Ethics and Transparency Panel Annual Report

26 June 2024

Annual Report – The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Report Date	17th April 2024
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Meeting and Date: Ethics and Transparency Panel Report, June 2024
Report Title: The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime
Author and Date: Detective Superintendent Matt Ditcher
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Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Panel with an update on the force's performance against the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales and follows on from the update report submitted in March 2023.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members note the contents of this report.

Background

1. In November 2020 HM Ministry of Justice presented a revised Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales (VCOP) required by the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. A new Code was enacted in April 2021 with an expectation that police and Criminal Justice Partners ensure they comply with the 12 Rights of the Code, namely:

   - The right to be able to understand and to be understood
   - To have the details of the crime recorded without unjustified delay
   - To be provided with information when reporting the crime
   - To be referred to services that support victims and have services and support tailored to your needs
   - To be provided with information about compensation
   - To be provided with information about the investigation and prosecution
   - To make a Victim Personal Statement
   - To be given information about the trial, trial process and your role as a witness
   - To be given information about the outcome of the case and any appeals
   - To be paid expenses and have property returned
   - To be given information about the offender following a conviction
   - To make a complaint about your Rights not being met

2. The Victims Bill which will enshrine these rights is currently within the House of Lords and is expected to come into legislation in late 2024. The Bill will also place a duty on PCC's to review the Force compliance.

Governance

3. Governance of VCOP activity is through the VCOP Delivery Group chaired by the Detective Superintendent with strategic responsibility for Victims' Services and attended by key stakeholders from across the force and from key commissioned services.

4. The VCOP Delivery Group addresses a number of issues associated with performance, training, increasing awareness and improving processes.

5. VCOP performance is scrutinised through the Local Policing Operational Service Delivery meeting which feeds into the Layer 3 Crime Board chaired by the Assistance Chief Constable.

Performance Framework/ Compliance

6. A performance framework has been developed by the VCOP Delivery Group to enable a comprehensive understanding of the Force's compliance against the 12 Rights for the victim. The framework consists of a quantitative performance dashboard using the Microsoft PowerBi app and a qualitative audit regime. The framework has provided a baseline and enabled the identification of areas where processes could be changed and where gaps were present in frontline officer knowledge.

7. There has been a consistent improvement in the performance and the service provided to victims.

PowerBi Data

8. In January 2022 a VCOP Information Dashboard was created within PowerBi, linked to victim–based open investigations. The dashboard displays compliance with key police-specific elements of the Rights (one to seven), including the assessment of victims' support needs and provision of information.

9. The Force's policy is that a victim of crime should be updated at least every 28 days. For an investigation to be fully compliant, the victim's needs assessment and timely provision of updates (28 days) must both be achieved.

10. Completed needs assessments and victim updates are now routinely above 90% (93% and 91. 6% respectively at the time of writing). The overall compliance rate is affected if one of those two elements has not been completed.

NOTE: *The PowerBI data is drawn from "live" victim-based cases recorded in the Niche system. These include crimes which have been recorded, for example by the Crime Bureau having been received through WebStorm or Single Online Home, but contact has yet to be made with a victim. For this reason, compliance can never be 100%.*

The full compliance figures are as follows:

March 2023	VCOP Fully compliant: 83.9%
April 2023	VCOP Fully compliant: 84.1%
May 2023	VCOP Fully compliant: 82.4%
June 2023	VCOP Fully Compliant 84.8%
July 2023	VCOP Fully Compliant 84.6%
August 2023	VCOP Fully Compliant 85.7%
September 2023	VCOP Fully Compliant 86.0%
October 2023	VCOP Fully Compliant 86.4%
November 2023	VCOP Fully Compliant 87.8%
December 2023	VCOP Fully Compliant 89.2%
January 2024	VCOP Fully Compliant 89.2%
February 2024	VCOP Fully Compliant 88.7%
March 2024	VCOP Fully Compliant 87.2%

11. The PowerBi Dashboard is both a performance monitor for governance and an operational tool for officers to monitor their own VCOP tasks using a traffic light system as it includes the capability to drill down from Force to departmental to individual officer level.

VCOP Audit

12. As a member of the NPCC Victims and Witnesses Performance Subgroup, the force adapted audit methodology from South Wales Police to track performance and understand compliance against the Victim Rights with a more qualitative, "deep dive" assessment. This is now embedded with qualitative audits taking place which are reported to the VCOP Delivery Group. The VCOP audit examines charged and not charged crimes in the following categories:

- Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO)
- Domestic Abuse (DA)
- Violent Crime (excluding DA)
- Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC)
- Hate Crime

13. The audit also examines the force's compliance around Victim Personal Statements and use of Special Measures. A quantitative measure is also now available for VPS via PowerBi using file quality data.

14. This year's audit has just been completed but unfortunately the results will not be available until April 17th. This is due to some changes within the audit team. This year's audit has been updated to include the nature and quality of the victim contact and update. This important addition will bring qualitative data to our quantitative audit.

Victim Satisfaction Data

15. Victim satisfaction data that is also used by the VCOP delivery group to triangulate the force's victim service from the victim's feedback against the quantitative and qualitative performance metrics.

16. The VCOP related questions satisfaction rate is an average of 84.6% for the rolling year.

Victim Notification Service

17. Compliance with the Right of the Victim to have their crime recorded and be informed of the crime reference number is improved by the automated notification system that has been implemented. For appropriate offences, a message with their crime number, a link to the VCOP booklet and Victim First is sent to the victim automatically as soon as the crime is recorded on the force's Niche crime recording system.

Victim First

18. Commissioned by the OPCC, Victim First is a free, independent and confidential service for victims and witnesses of crime across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The referral data is captured from Victim First and used within the VCOP Delivery Group to ensure that referrals are being made where necessary, and victims are given the opportunity to access the support available.

   - 18,975 referrals received from October 2022 to September 2023.

   - 92.2% of users were satisfied with the support they received from victim first.

   - 2058 (11.5%) victim/witnesses received enhanced support.

The Victim Right To Review (VRR) Scheme

19. The force has a robust procedure for the management of VRRs in place. Requests are triaged by the Crime Bureau Detective Inspector and allocated to an officer of a rank higher than the decision-maker, usually an Inspector, for review. Findings of the review and provided by the reviewer directly and are shared with the Serious Case review team to ensure that any themes and learning are captured and processed accordingly. The data regarding VRRs is also tracked by the VCOP Delivery Group to ensure oversight and understanding of the volume and content of requests.

Between **Feb and Dec 2023**:

- 57 VRR requests were received.

- 54 were eligible for review.

  - 22 were re-opened for further investigation,

  - 1 resulted in the decision being overturned but were prevented from further progression due to being statute-barred.

  - 31 resulted in the decision being upheld.

  - All applications were triaged within the prescribed 10 working days

  - 12 reviews were not completed within the 30-day time scale – Main reason being complexity of the review, one related to officer sickness. All extensions were agreed with victims.

Future Progress

20. Whilst Leicestershire Police has made significant progress on services to victims and quantitative data to inform this, further work is still ongoing to identify areas that could be enhanced, alongside continually reviewing performance and current processes.

21. One area that the Force will work towards with the latest audit is the quality and nature of the victim update. Once this is understood further work and training may be necessary.

Implications

Financial	None
Equality impact assessment	None
Risks and impact	Probability of Risk = 2 Unlikely Impact of Consequences (reputational / legal) = 3 Major Overall risk = 6 Low
Link to Police and Crime Plan	"Supporting Victims of Crime" – Because Victims Matter P.27 of the LLR Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024

Persons to contact

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Sign: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____