

British Transport Police

An inspection of the service provided
to victims of crime by British Transport
Police

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About this report

It is important that police forces provide the highest possible levels of service to victims of crime. This should start at the point of contact and last throughout the criminal justice process. It not only includes recording the victim's report, responding and undertaking proportionate investigations, but also making sure that any victim vulnerability is identified and appropriate safeguarding measures are taken.

As part of this process, it is important that forces have high-quality crime data. This allows them to establish where, when and how often crime is happening.

This makes sure each force:

- offers victims of crime access to appropriate support services;
- gives the public accurate information about crime in their area;
- understands its current and future demand; and
- can plan its work in support of victims and meet the demands of investigations.

In September 2015, we examined 306 incident records and found that 253 crimes should have been recorded. Of the 253 crimes that should have been recorded, 241 were. This represents a crime recording accuracy rate from incidents of 95 percent, with a [confidence interval](#) (CI) of less than +/- 3 percent. We didn't review the quality of crime case files in that inspection.

This report details our findings from a review of the service provided by British Transport Police (BTP) for each of the six components of the victim service assessment. These comprise:

- call handling;
- deployment of resources;
- crime recording;
- screening and allocation;
- investigation; and
- outcomes.

BTP has responsibility for policing the rail network throughout Great Britain, so we have worked collaboratively with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Scotland (HMICS) to produce a single report that covers its whole jurisdiction. Differences in legislation, policy and procedure in Scotland have necessitated a two-phased approach to this inspection, with BTP (Scotland) being examined in its own operating context separately from England and Wales. The products from these two phases of work have been brought together into this single report that encompasses the whole

force area. **Unless otherwise stated, our findings apply to all parts of the force's jurisdiction in Great Britain.**

Policing the rail network

BTP provides a policing service to rail operators, their staff and passengers across Great Britain. It:

- handles crime prevention and investigation;
- minimises disorder;
- leads investigations into unexplained, work-related and non-suspicious deaths; and
- responds to incidents that cause disruption on the network.

Approximately 97 percent of BTP crime occurs in England and Wales, with 3 percent occurring in Scotland. Some of its services are outside the responsibility of other police forces and this includes dealing with fatalities on the network. The force doesn't have a resident population. Instead, it offers a service to passengers, rail staff, those who work on or live near the railway and other blue light emergency services. It promises to support the rail industry in providing a reliable transport system and keep levels of disruption – and crime and fear of crime – as low as possible.

BTP has complicated arrangements for funding and working with other organisations, and unique operational pressures. Funding comes from police service agreements with the British Transport Police Authority. The authority is responsible for ensuring an efficient and effective police force for the railways. This includes setting the objectives for BTP, billing the rail industry for the costs of BTP and the recruitment of senior police officers.

These complex funding arrangements include user pays principles (calculations based on a variety of data) and separate funding arrangements for London Underground. The Department for Transport manages these processes and police data helps determine how much each rail operator pays.

Summary of our main findings

General findings

Our inspection was carried out to establish to what extent BTP provided a good service to victims of crime. In some areas, such as the recording of crime, it is very good indeed.

BTP has responsibility for policing the rail network across the whole of Great Britain with some 97 percent of its crime occurring in England and Wales and 3 percent in Scotland.

The force offers a variety of ways for the public to contact it. This includes use of online crime reporting, texts, emails and social media. Many reports of crime are initially received by Home Office forces, Police Scotland or railway staff. These are then passed to BTP, so this limits the availability of audio calls for audit. Call handling standards are high, and resources are generally used correctly and promptly.

We examined crime reports from 1 May 2021 to 31 July 2021. Based on this assessment, [we estimate](#) that over 800 crimes reported to the force went unrecorded during the year covering our inspection. This represents a recording rate of 97.9 percent (with a confidence interval (CI) of +/- 1.6 percent), which is a very high level of accuracy. The force is particularly strong in its recording of sexual offences, with a rate of 99 percent (with a CI of +/- 1.8 percent) being attained.

A high proportion of crime is followed up for further investigation. It is allocated to appropriately trained officers in line with force policy. The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (VCOP) and the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014 (V&WSA) are applied consistently. Investigations are effective and generally progressed in a proportionate and timely manner. In most cases the way investigations are finalised, by means of a specific outcome, is appropriate.

During our inspection we found some opportunities for improving the service BTP provides victims of crime. These include:

- The [THRIVE](#) mnemonic needs to be more consistently applied.
- The force needs to get better at identifying repeat victims and vulnerability.
- The backlog in online reports of crime needs to be reduced.
- Crime arising from reports of anti-social behaviour and for vulnerable victims needs to be correctly recorded.
- Victims need to be informed when a decision is taken to not investigate their crime further.

- Supervisory involvement in investigations needs to be consistently applied to the recognised standards.
- The views of victims need to be recorded before deciding to administer [cautions/recorded police warnings](#), [community resolutions](#) (England and Wales only) and [outcome 16s/victim uncooperative](#).

Call handling and deployment of resources

Overall, the standard of call handling by BTP is good. Victims can expect a high level of service from the force when reporting a crime or incident. In almost all cases where the vulnerability of a victim is obvious, this is recorded by the call handler. However, we found that the force needs to improve its processes to make sure that repeat victimisation as well as all vulnerabilities are identified and recorded on force systems. Generally, victim and witness safeguarding needs are dealt with properly.

Call handlers are polite, professional and show empathy to callers. But improvements are required in providing appropriate advice and support to victims when crime prevention and the preservation of evidence is required.

Generally, incidents are given an appropriate response with the right staff and departments allocated. Response and attendance times are within the target time on most occasions. But in a small number of cases the target time is missed, and victims aren't routinely updated.

Crime recording, screening and allocation for investigation

BTP offers a good range of ways for the public to report crime, including online crime reporting, texts, emails and social media. The national scope of BTP's jurisdiction means that many reports are passed to it from Home Office forces or railway staff. This means that the force doesn't have immediate access to an associated audio recording for many reports of crime. This limited the depth of audit scrutiny we could apply.

We estimate that the force records 97.9 percent of reported crime. The overwhelming majority of crime is recorded within the national standard of 24 hours. The force is particularly strong in its recording of violence, rape and other sexual offences. There is a strong focus on accurate crime recording, efficient reporting and recording processes, and highly effective quality assurance and audit activity.

We did, however, find some opportunities for improving the recording of crime related to anti-social behaviour, such as some public order offences. Many of these crimes involve vulnerable victims, making it even more essential to ensure they are correctly recorded.

We found that crime screening decisions are consistent with force policy and, in all cases where the crime is followed up for investigation, it is allocated to the most appropriate department. Where a crime isn't followed up, it is the correct decision. But the force needs to make sure victims are told that no further investigation will take place.

Investigations and outcomes

In general, victims contacting the force can expect a proportionate and prompt investigation into the offences they report.

We found good evidence in the application of VCOP and V&WSA. And, in most cases, we found evidence of appropriate victim care and engagement. But the completion of victim needs assessments (VNA) and victim personal statements (for England and Wales) needs to improve. The force should also make sure victims are consulted before finalising their crime by caution/police recorded warning, community resolution (England and Wales only) or outcome 16/victim uncooperative (where a victim is recorded as not supporting or withdrawing support for police action). An auditable record should be created. For outcome 16/victim uncooperative, this should be specifically endorsed by the victim.

In most cases we reviewed, we found good evidence of effective investigations where outcomes were appropriate for victims.

Recommendations and areas for improvement

Recommendations

The force should immediately:

- make sure there is effective supervision of investigations. This should be applied consistently and in accordance with the recognised standards.

Within three months the force should:

- Improve the completion of THRIVE assessments and the identification of vulnerability and repeat victimisation to make sure that victims receive the most appropriate response when they report a crime; and
- Put arrangements in place to make sure that victims of crime are consulted prior to the administration of a caution/police recorded warning, community resolution (England and Wales only) or outcome 16/victim uncooperative, and that an auditable record of the interaction is maintained. For outcome 16/victim uncooperative, the fact that the victim doesn't support police action should be specifically endorsed by the victim.

Areas for improvement

The following areas for improvement have been identified:

- The force needs to make sure processes are in place to provide crime prevention and preservation of evidence advice when appropriate.
- The force should make sure that victims are updated when there are delays to response times. This will minimise both the negative effect delays can have on victim engagement and the loss of evidential opportunities, as well as limiting exposure to further risk for the force.
- BTP should make sure that crime arising from reports of anti-social behaviour and from vulnerable victims is correctly recorded.
- The force will need to reduce its backlog of reports on its Single Online Home system to make sure there is no delay in the recording of crimes or the service provided to victims.
- The force needs to make sure that, where relevant, all victims are told that crimes they have reported won't be investigated further.

How the police provide a service to victims of crime

The police have a duty to keep the peace, prevent crime and disorder, and bring offenders to justice. If the service provided to victims of crime isn't handled properly and in accordance with the established rules, the police can't perform these duties well. A failure to correctly deal with a report of crime may let a victim down and can potentially result in missed opportunities to identify an offender and prevent further crime. It may also reduce public confidence in the police.

Call handling

When a victim contacts the police, their call should be answered promptly, the appropriate information recorded accurately on police systems and the victim dealt with in a professional manner. The information needs to be accurately assessed. This assessment should take account of any specific threats, potential harm or vulnerability. Victims should also be given safeguarding advice where appropriate.

Deployment of resources

Police forces should aim to respond to calls for service within published time frames, based on the call priority. A force should only change the prioritisation when the original prioritisation is deemed inappropriate or when further information suggests a change is needed. The police response should also consider risk and victim vulnerability, including any information obtained after the call.

Crime recording

The force's crime recording should be trustworthy. It should be effective at recording reported crime in line with national standards. Effective systems and processes should be supported by the necessary leadership and culture.

Screening and allocation

Police forces should have a policy to make sure crimes are allocated to appropriately trained officers or staff for investigation or, if appropriate, not investigated further. The policy should be applied consistently. The victim of the crime should be kept informed about who is handling their case and whether the crime is to be further investigated.

Investigation

Police forces should carry out a proportionate and prompt investigation into reported crime. Victims should be kept updated about the investigation and the force should have effective governance arrangements to make sure investigation standards are high.

Police forces should have structured processes that are supported by clear guidance that all staff members understand. This helps investigations to be undertaken in a consistent way and to recognised standards.

Outcomes

National guidance and rules for deciding the outcome given to each report of crime should be followed. The force should consider the nature of the crime, the offender and the victim. And it should show the necessary leadership and culture to make sure the use of outcomes is appropriate.

There is a wide range of outcomes that can be applied to a recorded crime report. This includes outcomes where an offender is charged or summonsed to court, out-of-court disposals such as cautions or recorded police warnings, community resolutions and penalty notices for disorder. This also includes those outcomes that conclude an investigation for other reasons, such as there being no realistic investigative opportunities or an outcome 16/victim uncooperative.

Detailed findings

Call handling

With BTP jurisdiction spanning the entire rail network of England, Wales and Scotland, many reports of crime are initially made to Home Office forces, Police Scotland or railway staff, before being transferred to BTP. This makes the force highly dependent of the action of others in gathering information relevant to the report, with approximately 13 percent of crime recorded being reported to BTP by phone calls.

BTP reviews call data to make sure calls are answered promptly, measuring the [call abandonment rate](#). There is no national target for the abandonment rate of 999 calls. The target rate for non-emergency calls is less than 10 percent abandoned. BTP had an abandonment rate for 999 calls of 3.4 percent for the year to July 2021. The rate for non-emergency calls was 11 percent for the same period. But, for this financial year (starting 6 April 2021) to July 2021 the rate was 15.6 percent. Force data shows the abandonment rate is particularly high between 3.00pm and 11.00pm, at over 20 percent. Some of these abandoned calls will be due to callers hanging up to adopt an alternative and more appropriate route of reporting, as advised in a pre-recorded message.

We found that, overall, the standard of call handling and first contact with victims was good. Initial prioritisation grading of the call is appropriate in the majority of cases and, where crimes are disclosed, these are recorded consistently.

However, we found too many instances where a structured initial triage ([THRIVE assessment](#)) was required but wasn't clearly recorded on force IT systems.

Checks to identify repeat victims, when required, were rarely completed by call or contact handlers. When these did happen, repeat victims were only recorded as such in a third of cases. This means that callers who are repeat victims of crime may not receive the appropriate levels of service or response and the force may miss opportunities to prevent repeat victimisation.

In most cases where the vulnerability of a victim or other parties is obvious, call and contact handlers record this appropriately and most of the vulnerability and safeguarding needs identified are met. However, we found that vulnerability checks were recorded in less than two thirds of applicable cases reviewed. This means opportunities are being missed to identify and potentially safeguard vulnerable people.

Recommendation

Within three months the force should improve the completion of THRIVE assessments, and the identification of vulnerability and repeat victimisation, to make sure that victims receive the most appropriate response when they report a crime.

We could only listen to a few calls, as many reports of crime are passed to BTP by Home Office forces, Police Scotland or railway staff. In those we could review, we found call and contact handlers were polite, professional and showed empathy to callers. But appropriate advice on crime prevention and the preservation of evidence is sometimes missed. This could lead to victims being exposed to further threat, harm and risk, and lost opportunities to secure and preserve evidence. The force needs to make sure that processes are in place to provide crime prevention and preservation of evidence advice when appropriate. This is an area for improvement.

In most calls where it is appropriate and necessary, supervisory involvement and oversight is evident.

Deployment of resources

The force has a clearly defined graded response policy. We found there was a consistent approach to the allocation of incidents to the appropriate team and departments gave an effective response. Specialist officers (such as sexual offence trained officers) and members of the public protection and vulnerability unit are deployed directly when required. They attend scenes quickly, giving specialist support to victims and people who are deemed to be suffering from a mental health crisis.

In most cases, response and attendance are within the target times. Delays that occur are across all gradings and are relevant to all crime categories reviewed. However, we found little evidence that victims are routinely updated of these delays. In context, none of these delays resulted in any requirement for remedial action.

However, the force should make sure that victims are updated when there are delays to response times. This is to minimise both the negative impact such delays can have on victim engagement and loss of evidential opportunities, and to limit exposure to further risk for the force. This is an area for improvement.

Any changes in response times are appropriate and in line with risk and vulnerability assessments. These are completed in most relevant cases, with a rationale and justification recorded. However, we found that less than half of the BTP (England and Wales) cases reviewed had any supervisory oversight. The force policy, on downgrading the police response, doesn't state that supervisor approval is required. The force may wish to consider implementing this to make sure that any reprioritisation of incidents is justified and appropriate.

Crime recording

As stated above, many reports of crime are initially made to Home Office forces, Police Scotland or railway staff, before being transferred to BTP. Therefore, many didn't have an associated audio recording available to review during our audit of crime recording. Instead, when audio files were missing we have relied upon other available material such as the incident log, the crime record and any associated documentation linked to the report.

This not only affected the depth of our audit but will affect the force when it completes its own audits of crime data integrity. The force may wish to consider extending some audits to include access to audio recordings held by Home Office forces and Police Scotland, in liaison with those forces. This would provide the assurance that the information passed to BTP is correctly transposed and that subsequent crime recording decisions accurately reflect all the available information.

For the year to July 2021, approximately 66.3 percent of crime was reported with an associated incident, 11.3 percent was directly recorded, and 16.6 percent was reported via the Single Online Home (SOH) portal.

Our assessment found that the force recorded 97.9 percent of reported crime (with a confidence interval (CI) of ± 1.6 percent). This represents a very high level of accuracy and a statistically significant improvement on our finding in our report published in September 2015.

The recording of sexual offences is particularly strong with 99 percent being recorded (with a CI of ± 1.8 percent), with all 8 reports of rape being correctly recorded. Equally, some 97.1 percent of reported violent crime is also recorded (CI ± 3.2 percent).

The overwhelming majority of reported crime is recorded within the national standard of 24 hours in England and Wales, and within 72 hours for Scotland under the Scottish Crime Recording Standards (SCRS).

This success can be attributed to various factors. These include the focus given to crime data integrity by the force, training inputs, audit and effective communication with staff to help raise its profile throughout the force. This, coupled with a highly effective and skilled process of quality assurance exercised by the data integrity unit (DIU), first contact centre (FCC) and the occurrence management unit, has combined to provide a material improvement in crime recording standards.

The functions of the DIU have since been redistributed between the FCC, force control rooms (FCRs) and a newly created change and development department. All six existing DIU staff join ten other colleagues from the FCC and FCRs to become development officers. These individuals will undertake mentoring, training and quality assurance activities to maximise the quality of service provided to victims of crime and those making calls for service. The force will need to make sure that the momentum achieved by the DIU to date isn't lost when other demands undoubtedly occur.

Despite this strong performance, there are some discrete areas of crime data integrity that present an opportunity to improve.

We examined 74 individual safeguarding/vulnerability concern reports for adults and children that were allocated to staff in the public protection and vulnerability unit. We found 24 crimes that should have been recorded and the force recorded just 16 crimes. The missing crimes comprised less serious assaults, malicious communications and public order offences. There is no independent quality assurance process for these reports but the force may wish to consider introducing such oversight.

We also reviewed 100 incident reports of anti-social behaviour. We found 13 crimes that should have been recorded and the force recorded just 7. The missing crimes were all public order or related offences. The force should take greater care to make sure victims of all crime-related anti-social behaviour are properly identified as such and receive the service and support they need and deserve.

BTP needs to make sure that crime arising from reports of anti-social behaviour and from vulnerable victims is correctly recorded. This is an area for improvement.

A backlog of 647 SOH reports, yet to be processed, had accumulated at the time of inspection, with the earliest report going back 15 days. The force has a process to review the SOH queue to speed up reports of serious crime for action. But these reports can't be allocated for investigation until they have been processed. And any screening of risk is dependent on the accuracy and completeness of the information provided by the originator. The force will need to reduce its backlog of reports of crime on its SOH system to make sure that there is no delay in recording, or in the service provided to victims.

Reports of crime in BTP (Scotland) must be recorded in accordance with the SCRS and Scottish legislation, alongside legislation applicable to the whole of the United Kingdom. Knowledge of the important differences in legislation needs to be maintained by officers in BTP (Scotland) and by staff in the FCR/FCC, where crime is often recorded at first report. We found that some crimes were missed when these differences existed, suggesting that officers and staff lacked this knowledge.

Screening and allocation

Approximately two thirds of crime is screened in (followed up) for further investigation. This is partly due to the widespread availability of lines of enquiry from CCTV evidence. Crime screening decisions are consistently correct and made in line with force policy, making sure that victims receive a relevant and proportionate investigation.

We found no problems with the timeliness of the screening process. However, victims aren't routinely told about screening out decisions (decisions not to follow up). This leaves some victims unaware that their reports won't be investigated further. The force needs to make sure that, where relevant, all victims are informed that crimes they have reported won't be investigated further. This is an area for improvement.

Nearly all investigations are allocated to appropriate teams. Of those that were incorrectly allocated, four cases related to a serious assault and three were [domestic](#)

abuse crimes. All of these were allocated to response officers and not to a detective, contrary to force policy.

We found that victims received appropriate care in all relevant cases.

Investigation

Most of the cases we reviewed had been investigated effectively.

Suitable investigation plans are created in most cases, where relevant, by the appropriate officer. However, updates in the occurrence enquiry log often aren't detailed enough to give a clear understanding of how the investigation is progressing. The use of closed questions in templates also means there is no recorded rationale to support decision making.

Generally, investigations are conducted promptly. However, there are instances when this doesn't happen and officers fail to see victims and witnesses at the earliest opportunity. One example related to a report of sexual assault on 27 July 2021. An initial account wasn't taken until 4 August 2021. And a witness statement had yet to be completed when our audit finished. Another related to a domestic abuse crime where victim and witness statements weren't obtained for two months.

We found evidence of proportionate investigations, with appropriate investigative opportunities undertaken in line with force policy in most of the cases we reviewed. With 150,000 CCTV cameras across the rail network, there is an understandable reliance on this footage. Investigators make full use of the Digital Evidence Management System to retrieve evidence from station buildings. Footage recorded on other digital media is also gathered and this can take longer to receive. Investigators are acutely aware of the retention periods for CCTV footage across the network and act promptly to avoid it being lost.

In a limited number of cases some investigative opportunities aren't taken. For example, one investigation related to a report of rape by a patient suffering from mental ill health where minimal investigation took place into the allegation. In another, a serious knife attack, lines of enquiry including CCTV, witnesses and phone enquiries were abandoned too soon when the victim was reluctant to pursue. This means that on some occasions investigations may fail, victims will be let down, offenders may evade justice and the force will be subject to further risk.

Where supervisors are required to provide advice, direction and oversight to the investigations, this happens in most cases. However, we found problems of timeliness, missed investigative opportunities and updates of plans. This was often due to ineffective supervision and direction. As a result, some investigations fail to receive appropriate levels of supervision to the detriment.

Recommendation

The force should make sure there is effective supervision of investigations. This should be applied consistently and in accordance with the recognised standards.

We found good evidence of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014 and agreed levels of victim contact being followed. However, in certain cases, victim care and engagement doesn't reach the required standard. This is sometimes linked to the absence of a victim needs assessment (VNA), which wasn't completed in a significant number of the relevant cases we reviewed. This can lead to victims disengaging with investigations and losing faith in the criminal justice process.

In England and Wales, we also found that a victim personal statement was only obtained in a few cases. In Scotland, the completion of victim impact statements is managed by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) instead of the police.

BTP (Scotland) doesn't currently have full and ready access to the interim vulnerable persons database held by Police Scotland. It can sometimes take days to receive information following requests. This could affect the completeness of the initial THRIVE assessment and the VNA at the start of an investigation. The force has engaged with Police Scotland on this issue since 2013 and work is now scheduled for the second quarter of 2022. BTP is encouraged to liaise with Police Scotland to avoid any further delay in attaining access.

For BTP (England and Wales), just over half of the cases we identified as having opportunities to progress evidence-led prosecutions were progressed or attempted. When victims disengage or fail to support prosecutions, the force doesn't take every opportunity to pursue offenders. We also found that they didn't make the best use of other measures such as Domestic Violence Protection Notices/Orders. If these measures were better used it could protect victims and reduce demand on the force.

By contrast, BTP (Scotland) routinely submits reports to COPFS where there is enough evidence to consider a prosecution in the public interest.

Overall, we found evidence of good victim care and an appropriate outcome for the victim in most investigations reviewed.

The force has a crime review team that quality assures investigations of crime progressed by officers from the criminal investigation department. The team reports directly to the detective chief superintendent and plays an important role in improving investigative standards. The team could be an asset to the force in addressing many of the opportunities for improvement detailed above.

Crime outcomes

The force doesn't have an outcomes policy, instead referring directly to national policy on the subject.

For BTP (England and Wales), we examined the use of three outcomes: cautions, community resolutions and outcome 16s. For BTP (Scotland), we examined the use of two of the equivalent outcomes used in Scotland – recorded police warnings and victim uncooperative. There was no available comparative measure for community resolutions.

Cautions/recorded police warnings

We reviewed a sample of files that resulted in cautions being issued. In all cases for England and Wales, and all but two in Scotland, both the offence and offender were suitable for a caution.

Most cases that involved victims had no auditable record showing whether the victim had been fully consulted before the caution was given. The records also didn't indicate if victims' views had been considered in the resulting caution. We found that victims had been told about the use of a caution as the outcome in all these cases.

In all cases reviewed there was evidence of supervisory consultation or endorsement for the outcome with clear reasons recorded.

Community resolutions (England and Wales)

We also reviewed a sample of files that resulted in community resolutions being issued. We found 37 cases that were considered unsuitable for a community resolution. In one case, the offender had 34 previous convictions. And in the other three cases, community resolution wasn't suitable due to the racially and homophobic aggravating circumstances, the high value of property involved, or the fact that the offender didn't make full unambiguous admission.

All cases reviewed involved a victim. We found inconsistent consultation with victims before community resolution. There is also little evidence that victim views are logged in an auditable record endorsed by the victim. We found several cases where victim agreement to the community resolution couldn't be established. Some victims aren't being told about the outcome.

The lack of consultation before community resolutions are implemented means that the victim's views aren't being heard. And victims aren't being given the opportunity to influence the outcome of investigations.

We found evidence of supervisory consultation or endorsement of the outcome in most relevant cases, but this often happens later. There is little evidence officers use the force decision-making matrix. Clear reasons aren't recorded to support the decision for the outcome within the finalisation process. This highlights that, in most cases, supervision is ineffective or has merely been conducted as an administrative function.

Outcome 16s or victim uncooperative

We reviewed a sample of outcome 16/victim uncooperative disposals recorded by the force. None related to domestic abuse investigations.

In most cases the use of these outcomes is appropriate to the nature of the offence and the investigation. For those that are inappropriate, there is a lack of detail within the occurrence enquiry log to show whether the victim did or didn't support further police action.

There is little evidence of supervisory consultation or endorsement for the outcome in the files reviewed. For BTP (England and Wales) there is limited evidence to show

that the finalisation process took account of evidence-led prosecution considerations in line with force policy. This isn't the case for BTP (Scotland) as reports are routinely submitted to COPFS where there is enough evidence to consider a prosecution in the public interest.

Only a small number of cases reviewed contain an auditable record endorsed by the victim, such as a statement or police notebook entry, confirming that they didn't support, or wanted to withdraw support for, police action.

Recommendation

Within three months the force should make sure that victims of crime are consulted prior to the administration of a caution/police recorded warning, community resolution (England and Wales only) or outcome 16/victim uncooperative. An auditable record of the interaction should be maintained. For outcome 16/victim uncooperative, the fact that the victim doesn't support police action should be specifically endorsed by the victim.

Next steps

British Transport Police can rightly be proud of the service it provides to victims of crime. However, there is opportunity to build on the successes identified.

Further enhancements can be achieved by implementing the recommendations and addressing the various areas for improvement detailed within this report. We expect BTP will waste no time in progressing these.

Explanatory notes

Call abandonment rate

The proportion of inbound calls that are disconnected before reaching a call handler or otherwise abandoned by the caller before being answered.

Caution/recorded police warning

Used for people, adults and children, when the offender's behaviour requires no more than a formal warning. A caution may be offered when the offender admits the offence and there is enough evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction, but it isn't in the public interest to prosecute. The offender must also agree to accept the caution/police recorded warning and, in doing so, must understand the implications.

In Scotland, recorded police warnings differ from England and Wales in that they can be issued for certain minor offences where an offender meets specific criteria and there is enough evidence to prosecute. The offender must also agree to accept the warning but doesn't need to admit the offence.

Community resolution

A way of dealing with an offender that is proportionate to less serious crime. It may include, for example, apologising to the victim or making good damage caused. Community resolution can be offered when the offender admits the offence. It is mainly used in cases where the victim has agreed that they don't want formal action to be taken.

Confidence level and confidence intervals

We apply the 95 percent confidence level as the generally accepted level of certainty used in statistical tests. Any sample may produce estimates that differ from the figures that would have been obtained if the whole population had been examined. At the 95 percent confidence level, with many repeats of an audit under the same conditions, we expect the confidence interval would contain the true population value 95 times out of 100.

The audit aims to select a random sample size necessary to yield confidence intervals (CI) of no more than ± 5 percent for violent crime, sexual offences and all other crime (at the 95 percent confidence level) and ± 3 percent for overall recorded crime.

The CI provides an estimated range of values that the given population being examined is likely to fall within. For example, if an audit found that 85 percent of crimes were correctly recorded with a CI of ± 3 percent, then we could be confident

that between 82 percent and 88 percent of crimes were correctly recorded of the population for the period being examined.

Domestic abuse

In England and Wales, domestic abuse is defined as “any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality”.

In Scotland, a slightly different definition is used that is restricted to the context of a relationship and has no age restriction.

The abuse can include, but isn't limited to:

- psychological;
- physical;
- sexual;
- financial; and
- emotional.

This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so-called honour-based abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

Estimate of the number of unrecorded crimes

This estimate has been calculated by applying our audit findings, covering a three-month audit period, to Home Office police-recorded crime figures (excluding fraud) for the force for the 12 months to the end of the audit period.

Outcome 16 or victim uncooperative

A category of outcome that encompasses cases where a prosecution is prevented due to evidential difficulties. There is a named suspect, but the victim doesn't support (or has withdrawn support) police action. Victim uncooperative is the term used in Scotland.

THRIVE

The mnemonic used to prompt staff to consider important questions that inform the nature and timeliness of police attendance to reported incidents and crime. It stands for threat, harm, risk, investigation, victim and evidence.

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