for newspaper and magazine industry in the UK.
www.ipso.co.uk.

Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) – Provide continuous support, advice and help for victims and survivors of sexual violence.
www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-role-of-the-independent-sexual-violence-adviser-isva.

Glossary

Magistrates' courts – A court where criminal proceedings are heard before magistrates or district judges.
www.judiciary.uk/you-and-the-judiciary/going-to-court/magistrates-court/.

Mental Health Tribunal – First-tier Tribunal (Mental Health).
www.gov.uk/mental-health-tribunal.

Out of Court Disposals – Alternatives to prosecution, such as cautions, for dealing with low-level offending.

Parole Board – Carries out risk assessments on prisoners to determine whether they can be safely released into the community.
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/parole-board.

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) – Elected to make sure that local police meet the needs of the community.

Registered Intermediary (RI) – Help vulnerable witnesses during interviews and court to communicate their best evidence.

Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme – Sentences in the Crown Court for certain serious offences may be referred by the Attorney General to the Court of Appeal to consider whether they are unduly lenient.
www.gov.uk/ask-crown-court-sentence-review.

Victims' Code – Sets out the information, support and services that victims of crime by law are entitled to receive from criminal justice agencies in England and Wales.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime>.

Victims' Commissioner – Promotes the interests of victims and witnesses and encourages good practice in their treatment.

Victim Contact Scheme (VCS) – Eligible victims can receive information about the offender.
www.victimsinformation.service.org.uk/what-help-you-can-expect/joining-victim-contact-scheme/.

Victim Liaison Officer (VLO) – Staff who work with victims who are in the Victim Contact Scheme.

Victim Personal Statement (VPS) – Gives victims an opportunity to explain how the crime has affected them.
www.gov.uk/government/publications/victim-personal-statement.

Victim Right to Review (VRR) scheme – Victims can seek a review of decisions not to charge, to discontinue or otherwise terminate all proceedings.
www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/victims-right-review-scheme

Witness Care Units (WCU) – Provide information and support to victims and witnesses in cases progressing through the criminal justice system.

Endnotes

- ¹ Fraud and cyber offences now account for nearly half of all crime in England and Wales as estimated by the Crime Survey England and Wales for the year ending March 2018. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>. The number of men supported by specialist services in England and Wales rose from 6,709 in 2014/15 to 18,580 in 2016/17: Returns from MoJ funded RSCs (June 2016 Female Rape Support Fund 2015/16 – MoJ End of Year Review summary).
- ² This information has been compiled from an evidence assessment of existing international literature on ‘what works in supporting victims of crime’, produced by the Victims’ Commissioner’s Office. Wedlock, E and Tapley, J (2016) ‘What works in supporting victims of crime: A rapid evidence assessment’, University of Portsmouth, Victims’ Commissioner.
- ³ ONS (2018) Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>
- ⁴ In the year end March 2018 offences involving a knife or a sharp instrument went up 16% to 40,147. See ONS (2018) Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>
- ⁵ ONS (2018)) Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area Tables. (Table P3). Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatatables>
- ⁶ As of 22 June 2018, the Homicide Service, ran by Victim Support has reported 82 notifications of homicide in London since January 2018.
- ⁷ ONS, (2018), Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2017, Offences involving the use of weapons: data tables, Table 2. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/offencesinvolvingtheuseofweaponsdatatables>
- ⁸ ONS (2018) Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>
- ⁹ 454 crimes in 2016, 261 in 2015 and 166 in 2014. House of Commons Briefing Paper Number CBP 8041, 17 December 2017, ‘Acid Attacks’, Lipscombe, S. and Hutton, G. <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8041>
- ¹⁰ ONS (2018) Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>
- ¹¹ ONS (2018) Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>
- ¹² ONS (2018) Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area Tables. (Tables P2 and P3) Available here: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatatables>
- ¹³ Sexual Offence Appendix Tables, Analyses from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) of sexual assaults experienced by adults aged 16 to 59, including by type, sex and personal characteristics, and police recorded sexual offences. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/sexualoffencesappendixtables> (Table 8).
- ¹⁴ The number of men supported by specialist services in England and Wales rose from 6,709 in 2014/15 to 18,580 in 2016/17: Returns from MoJ funded RSCs (June 2016 Female Rape Support Fund 2015/16 – MoJ End of Year Review summary).
- ¹⁵ 2017 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery, HM Government, October 2017. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652366/2017_uk_annual_report_on_modern_slavery.pdf
- ¹⁶ For the year ending March 2017 Crime Survey for England and Wales. Office for National Statistics (2017). Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2017. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2017>
- ¹⁷ ONS (2017), Domestic abuse in England and Wales – Appendix Tables. (Table 6) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesappendixtables>

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- ¹⁸ ONS (2018) Appendix tables: homicide in England and Wales. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/appendixtableshomicideinenglandandwales>
- ¹⁹ Office for National Statistics (2017). Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2017
- ²⁰ All stats referenced in introduction except 12% rise in homicides. This figure excludes 35 homicides related to the London and Manchester terror attacks in the year ending March 2018 and the 96 cases of manslaughter that occurred at Hillsborough in 1989 recorded in the year ending March 2017. Excluding these exceptional events, there was a volume rise of 74 homicides (a 12% rise, up to a total of 701). ONS (2018) Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>.
- ²¹ Home Office (2017), Hate Crime England and Wales, 2016/17. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652136/hate-crime-1617-hosb1717.pdf
- ²² 4,484 incidences of Fraud and Computer Misuse, out of 10,571 incidences of all CSEW Crime. Appendix table (Table A1) available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeinenglandandwalesappendixtables>. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>
- ²³ Button M, Lewis C & Tapley J 2009a. A better deal for fraud victims. London: Centre for Counter Fraud Studies https://researchportal.port.ac.uk/portal/files/1924328/NFA_Report_1_15.12.09.pdf and Cross CA, Richards KM, Smith R, (2016) The reporting experiences and support needs of victims of online fraud, Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice p1-14
- ²⁴ Victims in the South East of England suggested that they were not aware of the Victims' Code and their entitlements in the first place Tapley, J., Stark, A., Watkins, M. and Peneva, B. (2014) A Strategic Assessment of Support Services for Victims of Crime in the South East. Portsmouth: University of Portsmouth. Referenced in Wedlock, E. and Tapley, J (2016) What works in supporting victims of crime: A rapid evidence assessment', University of Portsmouth, Victims Commissioner
- ²⁵ ONS 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), data table 4b, victims' services and restorative justice, year ending March 2013 to year ending March 2017 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/adhocs/008615dataonvictimsservicesandrestorativejusticeyearsendingmarch2013tomarch2017crimesurveyforenglandandwales>
- ²⁶ Wedlock, E. and Tapley, J (2016) What works in supporting victims of crime: A rapid evidence assessment', University of Portsmouth, Victims Commissioner
- ²⁷ MOJ (2018). Supporting data tables: Female offender strategy. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-offender-strategy>
- ²⁸ The Ministry of Justice provides separate funding for support to families bereaved by road crime. We are working with Police and Crime Commissioners to ensure that families bereaved by road crime get effective support through across England and Wales.
- ²⁹ Crown Prosecution Service Key Measures, 2017/2018 Excel Report. <https://www.cps.gov.uk/key-measures>
- ³⁰ Victim personal statements, by demographics and offence type, year ending March 2014 to year ending March 2017, Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) <https://peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjusticeadhocs/007299victimpersonalstatementsbydemographicsandoffencetypeyearendingmarch2014toyearendingmarch2017crimesurveyforenglandandwalescsew>
- ³¹ Not all victims will be able to access to restorative justice, as it is dependent on the perpetrator being identified, apprehended and then agreeing to take part. Whilst this could go some way to explain this statistic, we know and victims tell us that more can be done to improve the offer of restorative justice. ONS 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), data table 6b, victims' services and restorative justice, year ending March 2013 to year ending March 2017 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/adhocs/008615dataonvictimsservicesandrestorativejusticeyearsendingmarch2013tomarch2017crimesurveyforenglandandwales>
- ³² CPS survey is not representative of all victims only those in contact with CPS.
- ³³ Wood, M. Lapanjuuri, K. Paskell, C. Thompson, J. Adams, L. and Coburn, S. (2015), Victim and Witness Satisfaction Survey, CPS. https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/victims_witnesses/cps_victim_and_witness_survey_sept_2015.pdf
- ³⁴ Hamlyn, B., Phelps, A., Turtle, J. and Satter, G. (2004) Are Special Measures Working? Evidence from Surveys of Vulnerable and Intimidated Witnesses. London: Home Office Research Study 283. Criminal Justice Joint Inspectorate (2015) Witness for the Prosecution: Identifying Victim and Witness Vulnerability in Criminal Case Files. London: HMIC. Referenced in Wedlock, E. and Tapley, J (2016) What works in supporting victims of crime: A rapid evidence assessment', University of Portsmouth, Victims Commissioner.

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- ³⁵ 'A voice for the voiceless' The Victims' Commissioner's Review into the Provision of Registered Intermediaries for Children and Vulnerable Victims and Witnesses. Office of the Victims' Commissioner. January 2018.
- ³⁶ ONS 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), data table 3b, victims' services and restorative justice, year ending March 2013 to year ending March 2017 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/adhocs/008615dataonvictimsservicesandrestorativejusticeyearsendingmarch2013tomarch2017crimesurveyforenglandandwales>
- ³⁷ Efficiency in the criminal justice system. Public Accounts Commitee. May 2016
- ³⁸ Troxel, N., Ogle, C., Cordon, I., Lawler, L. and Goodman, G. (2009). 'Child Witnesses in Criminal Court' in B. L. Bottoms, J. Najdowski, and G. S. Goodman (Eds.) Child Victims, Child Offenders: Psychology and the Law. The Guilford Press. Quoted in Hayes, D., Bunting, L., Lazenbatt, A., Carr, A. and Duffy, J. (2011) The Experiences of Young Witnesses in Criminal Proceedings in Northern Ireland: A Report for the Department of Justice (NI) Queens University of Belfast & NSPCC: Belfast <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doj/the-experiences-of-young-witnesses-in-criminal-proceedings-in-northern-ireland.pdf>
- ³⁹ From feedback from the Victim's Commissioner, Witness Service volunteers, HMCTS staff and the Change Victims and Witnesses engagement group.
- ⁴⁰ Process evaluation of pre-recorded cross-examination pilot (Section 28). MoJ & HMCTS. September 2016.
- ⁴¹ Ministry of Justice (2018), Criminal Court Statistics Bulletin: January to March 2018. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-annual-january-to-march-2018>
- ⁴² Review of the law, policy and procedure relating to Parole Board decisions. Ministry of Justice. April 2018
- ⁴³ Victims here refers to the victims interviewed as part of the review and not all victims.
- ⁴⁴ Entitlements and Experiences of Victims of Mentally Disordered Offenders, Office of the Victims' Commissioner. July 2018
- ⁴⁵ Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (EA) places a duty on Ministers and government Departments, when exercising their functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct under the Equality Act 2010; Advance equality of opportunity between different groups (those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not); and Foster good relations between different groups (those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it).
- ⁴⁶ In line with our responsibilities under the EA, MoJ have paid early consideration to the nine protected characteristics in relation to victims of crime: race; sex; age; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; pregnancy and maternity; gender reassignment; and marriage/civil partnership.
- ⁴⁷ See also, previous equalities assessments relating to the 2012 'Getting it right for Victims and Witnesses' <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/victims-witnesses/>; and the 2013 consultation Improving the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/code-victims-crime/>

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