

Avon and Somerset INTEGRATED VICTIM CARE

Putting the victim at the heart of everything we do



AVON AND SOMERSET'S INTEGRATED VICTIM CARE PROGRAMME IS TRANSFORMING THE WAY THE POLICE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES DELIVER VICTIM SERVICES

The Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner, Sue Mountstevens, has made a clear commitment to put the victim at the heart of everything we do. The Integrated Victim Care programme was set up to work with all community safety and criminal justice organisations to ensure that every victim of crime and antisocial behaviour benefits from the best possible service according to their needs.

To do this, we've worked with partners to map the often complex journey our victims undertake with us, from start to finish. We've found that we aren't always working effectively together, which means a victim can have multiple contacts and can be left feeling ill-informed and unsupported.

In this leaflet, we share some of our findings and set out our shared vision for the future: a coordinated, consistent end-to-end service for victims, from their first point of contact with the police, all the way through the criminal justice service.

OUR JOURNEY SO FAR...

UNDERSTANDING THE VICTIM'S JOURNEY

To help us understand the victim's journey 'as is', we've listened to the voices of our victims and witnesses and those who work with victims, to build a picture from the outside in.

It's fair to say we do get a lot right. Current satisfaction levels with the police are healthy and have shown a significant improvement in recent years, rising from 82% in 2009 to 89% in 2014. There is a similarly positive picture across the satisfaction surveys run by probation and other statutory and voluntary sector victim services. The majority of victims are happy with the service they receive.

However, this only tells part of the story. We know that there are gaps in our understanding of the service we provide, particularly to our most vulnerable victims and those who go through the entire criminal justice service. We know that often our targets are based on what is easy to measure, rather than on the behaviours we really want to encourage in those who work with victims.

'They always had time for me and were never anything other than supportive'

'Calls were always returned'

'The response was immediate, sensitive and professional'

'It's been 12 years since my son's murder. It's only now I've been asked to have my say. The victim's experience should be immediately surveyed every time'

'We need a consistent approach'

'We need to better identify vulnerable victims and focus efforts on repeat victims'

VICTIM'S VOICE

Multiple handovers and silos in our processes means inefficiency and errors being passed down the line for others to fix. We don't give enough victims a voice in the criminal justice service and we don't measure how victims feel at the end of their journey.

To get a clearer picture of victims' needs, we conducted a victim consultation between November 2013 and January 2014 asking: 'What do you need from us?'

We found that victims' needs aren't always complex - we just need to get better at the basics: regular updates, emotional support, a named contact person and time to talk. We also found that every victim, no matter how vulnerable, valued the opportunity to give feedback.

THE FUTURE

We have a crucial opportunity to redefine and refocus our commitment to truly put the victims at the heart of the criminal justice service.

Through the Integrated Victim Care programme, Avon and Somerset criminal justice partners have been working closely together to implement new integrated victim care teams by October 2014.

THE SOLUTION

The aim of the teams will be to:

- ✓ Bring together victim contact functions in the police service, co-located with partners, to provide more coordinated, end-to-end care for victims
- ✓ Guide a victim through their journey from first point of contact with the police, through the investigation and on to the end of the criminal justice process
- ✓ Provide greater ownership of the whole journey of a victim, reducing handovers and providing a 'single point of contact' approach
- ✓ Simplify things for victims
- ✓ Refer and direct victims to relevant local support agencies or charities which will be paid for by the Police and Crime Commissioner



We are streamlining our processes so that every victim will now have one point of contact to guide them through the journey to justice

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE EMAIL:
IVC@AVONANDSOMERSET.POLICE.UK

'I'm excited'

Sue Mountstevens, Police and Crime Commissioner

'It feels like we are finally putting the trust back in the people rather than the process'

'Victim and Witness Liaison Officer, Avon & Somerset Police'

'This is much more streamlined and, as a result, a better service for victims'

'Victim Advocate, Avon & Somerset Police'

'The victims' interests should be at the heart of criminal justice and this approach can achieve that'

'Victim Contact Team, National Probation Service'



Placing the voice of the victim at the heart of everything we do through effective collaboration, cohesion and innovation among service providers

INTEGRATED VICTIM CARE

The 'As Is' – how our service stands

1 REPORT

472

crimes and antisocial behaviour incidents reported each day to police

11%

of victims said they would not report to the police again after their investigation finished

more than 95%

of victims are happy with initial contact with police

VICTIM FEEDBACK

'I felt like sometimes it was like I was making a fuss as nobody understood.'

'The response was immediate, sensitive and professional.'

'Calls were always returned.'



2,600

victims surveyed by Avon and Somerset Police – 89% are satisfied overall, but we don't survey vulnerable victims.

30%

of victims who report antisocial behaviour are potentially vulnerable.

25%

of potentially vulnerable victims are not flagged as such on police systems.

23%

of calls to Avon and Somerset Police's Force Service Centre are people calling for updates.

14%

of calls to Avon and Somerset Police's Force Service Centre are people asking for information.

2 INVESTIGATION

24%

of victims feel they have to chase for updates about their investigation

52%

of victims are either not satisfied or only partly satisfied with the outcome of their investigation

25%

of victims told us that the outcome of the investigation wasn't explained

15%

felt the outcome had only partially been explained

5,388
LIVE INVESTIGATIONS
AT ANY ONE TIME

INCONSISTENCY

I had to chase the police to get updates and the response depended on who was on duty.

WE'RE NOT WORKING AS ONE TEAM

I can't promise to keep all my victims updated in a timely way when I'm not here all the time.

42%

OF VICTIMS IN AVON AND SOMERSET SAY THEY WEREN'T OFFERED A 'VICTIM PERSONAL STATEMENT'

3 CRIMINAL JUSTICE

3,117

LIVE COURT
CASES AT ANY
ONE TIME

24,000

witnesses in criminal cases each year

86%

of charges result in a successful outcome at court

22%

of victims said the court outcome wasn't explained to them

58%

of victims were not satisfied with the outcome of their court case

38%

of victims felt less confident in the criminal justice service after their experience

'Sometimes the victim gets told what's going on – but other times they fall through the gap.'

'I often find by the time victims get to us, they have no idea what is going on and are totally disillusioned; it's hard to come back from that.'

'I had to keep giving the same information about myself and the offender.'

Victims value...

1. regular updates
 2. info about what happens next
 3. a named contact person
 4. time to talk
- (these were the top four things victims valued most in our survey)

A victim may have contact with up to 30 different criminal justice professionals during their journey to justice



Less than 35% have heard of the victim code and feel they know their rights

AND BEYOND...

'VICTIM CONTACT APPEARS TO BE VERY UNCOORDINATED AND VERY HIT OR MISS'

There are more than 15,000 convictions per year, but less than 400 victims qualify for ongoing updates and support following the court case

'I felt unsafe as I wasn't informed about the offender being released'

90%

of qualifying victims take up the offer of ongoing updates about the offender