

Listening and learning:

Improving support for victims in Cleveland



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“She (domestic abuse officer from local authority) made me feel like a human being again, never left me feeling worried, never minimised my fears and never left before we had worked out a solution to a problem.”

Female victim of domestic abuse

1 Executive summary

This report was researched and written by the victims' services advocates (VSA) project.

The VSA project was commissioned by the former Victims Commissioner in anticipation of the arrival of the police and crime commissioner (PCC) for Cleveland.

Introduced by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, elected PCCs will replace police authorities across England and Wales from November 2012.

This report aims to:

- summarise current support for victims in Cleveland
- identify what victims need from local services
- propose a course of action by the PCC to meet these needs

1.1 The report was commissioned to look particularly at the needs of the following groups:

- victims of antisocial behaviour
- victims of domestic abuse
- victims of sexual violence
- victims of hate crime
- people bereaved by murder and manslaughter
- young victims of crime.

1.2 Five sources of information contributed to the findings of this report:

- a mapping exercise to identify current services for victims in Cleveland (see appendix 6)
- the contribution of local organisations and stakeholders
- focus groups and interviews with victims of crime
- a review of statistical data, mainly from the British Crime Survey
- existing local evidence and research on victims of crime

1.3 This information told us that:

1.3.1 Support for victims of crime in Cleveland is given by a range of voluntary, public and independent sector providers and there is evidence of strong partnership working. Complicated commissioning arrangements such as tendering, however, have the potential to create competition between service providers, which could lead to the loss of specialist services.

1.3.2 Although this report is focused on victims of specific crimes, there was a very clear message that support should be about empowering and helping people regain control over their lives, and that it should be provided according to the likely level of harm and impact regardless of the crime they have experienced. People will react differently and are likely to have different support networks around, therefore their needs will not all be the same.

1.3.3 A review of existing research¹, current and historical, supports victim perceptions about the need to tailor care and support to individual needs rather than assuming harm and impact based on the crime experienced.

1.3.4 While overall crime in Cleveland is falling, there are still significant issues with under reporting of crimes such as domestic abuse and hate crime, differences between confidence levels in the criminal justice system as expressed by those who have been a victim of crime and those who have not, and a general lack of awareness among victims of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.

1.3.5 Stakeholders are keen to work together to develop a greater understanding of the nature and scale of the impact and harm experienced by victims and to agree and take ownership of appropriate pathways of support. This however, needs to be supported by effective commissioning and resourcing arrangements.

¹ For a full list see Chapter 7



1.4 Looking in more depth at the needs of Cleveland victims and witnesses in the key crime categories, we further identified that:

1.4.1 Anti-social behaviour victims want better communication and information to ensure they are fully aware of the processes available to address both criminal and non-criminal behaviour and who is responsible for the different elements. There is also a need to ensure availability of adequate support for victims through these sometimes long and drawn out processes.

1.4.2 Victims of domestic abuse want a rapid response when they ask for help and to be made to feel safe, secure and supported. They also want a co-ordinated response from agencies and to have person-centred needs assessments that take account of both current and future risk, as well as holistic support that helps them regain control over their lives.

1.4.3 Rape and sexual violence are particularly sensitive crimes that leave victims needing a full range of physical, emotional and practical support. In addition, they need to feel believed and treated with dignity and respect. Crucially, there should be an acknowledgement that support needs don't always end when a court case is over – for the victim this is often just the start of the recovery period.

1.4.4 Support for those affected by murder or manslaughter needs to be consistent and take account of the wider network of people that may need support. Taking a harm based approach to delivering support would ensure that services were available to help secondary victims in the case of homicide. This would mean that all those affected by the crime were identified and offered support.

1.4.5 Understanding the scale and nature of hate crime is an area that is still developing. There is still some blurring of the boundaries between anti-social behaviour, for example, and the recognition of crime that is driven by prejudice. For instance, while incidents such as verbal abuse and criminal damage may be

categorised as anti-social behaviour by agencies, victims themselves are often aware that the motivation behind the actions is more to do with their lifestyle or particular characteristics. Many victims of hate crime prefer to be supported by organisations that have a specialist understanding of their needs, but they also want mainstream services and the criminal justice system as a whole to be sensitive to the impact of hate crime, not only on the individual but often entire communities.

1.4.6 The true extent of the victimisation of children and young people is difficult to assess but work is being done nationally and locally to identify and address this. Young people told us that they wanted more young person-friendly information, and better awareness among young people about where they can report in confidence, feel safe and ask for help. It is also imperative that mainstream services are fully involved in early identification of risk factors and take an integrated approach to early intervention.

1.5 Taking into account the findings of this report and the duty on PCCs to obtain the views of victims of crime before setting their policing plan, this report proposes the following actions to address the issues identified in this report:

1.6 Proposed actions

1.6.1 Introduction of harm/impact based model of assessment and support

The PCC should:

- recognise all victims of crime and anti-social behaviour as individuals with individual needs
- respond to crime and anti-social behaviour according to the likely harm or impact experienced by the victim
- treat victims according to their needs, taking into account the needs of their children and wider family as appropriate, in service provision. Make regular assessments of how a victim's needs change over time
- introduce incentives for services that can demonstrate how they achieve the best overall outcome for victims.

1.6.2 Clear, jointly agreed, monitored and evaluated pathways for referral, assessment and support

The PCC should:

- review existing referral processes and pathways across specialist support services to ensure seamless provision
- review current flexibility of pathways into mainstream and wider support networks to support early intervention and reduce potential for re-victimisation
- develop advocacy provision so that victims can make their own views and wishes clear, express and present their views effectively, obtain independent advice and accurate information, and negotiate and resolve conflict.

1.6.3 Review of communication and information standards, monitoring and evaluation

The PCC should:

- introduce standards of communication with victims of crime that include measures not only of frequency, but sensitivity, timeliness, appropriateness and tailoring to those with special communication needs and the use of appropriate language
- implement more efficient ways for victims to request/receive feedback according to their needs while managing their expectations
- introduce effective monitoring and reviewing of compliance
- introduce sustained awareness raising campaigns about services available to victims, especially for hard to reach groups.

1.6.4 Introduction of robust models of victim engagement

The PCC should:

- work with key stakeholders as well as local and national organisations to regularly gather and update information on current services and their scope, by crime type and victim demographic, and to report back on service gaps and victim needs

- create local mechanisms that are sensitive to the needs of victims to enable them to give feedback on their experiences
- identify/appoint victims' advocates/champions to work with victims and stakeholders to make sure that due care is given to victims' needs.

1.6.5 Explore, agree and initiate models of consortium/collaborative service delivery

The PCC should:

- acknowledge and support current partnership and commissioning arrangements
- be sensitive to the challenges that local commissioning arrangements may present, and work with relevant stakeholders to support an effective and high standard of service delivery for victims
- explore and support consortium/collaborative service delivery arrangements to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and economies of scale.

2 Introduction

2.1. Police and crime commissioners

Introduced by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, elected police and crime commissioners (PCCs) will replace police authorities across England and Wales from November 2012. In London the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime took on this role from January 2012.

PCCs will be elected by the public to hold chief constables and their force(s) to account. PCCs will be responsible for setting the police force's strategic priorities, cutting crime and ensuring that policing is efficient and effective. PCCs will also be responsible for appointing the chief constable.

PCCs will be expected to work with a range of public, private and voluntary partners working in criminal justice, community safety and public protection. It will have a significant role to play in the commissioning of some local services² which may include services for victims of crime³.

PCCs will also have a specific duty to obtain the views of victims of crime⁴ before setting the local policing plan. This gives an unprecedented opportunity for victims to influence the services they get.

2.2. This report

This report was researched and developed by the victims' services advocates (VSA) Project. The project was commissioned by the former commissioner for victims and witnesses in anticipation of the arrival of PCCs, and delivered by Victim Support. Victim Support is the national charity giving free and confidential help to

² Police and Crime Commissioners: Have you got what it takes? Home Office, 2011

³ At the time of writing, the government is consulting on proposals to devolve responsibility for commissioning local services to victims and witnesses to PCCs (Getting it right for victims and witnesses, Ministry of Justice, January 2012)

⁴ Introduced by The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

victims of crime, witnesses, their family, friends and others affected across England and Wales.

This report was written for Cleveland and aims to:

- provide a picture of current support for victims in Cleveland
- identify what victims need from local services
- propose a course of action by the PCC to meet these needs

The report seeks to present the views of victims and service providers in Cleveland.

While the project took great care to explore the full range of issues concerning victims' services in Cleveland and to consult a wide range of local stakeholders and partner organisations, it is acknowledged that there may be issues that the report has not been able to cover, given the timescales and scope. It is also acknowledged that, given the complexity of the subject area, in some cases issues are raised which do not have straightforward solutions. These will require close partnership working across systems and agencies to deliver change.

The report was commissioned to look particularly at the needs of the following groups:

- victims of antisocial behaviour
- victims of domestic abuse
- victims of sexual violence
- victims of hate crime
- people bereaved by murder and manslaughter
- young victims of crime

Victims' services advocates were recruited to identify and research the needs of victims of crime, and to identify and research issues of concern to those who provide services to victims.

This is one of 42 local reports, covering every police area in England and Wales.⁵ Delivery of the reports has been overseen by colleagues from the Home Office, which funded the project, and the Ministry of Justice. Ownership of all 42 reports sits with the Home Office.

⁵ Including the Metropolitan Police, but not the City of London Police, which is unaffected by the reforms.

3 What we learned

Five sources of information contributed to the findings of this report:

- a mapping exercise to identify the services that currently exist for victims in Cleveland (see appendix 6)
- consultation with local organisations and stakeholders
- focus groups and interviews with victims of crime
- a review of statistical data from sources including the British Crime Survey
- existing local evidence and research.

This chapter outlines what we learned from these different sources about what victims need from local services.

3.1. Mapping services to victims in Cleveland

The victims' services advocates (VSA) project undertook a mapping exercise to identify services for victims in Cleveland. This involved:

- Desk based research into local services
- Discussions with key local organisations – including police, local authority and third sector agencies – about services available
- Feedback from local victims of crime

What was in scope?

This was a time-limited project, spanning a 12 month period. The project focused primarily on services for:

- victims of antisocial behaviour
- victims of domestic abuse
- victims of sexual violence
- victims of hate crime
- people bereaved by murder and manslaughter
- young victims of crime

It also included services for witnesses if offered as part of a combined victim/witness service.

We acknowledged at the outset that a single organisation may provide a range of individual services, so this exercise set out to map services, not organisations.

What was out of scope?

The research did not include services offering more generic support – for example services offering general support around housing, or drug and alcohol support. It is acknowledged however that some victims may not seek help from specialist victims' services, and therefore that we may not have included the full range of services accessed or required by victims.

Further research would be required to assess the full range of services used by victims, especially those in the most vulnerable circumstances, whom services can find harder to reach.

This mapping exercise should not be seen as comprehensive or exhaustive. It should also be noted that, as with any such exercise, the landscape can change rapidly. To the best of our knowledge, the information contained in this report was correct at the time of writing.

The landscape of services to victims in Cleveland

The local landscape

The area covered by Cleveland Police is geographically one of the smallest in England and Wales but one of the most densely populated. Serving a population of approximately 560,000 it is predominantly rural with some densely populated urban areas. There are four unitary authorities – Stockton, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Redcar and Cleveland. The Index of Multiple Deprivation identifies high levels of disadvantage in the area⁶.

There are four Community Safety Partnerships, one in each local authority area, some cross-partnership working and a number of force wide strategic partnerships such as the Teesside Sexual Violence Strategy Group, Teesside Domestic Abuse Co-ordinating Group and the Tees wide Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board. All of the

⁶ Cleveland Policing Plan 2011-2014

Community Safety Partnerships have operational groups focusing on what are considered to be the main priority crime issues. All relevant strategies include references to the need to support victims.

Performance relating to compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime and public satisfaction are discussed later in this chapter.

Support for victims in Cleveland

Across Cleveland, there are many services that deliver support to victims, and they are varied. While some are nationally commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office, such as Victim Support, others are commissioned locally, through Community Safety Partnerships, for example. A number of voluntary organisations delivering support use a variety of funding streams to maintain services. Although some services support victims across the area, others work in specific geographical locations or serve victims of particular types of crime such as domestic abuse or sexual violence.

Our mapping exercise identified over 40 different organisations either delivering or commissioning victim specific services. A number of the organisations we spoke to expressed concern over increasing numbers of referrals and the capacity to deliver, as well as consistency and sustainability of funding. Some voluntary organisations, for example, have funding from multiple sources that needs to be maintained if they are to continue to deliver at their current level. This creates difficulties when trying to map services, as there is the potential for them to lose some or all of their funding with the subsequent loss of provision. The issue of future funding was also a concern for some statutory services, with the current pressure to reduce public spending.

The landscape of services that support victims has evolved to a degree in response to a range of national and local needs and priorities. A potential consequence of this is that inconsistencies can develop in the availability of support for victims of crime types, or in localities, that have not been identified as priority areas. There is also the risk that certain victims of crime such as children and young people or minority

groups will have very little provision other than that provided by mainstream services.

Uncertainties over levels of future funding and commissioning arrangements were a significant feature during our discussion with stakeholders.



3.2. What victims in Cleveland told us

From Autumn 2011 we held a series of focus groups and interviews with victims of crime in Cleveland. Some but not all had also been witnesses; some had had no contact with the criminal justice system at all.

We recruited people to the focus groups and interviews through:

- 'gateway' organisations, i.e. organisations whose services the victims' services advocate had already had contact with through the mapping exercise. Victim Support, as the host organisation for the project, was one such organisation.
- partner organisations in the criminal justice system, especially the police
- advertising using bespoke publicity materials
- publicity in local media

All participants had generally experienced the crime in the last two years. We sought to ensure from the outset that their feedback was based on recent experience and relevant to current services. The exception to this was some victims of sexual abuse who had experienced the crime up to five years previously but had received services relating to that experience more recently.

The project did not interview people bereaved by murder and manslaughter. Instead, the project has referred to the 2011 report by the then commissioner for victims and witnesses on the service landscape for people bereaved by murder and manslaughter⁷.

⁷ Louise Casey CB, *Review into the Needs of Families Bereaved by Homicide* (July 2011)

The project was also asked to consider the needs of young people as victims of crime. In many police force areas, there are very few specialist services for young victims. Evidence also suggests that young people are very reluctant to report crime in the first place, making it more difficult to identify and respond to their needs. To ensure that young people, including young victims, had a voice in this report, the project visited a local Barnardos project to talk to young people about their perspectives on being a victim of crime and the kinds of services they would consider useful.

To avoid singling young people out within focus groups, the VSA did not ask individual young people whether or not they had been victims of crime. This means that it is not possible for us to say that the views expressed apply to young victims *per se*.

Further specialist research would be required in order to determine the specific service needs of young victims of crime.

What we learned from victims in Cleveland

Over a six month period we spoke to a range of victims either through face-to-face interviews or as participants in focus groups. Victims that we spoke to in general accepted the limitations sometimes imposed by the criminal justice system but this was combined with a view that more could and should be done to address some very basic needs. Some victims felt that they had not been treated with dignity and respect, listened to or taken seriously and often felt more like a hindrance than a victim or witness. We also heard stories of frustration with long, complicated processes, perceptions of poor communication and lack of information.

Referrals and care pathways

'*Redefining Justice*'⁸ describes the need to provide end-to-end victim and witness management that takes account of the impact of the crime and the individual needs of the victim arising from this. This was supported by a number of the victims we spoke to who

⁸ Payne, S, *Redefining Justice: Addressing the individual needs of victims and witnesses* (2009)

described common needs, irrespective of the crime they had become a victim of.

Victims across the range of crime types described how they had been left feeling anxious, depressed, frightened and sometimes guilty. Many common needs were also identified in relation to the wider impact on victims' general health and wellbeing, and financial, social and family circumstances, irrespective of the crime.

Identifying and supporting vulnerable people were noted as priorities by all of the stakeholders we spoke to. Victims themselves, however, told us that vulnerability could also be a result of the very fact that they had been a victim and not just linked to particular characteristics. In addition, while there were some common needs, the way in which they were met could vary depending on existing personal support networks, ability to cope with complicated processes and the potential difficulties created by having a number of different agencies involved, all with different roles and responsibilities.

Overall, we heard that victims wanted a meaningful assessment of their individual needs and a support pathway designed to meet these. If processes were in place to ensure this happened, they felt they would be far more likely to recover, move on and regain control of their lives. The first point of contact was considered to be the most important, whether this was with the police or another agency, to ensure that victims were aware that someone was available and could then refer on to sources of support when appropriate.

Communication and information

Communication and information were repeatedly reported as inadequate. While communication with the police, for example, was often good in the early stages after reporting, this appeared to become less and less frequent with victims feeling as though they had been forgotten about. Information was often described as limited, not always easy to understand and given at times when victims were too upset or anxious to take it all in. In addition, victims and stakeholders shared the view that communication within and between agencies was sometimes not as good as it could or should

be and this resulted in victims having to repeat their story several times to various agencies.

Although communication and information are included in the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime this refers primarily to timescales and communication of key developments. The lengthy processes often involved in the criminal justice system mean that there can be long delays between these key developments and victims are left waiting and wondering what is happening. Communication and information standards that are based on quantity rather than quality are blunt tools when seeking to improve the experience of victims.

Engaging with victims

Cleveland Police regularly use satisfaction surveys as part of performance management arrangements. Satisfaction surveys can be a relatively weak tool when seeking information about the experience of victims. The most vulnerable victims and those whose voices are rarely heard do not often participate in surveys and some are excluded simply because of the very serious and sensitive nature of the crime they have experienced. The police and crime commissioner (PCC) will have a statutory duty to obtain the views of victims, and this is seen as an opportunity by victims and stakeholders to develop methods of engagement that provide 'real time' information about victim perceptions that can be used to enhance commissioning decisions.



3.3. What existing evidence and research from Cleveland tell us

The victims' services advocate in Cleveland called on local partner organisations to identify any existing research, surveys or other evidence to inform their understanding of the needs of victims.

Sources of information used in this report include British Crime Survey statistics, local policing plans, local Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) inspection reports, Crown

Prosecution Service reports, and Community Safety Partnership needs assessments, strategies and commissioning plans. Reference was also made to national strategies required to be implemented locally, such as the Home Office strategy and action plan for ending violence against women and girls. Local, regional and nationally published research has also been referred to where relevant.

The sources of information that we referred to told us that, in the main, the crime types included in the VSA project were priorities for local and national action. In common with many other areas, Cleveland has seen a rise in the number of domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour and hate crime cases reported. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that this rise is in part due to improved awareness raising but that there is still significant under-reporting in these crime types.

All Community Safety Partnerships have, over recent years, developed frameworks for reviewing service delivery models, improving data collection and information sharing, developing minimum care standards, better integration of services and joint commissioning.

There is evidence in each of the strategies and action plans that attention has been given to identification and acknowledgement of common themes and how these can be addressed. Examples of this include identifying and supporting vulnerable victims, addressing the issues of repeat victimisation and under-reporting, securing sustainable funding and collaborative working protocols. An area which was identified as being underdeveloped, but a priority for the victims that we spoke to was the way in which support was assessed and delivered. A number of high profile national reports tell us that a fundamental shift in the way support for victims is prioritised and delivered is essential if the health, social, economic and environmental impact on individuals and society as a whole is to be addressed:

"The criminal justice system must refocus so that it addresses the total impact a crime has had on a victim rather than the type of offence committed. Victims need and impact must be assessed on an

individual basis and interventions for victims based on those assessed needs.”⁹

“...identified systematic problems which affect the current strategy for dealing with anti-social behaviour. These include a lack of understanding of the intensity of harm to communities and vulnerable individuals caused by anti-social behaviour... and an uncertainty about what priority to give to ASB and what the police are trying to achieve.”¹⁰

In our discussions with stakeholders however, there was an acknowledgement that commissioning and delivering support to victims was still predominantly linked to specific crime types rather than person-centred approaches based on likely harm or impact.

Taking an individual harm or impact based approach is recognised as requiring a partnership approach; multiple needs are likely to need multiple solutions that cannot be provided by one single agency. In Cleveland, there are examples of successful partnership working in terms of identifying and addressing many community safety issues. Developing this model further in relation to supporting victims is likely to contribute not only to better support for individuals but also the wider economy in terms of long-term savings to health and social services and the criminal justice system, for example.

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3.4. What the data tells us about victims and witnesses in Cleveland

A number of sources of data are used throughout this report to give a more comprehensive picture of crime in Cleveland. We have drawn on data from The British Crime Survey (BCS) to understand the true extent of personal crime than police recorded statistics because the survey includes crimes that are not reported to, or recorded by, the police.

Police recorded crime is an important indicator of the workload for local police forces and also includes crime categories that are not covered by the BCS, including homicide.

Crime in Cleveland

According to British Crime Survey statistics, only 33% of those who had been a victim were very or fairly confident about the criminal justice system. Similarly, only 4% of victims strongly agreed that

⁹ Payne, S, *Redefining Justice: Addressing the individual needs of victims and witnesses* (2009)

¹⁰ HMIC, *Stop the Rot* (2010)

¹¹ Payne, S, *Redefining Justice: Addressing the individual needs of victims and witnesses* (2009)

¹² HMIC, *Stop the Rot* (2010)

the criminal justice system supports victims and witnesses with 60% of victims only tending to agree.

In response to how good a job the police in Cleveland were doing, only 49% of those who had been a victim said they thought it was excellent or good.

Cleveland Policing Plan¹³ reports that total recorded crime in the area has dropped by 9%. In common with most police force areas, Cleveland carries out regular local confidence surveys. The results for April 2010 to March 2011 indicate that 89% of respondents had overall confidence in Cleveland police, 87% agreed that they were treated with respect by the police, and 81% considered Cleveland police to understand the issues affecting local communities. The total number of recorded crimes in Cleveland during 2010/2011 was 43,018.

When asked how much they agreed or disagreed that the police and local council were dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that mattered in the area, 50% of respondents who had been a victim of crime strongly agreed or tended to agree.

When asked what they thought should be the highest priority for the criminal justice system, the top three responses were:

- bringing people who commit crime to justice
- reducing crime
- dealing with cases promptly and efficiently.

The four most important things the criminal justice system could do to improve confidence were ranked as:

- tougher sentences
- tackling anti-social behaviour and minor crime
- reducing re-offending
- bringing more offenders to justice

Only 19% of respondents said they had heard of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime while 76% had heard of Victim Support.

¹³ Cleveland Policing Plan 2011-2014



3.5. What partner organisations and stakeholders in Cleveland told us

This report could not have been produced without the generous contribution of service providers throughout the voluntary and statutory sectors in Cleveland, including criminal justice agencies.

Their contribution has been invaluable in:

- mapping service provision
- recruiting participants for focus groups and interviews
- obtaining evidence and research
- reviewing our findings and recommendations
- publicising the project and helping the victims' services advocates develop their network of contacts.

Our discussions with stakeholders demonstrated that there are likely to be multiple victim needs in any given area and that it is unrealistic to expect one single agency to provide all the support necessary to ensure a seamless pathway of care. Strong partnerships already exist but new commissioning environments and an emphasis on targeting resources effectively while maintaining quality and consistency will make collaborative working even more important in the future. Equally, there is the danger that smaller organisations unable to compete with the demands of complex commissioning processes might be lost along with the local and specialist knowledge so important to delivery of victim services.

We heard many examples of successful partnership working at both strategic and operational levels in relation to crime prevention and reduction, but fewer examples of a strategic approach being taken to understanding and responding to the totality of victims' needs, irrespective of the crime type.

Despite the number of services delivering support to victims, many stakeholders told us they were concerned about increasing demand, stretched capacity and sustainability of funding.

Public sector services are also under pressure to reduce spending and this could have implications for future service delivery.

A number of stakeholders referred to the need to introduce performance measures based not solely on outputs but on tangible outcomes for victims, but that these should be negotiated and agreed with input from victims. If arrangements are not in place to support this, there is a danger that victim reported outcomes will be compromised by a continuing emphasis on organisationally focused performance measures.

4 The service needs of victims of crime

This project was initially commissioned to focus on victims of:

- victims of prolonged anti-social behaviour
- victims of domestic abuse
- victims of sexual violence
- people bereaved by murder and manslaughter.

After the initial mapping exercise, it was agreed that the project should also consider:

- victims of hate crime, and
- young victims of crime

This chapter considers all the information gathered over the lifetime of the project and aims to draw some conclusions about the priority service needs of each of these groups of victims in Cleveland. These conclusions have been informed by existing evidence and research, both national and local.

4.1. Victims of prolonged antisocial behaviour

What is anti-social behaviour?

“Behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator.”¹⁴

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) produced the 'Stop the rot' report on anti-social behaviour in September 2010.

This stated that, “ASB is a blight on the lives of millions who are directly affected; on the perceptions of millions more for whom it signals neglect in their neighbourhoods and the decline of whole towns and city areas; and the reputation of the police who are often thought to be unconcerned or ineffectual”.

Addressing anti-social behaviour incidents can be a long and drawn out process, requiring a coordinated approach from a range of agencies.

Victims can find the process confusing if it is not properly explained, which may result in them losing confidence in the process.

Anti-social behaviour in Cleveland

The Cleveland Local Policing Plan reports a 9% reduction in incidents of anti-social behaviour.

According to British Crime Survey data, 27% of respondents who had been a victim of crime thought that levels of anti-social behaviour were high in Cleveland. 50% of respondents who had been a victim were not very confident or not confident at all that the local authorities in the area were effective at reducing anti-social behaviour.

An HMIC inspection in Spring 2010¹⁵ concluded that there were higher than average levels of crime and relatively higher levels of anti-social behaviour in Cleveland. Results of a victim satisfaction survey included in the report indicated that Cleveland was performing broadly in line with national average:

- 69% of respondents felt that anti-social behaviour was a big problem in their area, with 27% saying there was more anti-social behaviour than a year previously
- 51% felt well informed about what is being done by local services to tackle anti-social behaviour in their area, and 68% agreed that local services were dealing with the anti-social behaviour issues that matter locally
- 57% said they had called the police to report anti-social behaviour three times or more over the past year
- When considering a specific call they have made to report anti-social behaviour, 72% of respondents were satisfied overall with the way the police handled their call
- 81% were satisfied with the way they were treated by the police and 78% were satisfied that the police had taken them seriously
- In terms of follow-up, 44% of respondents were aware of action taken by the police as a result of their call

¹⁴ Crime and Disorder Act 1998

¹⁵ HMIC, *Stop the Rot* (2010)

- 61% felt their call made a difference to the problem, while 35% said their call made no difference
- 86% said they would encourage others to make similar reports of anti-social behaviour, but 11% said they would not
- 85% said that if they witnessed or experienced the same type of anti-social behaviour in the future, they would report the incident

The report further concluded that Cleveland Police have increased the use of electronic briefings and have moved towards a system where response officers are assigned to a particular neighbourhood for at least six months. This is intended to increase knowledge of 'neighbourhood priorities' and specific local issues. In one local area (Redcar and Cleveland) CID officers were already operating in this way, and this was considered to have resulted in a better focus on anti-social behaviour issues.

The force, at all levels, was found to use a standard method of managing data and information to monitor anti-social performance. At a local level, HMIC found that police were working to address anti-social behaviour repeat offenders and hotspots, and to support repeat and vulnerable anti-social behaviour victims, by creating 'problem profiles'. These are compiled by the force, the local problem orientated policing co-ordinators, and other partners.

All four Community Safety Partnerships take a multi-agency approach to tackling anti-social behaviour. The local authorities, police, social landlords and communities themselves are considered key partners.

Support for victims of anti-social behaviour

All four local authorities have anti-social behaviour teams who have an investigative, enforcement and victim liaison role. Some teams, Stockton for example, have a dedicated victim liaison officer. There are a variety of landlord liaison schemes, target hardening, mediation and operations such as 'Operation Peacemaker' that focus on particular hotspot areas by providing extra police patrols and increasing police presence at peak times.

In addition, the Youth Offending Service works with a range of young people to prevent/reduce their involvement in anti-social behaviour and their victim liaison officers give support when people have been victims of youth related crime. Social landlords as well as the local authorities are key players in relation to reporting, investigating and taking civil action in cases of anti-social behaviour and supporting victims.

The victims we spoke to told us that the systems and processes involved in addressing incidents of anti-social behaviour are very long and drawn out and require a number of agencies to work in a co-ordinated way. This was particularly the case where the anti-social behaviour was neighbour-related and a mix of landlords were involved. Victims described being confused by the difference between civil and criminal proceedings, by what does and does not constitute a crime, and about who was responsible for what. The problem is compounded for those who own their properties, where the level of support is not always the same as for those living in social housing.

The net impact of sustained episodes of anti-social behaviour had left many victims feeling depressed, anxious, unable to sleep and relatively isolated. Some victims who owned their home referred to feeling trapped because they were unable to move to escape the problem, as it was impossible to sell their property. Overall, this had resulted in confusion and sometimes a loss of confidence for victims who felt they'd been forgotten because processes had not been explained properly, they weren't kept up to date, and because they saw little progress but had to continue living with the problem.

"The private landlord of the property where they lived (offenders) kept telling me and other neighbours not to cause trouble. I didn't know what the police could and couldn't do, they didn't seem to have any powers to stop it for more than a few hours and I didn't know who else to call on for help."

(Victim of anti-social behaviour)
Case study: victim of anti-social behaviour

“There was all sorts going on, lads in the street drinking, breaking windows, damaging cars and sheds and stealing lead. It was reported to the police and dispersal orders were made but they just came back once the police had gone.

“I filled in 60 or more forms and diary sheets and they put CCTV cameras in the street but still nothing was done. It went on for about three years until they broke into the shop and then the housing association finally evicted them.

“I was depressed and couldn’t sleep properly; I didn’t want to come home when I finished work because I knew it would all still be happening. My friends and family didn’t dare visit and I couldn’t even sell the house and move because the area had got such a bad reputation.

“It didn’t feel as though anyone was really taking it seriously enough because it went on for so long. I know rules have to be followed but there must be some sanctions that can be used quickly to stop them making people’s lives a misery.”

(Victim of anti-social behaviour)

Case study: Hartlepool Community Safety Office

Hartlepool’s Community Safety Office is located centrally in one of the main shopping streets in the area. A number of key community safety service providers are co-located in the office, including the police, Hartlepool Borough Council Community Safety staff and Victim Support staff. Other key service providers, such as housing and health are also key partners. This approach facilitates effective reporting arrangements, a multi-agency approach to problem solving and efficient referral and support pathways for victims.

Although not specifically focused on anti-social behaviour, the partnership approach and the availability of a dedicated Victim Support officer as part of the multi-agency team, encourages joint ownership when addressing issues, and enables the separation of the investigation, enforcement and support for victims’ functions. This results in a more person-centred assessment for victims, releases other officers to focus on investigating and enforcing, and subsequently helps to increase the confidence of victims.

Conclusions

Although addressing anti-social behaviour is clearly a priority, the emphasis placed on prevention and reduction needs to be matched with an equal commitment to identifying and meeting the individual needs of victims. While the principles of identifying and supporting vulnerable and repeat victims as reported by HMIC are welcomed, good communication, clarity over where to report, what action can be taken and what processes will be followed are key priorities for victims.

Additionally, having independent support and advocacy available for victims can help to rebalance relationships between victims and investigative and/or enforcement agencies, which can become strained when long processes are perceived as inaction. Equally, independent support of this nature can be beneficial in reducing the subsequent impact on the health, social and economic circumstances of victims by ensuring their needs are given full attention. The added benefit of this approach is that it reduces the need for those whose job it is to investigate and enforce anti-social behaviour related processes to balance victim needs with those of alleged offenders.

“I know now that lots of anti-social behaviour is not classed as a crime so police have no powers to deal with it but processes are very slow, there’s not enough information about who is responsible for taking action. Response times are often too slow and no-one takes notice until something really serious happens.”

(Victim of anti-social behaviour)

4.2. Victims of domestic abuse

What is domestic abuse?

'Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse [psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional] between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.'¹⁶

Domestic abuse is not a type of crime in itself but describes the context in which types of crime can occur. The types of crime most commonly 'flagged' by police as domestic abuse when victims are referred to Victim Support are actual bodily harm, common assault and harassment.

The British Crime Survey 2010/11 includes a self-completion module on intimate violence. This covers emotional, financial and physical abuse by partners or family members, as well as sexual assaults and stalking experienced by 16-59 year-olds.

Women are more likely than men to have experienced all types of intimate violence. Overall, 30 per cent of women and 17 per cent of men had experienced domestic violence since the age of 16. These figures were equivalent to an estimated 4.8 million female and 2.8 million 16-59 year-old male victims of domestic violence in England and Wales.¹⁷

In addition 7% cent of women and 5% of men reported having experienced domestic violence in the last year, equivalent to an estimated 1.2 million female and 800,000 male victims in England and Wales.¹⁸

Much has changed in how the police and other agencies view victims of domestic abuse. The

creation of multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) and independent domestic violence advisors (IDVAs) has led to improvements in the services victims receive.

The domestic abuse charity Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) estimates that for every £1 spent on MARACs at least £6 of public money can be saved on direct costs to agencies every year.¹⁹ This represents potential savings to the public purse of a national MARAC programme are over £740m annually, although it should be acknowledged there have been calls for further research to verify these figures.

The government's Action Plan to End Violence against Women and Girls, published in March 2011, contains 35 wide-ranging proposals, which require partnership working with and between government departments. It is too early to comment on the effectiveness of the action plan, but a review of IDVAs in 2009 estimated that there were less than half the number of trained advisors needed to give adequate coverage for all high risk cases in the UK. Research undertaken for this report indicates that there are still gaps. This is a continuing cause for concern.²⁰

A recurring theme in our conversations with victims of domestic abuse was that their first experiences with a support agency were a key factor in determining whether they would continue with any action that had been initiated, and whether they would report any future incidents.

Domestic abuse in Cleveland

Using the 'levels of violence against women and girls ready reckoner'²¹ it is estimated that 18,480 women and girls aged 16-59 living in Cleveland will have experienced some form of domestic abuse over the past year.

Cleveland has an overarching multi-agency Domestic Abuse Co-ordinating Group, multi-agency domestic abuse forums, and four

¹⁶ Home Office

¹⁷ Victim Support analysis based on Home Office: Research, Development and Statistics Directorate and BMRB, *Social Research, British Crime Survey; 2010-11*, Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor]. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO and the Queen's Printer for Scotland.

¹⁸ Victim Support analysis based on Home Office: Research, Development and Statistics Directorate and BMRB, *Social Research, British Crime Survey; 2010-11*, Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor]. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO and the Queen's Printer for Scotland.

¹⁹ CAADA, 2010

²⁰ Safety in Numbers – A Multi-site Evaluation of Independent Violence advisor Services, CAADA 2009

²¹ Violence Against Women and Girls Ready Reckoner

Community Safety Partnerships, which all have a key role in identifying need, commissioning appropriate services, monitoring and evaluating.

Current strategies for addressing domestic abuse include reference to the difficulties involved in identifying and quantifying more hidden forms of abuse such as forced marriages, female genital mutilation and honour based violence. Alongside this, the need to more fully understand the scale and nature of the issue in relation to black and minority ethnic groups, disability, male victims, same sex relationships and transgender issues is noted as a priority.

What else do we know about domestic abuse in Cleveland?

The principles of protection, prevention and provision are evident in all relevant strategies and there are a number of common themes across each of the locality-based domestic abuse strategies. All refer to the need to:

- improve information collection and sharing
- address issues of under-reporting and repeat victimisation
- improve co-ordination between, and referral processes into, mainstream services such as mental health, substance abuse and alcohol services
- strengthen early identification and protection processes for at risk and vulnerable victims
- identify young victims and their support needs early.

In addition, stakeholders we spoke to described the necessity of introducing whole family assessment processes rather than focusing on the needs of an individual in isolation from their wider networks.

The Teesside Domestic Abuse Co-ordinating Group is currently reviewing victim pathways to identify problem areas and solutions in response to stakeholder concerns relating to:

- late referrals for support
- the high number of referrals for support where alleged offenders have not been charged

- difficulties accessing timely information to inform risk assessment and safety planning.

Support for victims of domestic abuse in Cleveland

Support for victims is delivered by a range of different agencies. While some deliver services across the area, others work in specific geographical areas only. Cleveland Police has two vulnerability units with eight specialist officers covering the area. There are two specialist domestic violence courts; one in Middlesbrough and one in Hartlepool. MARAC arrangements are in place across the force area and IDVAs are based in My Sister's Place, EVA, Women's Aid and Harbour.

A number of voluntary organisations deliver services such as outreach, counselling, support through criminal justice system processes, Freedom programmes, help with debt, housing, immigration and personal safety issues. Many of these deliver only in specific geographical areas, and some restrict their service to women.

Local authorities have community safety teams who will give advice and help with finding support. Stockton Borough Council, for example, has a designated domestic abuse worker who supports victims in a variety of ways such as co-ordinating multi-agency input, liaising with agencies, advising on what support is available and using a person-centred approach to empower victims to make informed choices.

There are a number of target hardening and sanctuary schemes in operation and these include provision of personal safety advice, additional security features, panic alarms and high priority caller flagging.

Specialist outreach support for children and young people aged three to 16 years, who have lived or are living in situations of domestic abuse, is given in some areas.

A consequence of the different partnership and funding arrangements in each of the local authority areas is that there are some inconsistencies in service provision.

Most of the service commissioners and providers we spoke to were very clear that it was no longer sufficient to address the needs of domestic abuse victims in isolation to their wider family. This, in many ways, reflects what victims told us about the need for assessments based on them as a person rather than a crime type.

What victims told us

Victims we spoke to did not refer directly to either the availability or the quality of service provision. They most frequently mentioned the lack of information about what support could be offered and communication with and between the various agencies. At a basic level, victims described feeling as though they weren't being listened to and that their experience was not always taken as seriously as it should have been. Many of the victims that we spoke to told us that they had put up with many episodes of extreme verbal, emotional and physical abuse before taking action. Although the reasons given for this were very valid – concern for the children, financial control, manipulation and intimidation – they felt that professionals in the criminal justice system were often insensitive and seemed frustrated by what they saw as victims' reluctance to engage fully with necessary processes.

Victims also told us that the initial contact, whichever agency this was with, following the reporting of an incident, was the most important in determining whether they would continue with any action initiated or in fact whether they would report future incidents. This was particularly noticeable in relation to victims of emotional or psychological abuse, where there were no visible signs such as cuts or bruises.

Holistic assessment, acknowledgement of their fears, early intervention, appropriately tailored support and being kept informed of the progress of any criminal investigation, were identified as key factors in recovery. These factors were also critical to whether victims engaged with processes designed to protect them, or whether they simply continued living with the abuse. In addition, some of the female victims who spoke to us described feelings of being punished, as though they were the offenders. This was particularly related to having to move from homes they had cared for, contributed to and

called their own, into shared refuge accommodation, with little access to money, and in fear of having their children taken away from them.

"I might as well be in prison because I'm the one that's too scared to go out in case I bump into him."

(Victim of domestic abuse)

Case study

"After spending time living first in a refuge then in a homeless shelter I was finally given my own house and that's when it got really scary. I felt as though I was responsible for everything – keeping my son safe, keeping the house safe and keeping myself safe. The police had been really reassuring and made me feel safe but I knew that after the court case they wouldn't be around as much. I felt like a prisoner, didn't dare go out and was suspicious of everyone who passed by."

"It wasn't until I was put into contact with the support worker from the Council that things began to get better. She arranged for me to have extra safety such as alarms, a safe room, a safe letterbox but she also gave me moral and emotional support. She helped me to regain my confidence and self-esteem, always had time for me and I never felt rushed. She never left me worried, never minimised my fears and I knew that she was always there to help me think about how to resolve any problems I had."

"I always felt that she truly was there to help identify and meet my needs rather than just ticking boxes. I just wish the service I got could be there for everyone."

(Female victim of domestic abuse)

Case study: EVA Women's Aid

EVA Women's Aid supports female victims of domestic abuse in the Redcar and Cleveland area. The organisation provides refuge accommodation and support for women leaving abusive relationships. While living in the refuge, women can access support with welfare, housing, health, legal and educational issues as well as emotional support.

If it is found that the refuge might not be safe for a victim, too near to the abuser to be secure for example, EVA is able to liaise with a national network of 200 refuges and will help with accessing accommodation and support in a more appropriate location. Once rehoused from the refuge, EVA offers support with settling into a new home and community. Support is available until the victim feels comfortable and confident to live independently.

EVA also provides a dedicated childcare co-ordinator who supports children and young people, IDVAs and ISVAs and a Rape Crisis service, and is therefore able to give the 'wrap-around' care victims value.

Case study: My Sister's Place

My Sister's Place also delivers support for female survivors of domestic abuse in Middlesbrough. One service it offers is the provision of IDVAs who help with both civil and criminal law cases. Support includes help with safety measures and liaison with the police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to ensure the victim's voice is heard, their safety is prioritised, and that they are kept informed of what is happening at all stages of the process. The IDVA can also ask the court about special measures that may be available, such as screens or video links.

The IDVAs work closely with the Witness Service and can arrange pre-court visits, giving victims the opportunity to have a look round the courtroom prior to the trial, and discuss any concerns or queries that they may have. Support at court on the day of the trial is also provided, as well as help with other arrangements such as entering court by a separate door, and additional security. The IDVA can also help with arranging alternative protective measures, including civil sanctions such as injunctions, and matters relating to children.

Conclusions

A number of the victims we spoke to felt that they were not always taken seriously especially if there were no physical signs of abuse. This first response was considered to be the most important in terms of influencing outcomes relating to engagement with criminal justice

processes, referral for holistic needs assessment and subsequent development of appropriate pathways of support. There is agreement among victims, other stakeholders and existing research²² that if victims are listened to, receive early assessment and appropriate pathways of support they are better protected, recover more quickly and go on to successfully rebuild their lives.

What is also clear is that the needs of victims of domestic abuse rarely fit into one category but require a co-ordinated approach from a number of specialist and mainstream agencies.

A number of services offer support to a wide range of needs including male victims, victims from a variety of cultures and backgrounds, and domestic abuse within lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender relationships. There was, however, a view from victims and other stakeholders we spoke to, that this is not always promoted widely enough and so uptake is often poor.

There is an explicit acknowledgment in existing strategies and action plans of the need to do more to establish the exact nature and scale of domestic abuse outside the violence against women and girls agenda. This will be crucial if future commissioning is to be based on informed need.

"I gave up telling people because I thought they'd just think oh, it's her again."

(Victim of domestic abuse)

There is a large amount of research and literature on the needs of victims of domestic abuse, and this report cannot fully reflect the evidence it provides. Further investigation of the issues highlighted here, and thorough consultation with both victims and local service providers from all sectors, will be essential for providing the police and crime commissioner with a comprehensive picture of the needs of victims of domestic abuse in Cleveland.

²² For a full list see Chapter 7

4.3. Victims of sexual violence

What is sexual violence?

In this report, 'sexual violence' refers to the full range of sexual offences recorded by the Home Office.²³

Sexual violence can affect people of all ages, genders, sexual preferences and cultures.

The British Crime Survey 2010/11 includes a self-completion module on intimate violence. This covers emotional, financial and physical abuse by partners or family members, as well as sexual assaults and stalking experienced by adults aged 16 to 59.

Nineteen per cent of women and two per cent of men reported having experienced sexual assault (including attempts) since the age of 16. In addition, around three per cent of women and one per cent of men had experienced some form of sexual assault (including attempts) in the last year.

For a variety of reasons, sexual violence often goes unreported.

The government response to Baroness Stern's 2010 review of how rape complaints are handled by public authorities in England and Wales observed that "despite progress in recent years, it is estimated that up to nine in ten cases of rape go unreported and 38 per cent of serious sexual assault victims tell no one about their experience."²⁴

Research such as the 2009 Rape Experience Review by then Victims' Champion Sara Payne highlights the importance to victims of the first response they receive when they disclose an offence, whether to the police or anyone else:

"The women I spoke to were clear that if they are not treated with dignity when first reporting rape, it is unlikely they would continue to support a prosecution. Women felt that the attitudes and

response of police officers need to change and rape needs to be treated more seriously; they wanted a greater investment in ensuring that the police provide a believing, sensitive and consistent response."²⁵

Since this review was undertaken, the number of rape crisis centres and sexual assault referral centres in England and Wales has increased.

Police and criminal justice responses to victims of serious sexual violence have increased considerably.

Nationwide, many forces now have specially trained police officers (STOs) to act as a link between the victim and the investigation team, and to attend court with the victim.

Many areas also have independent sexual violence advisors (ISVAs) who operate in a similar fashion to independent domestic violence advisors (IDVAs), but their numbers are far fewer.

In addition to these changes, all agencies recognise that there is still room for improvement.



Sexual violence in Cleveland

A full needs assessment commissioned by the Teesside Sexual Violence Strategy Group was completed in January 2012²⁶. The final report recognises the difficulties in accurately measuring the true extent of sexual violence due to under-reporting of incidents. In addition, it is noted that victims of sexual violence seek help from a wide variety of organisations, and at varying intervals after their assault. Many mainstream services will be dealing with individuals who are victims of sexual violence or abuse, although this may not be apparent and go unnoticed.

British Crime Survey data suggests that 1% of males and 3% of females aged between 16 and

²³ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/counting-rules/count-sexual?view=Binary>

²⁴ The Government Response to the Stern Review, March 2011

²⁵ Rape: The Victim Experience Review, Sara Payne, November 2009

²⁶ Teesside Sexual Violence Needs Assessment January 2012

59 are likely to have experienced sexual violence in the last 12 months. Applying this to the population of Cleveland, it is likely that 4,925 people will have experienced sexual assault in the last 12 months. Of these, it is estimated that 1,197 people (994 females and 163 males) will have experienced serious sexual assault. In addition, from British Crime Survey statistics it is estimated that 9,264 people across Cleveland will have experienced serious sexual assault on one or more occasion since the age of 16²⁷.

The needs assessment evidenced a range of agencies providing services for victims of sexual violence across Cleveland. Some agencies provide specialist sexual violence services such as counselling and emotional support, while others are mainstream services that are being accessed by victims, sometimes for seemingly unrelated reasons, such as sexual health services and mental health services.

A survey of stakeholders and interviews with key sexual violence service providers undertaken by the needs assessment team highlighted the difficulty in obtaining a true picture of the demand on local services being accessed by victims of sexual violence. Many agencies (particularly those without a specific remit to respond to sexual violence) reported that information may be embedded in practitioners' case notes and were unlikely to be systematically 'flagged' or recorded as 'sexual violence'. Very few agencies have developed systematic methods of collecting or collating data on victims of sexual violence. Additionally, sexual violence is often hidden and an underlying factor for the people who seek help from agencies, and is therefore not as easily identified and captured as an initial 'presenting' issue. However, agencies providing specialist support for victims of sexual violence were much better able to identify the demand on their services.

In terms of provision, Cleveland has one Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) and three independent sexual violence advisers (ISVA). There is also a range of voluntary agencies providing specialist sexual violence services including:

- Women's Support Network and Jigsaw
- Eva Women's Aid
- Harbour
- Barnardo's.

The services include pre and post counselling, emotional and practical support, and support through the criminal justice system, where required. Barnardo's deliver services tailored to young people. In 2009/2010, 258 young victims (53% aged 14-17 years) accessed the services of the Sexual Exploitation of Children on the Streets (SECOS) project. Similarly, the Bridgeway Project was accessed by 210 young people (51% of whom were aged 13 years and under).

The Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) in Newcastle provides a service for acute child sexual abuse cases (within seven days of abuse occurring), as part of a regional response for the North East and is funded by NHS Tees. Between May 2010 and October 2011, 47 children from across Cleveland received a service. Non-acute or historical cases of child sexual abuse, where sexual abuse has occurred more than seven days ago, are seen locally by paediatricians.

The needs assessment concluded that there was good provision of specialist sexual violence services with a skilled and committed workforce. However, it was thought that some victims' needs were not being met effectively. These included:

- victims who are awaiting trial
- children and young people
- victims who have been abusers
- people from black and minority ethnic communities
- people with learning disabilities.

The key themes that emerged from the needs assessment for improving services for victims of sexual violence were the need to:

- develop services around the needs of victims
- ensure victims can receive the right service at the right time
- commission a 'whole system' that describes how elements of services work together
- clarify what is being commissioned through up-to-date service level agreements

²⁷ British Crime Survey 2010-2011

- ensure service standards are equitable across Teesside
- routinely monitor outcomes
- develop clear pathways of care, and for agencies to develop joint protocols and agree minimum standards
- invest in training and professional development by service providers
- raise professional awareness of sexual violence²⁸.

What victims told us

Despite improvements in the way in which victims of sexual violence are supported, the victims we spoke to still referred to the need for a more sensitive approach by criminal justice agencies including the police and courts. Some had experienced what they perceived as disbelief and this was particularly so for those victims who had disclosed abuse retrospectively.

Victims who had disclosed sexual abuse retrospectively told us that they felt guilty about not reporting it straight away. When the abuse had occurred during their childhood this was often because they didn't know whether anyone would believe them. One victim told us: *"I still don't know if they believe me because I waited so long"*. The complicated processes combined with a lack of regular contact and the feeling of just being a number had made it difficult for many victims to engage with criminal justice system processes.

"I didn't know what was available and not confident enough to find help on my own."

(Victim of sexual abuse)

Issues around waiting lists for certain services were noted as major issues for victims as well as restrictions on access to counselling services until after cases had gone to trial. Both reporting sexual abuse and seeking support to cope with the impact appear to be magnified for male victims.

Other key messages that we heard were:

²⁸ Teesside Sexual Violence Needs Assessment 2012

- The need for support doesn't always end when the court case is over - it should be offered for as long as it takes for victims to get their life back together;
- People react to being victimised in different ways and this means that support should be given not just because of the nature of the crime but the way in which the person is affected by it;
- Victims want to take control over their lives again; help with developing coping/life strategies that empower people and help them to gradually get their life back together is crucial to facilitate this.

Case study: female victim of rape

"I dialled 999 and the police came really quickly, they took him straight away but he was only in custody for 24 hours and then bailed. He did break his bail conditions though so he was rearrested and put on remand. The prison was really good as well; they blocked his telephone calls and letters to me."

"I had the same police officer throughout the case and she was very understanding and gave me lots of help, everyone at the SARC was really good, made me feel comfortable. I also had really good support and safety advice from (support agency) and (support agency)."

"The only bad bit was when it came to court. I didn't have any contact with the Witness Service so didn't know I could go and look around the court before the date of the case, the police discussed special measures but then decided not to apply for them and I only met the barrister on the morning of the court case so didn't know what to expect."

"No-one asked if I was ok to get to court on my own or organise care for the kids. I still haven't been offered counselling but I am still getting support from... (support agency) and... (support agency) so that's helping."

Case study: Women's Support Network and Jigsaw

Based in Middlesbrough, Women's Support Network and Jigsaw offer free one-to-one confidential counselling to anyone who has been affected by rape or sexual abuse at any time in their life. The Jigsaw element of the organisation

is the equivalent service for men and boys, who are given the same choices, in relation to counselling, as women and girls. The organisation offers an 'end-to-end' service that reflects the need for support beyond the completion of criminal justice processes.

As well as counselling, support includes a life enhancement skills adviser and provision of ISVAs who will liaise with the various agencies involved, for example the police or Crown Prosecution Service, on behalf of the victim, and make appropriate referrals to other agencies in relation to any housing issues, debt or benefits. The ultimate aim of the service is to ensure that the rights of the victim are recognised and upheld and that they are fully supported emotionally and practically.

Conclusions

The discussions we had with victims and other stakeholders all point to the need for a more consistent response to victims who report sexual violence either at the time it happens or retrospectively. There is also a perceived need for more information about the support available, better communication and availability of independent advocacy and/or support for victims. The need for follow up support was described as crucial by victims and other stakeholders to ensure that it does not stop once criminal justice processes have ended. It is only at this time that the recovery process begins for many victims.

A better understanding of the scale of the problem in relation to retrospective disclosure, male victims and the needs of victims from different backgrounds and cultures such as those with a disability and black and minority ethnic or lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities is important to ensure that these needs are met and responded to appropriately.

4.4. People bereaved by murder and manslaughter

What are murder and manslaughter?

Murder and manslaughter are defined as:

- murder
- manslaughter and
- infanticide.

This report also considers the needs of those bereaved as a result of culpable road traffic incidents.

The local data available on services for those bereaved by murder and manslaughter, including services for those bereaved as a result of culpable road traffic incidents, has been limited because most services we mapped deliver on a national rather than on a local basis.

For example, the charity Brake is a national provider of emotional support, information, help and advocacy to people bereaved and seriously injured in road crashes. This is delivered through a UK-wide helpline and via partnerships with police family liaison officers, who distribute Brake's support packs for people bereaved in road crashes, *Advice for family and friends following a death on the road*²⁹. Brake's packs and helpline offer emotional comfort, guidance on practical matters, and signpost to further sources of support, including locally available help.

We have tried to include all services accessible to victims in Cleveland, but may have missed some of them.

We did not hold focus groups or interviews with people bereaved by murder and manslaughter. Instead, the project has referred to the 2011 report by the former Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses, Louise Casey, on services for secondary victims of murder and manslaughter.³⁰

²⁹ These packs are produced by Brake and funded by the Ministry of Justice for use by families bereaved by road crashes in England and Wales. Support literature for bereaved children, serious injury victims, and those affected by road death in other parts of the UK is available from Brake.

³⁰ Review into the Needs of Families Bereaved by Homicide, Louise Casey CB, July 2011

This called for, among other things:

- A dedicated casework service to help [bereaved families] with practical problems and support families in the early weeks and months following a bereavement. Where aspects of a case include complex and specialist areas of law, there should be arrangements in place for families to access additional assistance.
- Trauma and bereavement counselling as necessary.
- An offer of peer support through a national network of peer support/self help.
- Age-appropriate services for children.³¹



Murder and manslaughter in Cleveland

In 2010/2011, there were four recorded homicides in the Cleveland Police force area³².

Support for those bereaved by murder and manslaughter in Cleveland

Besides Besides police family liaison officers, Victim Support's homicide service, and a number of national providers such as Support after Murder and Manslaughter (SAMM) and Mothers against Murder and Aggression (MAMAA), there are few specialist services for those affected by murder or manslaughter. Mainstream services do offer help such as bereavement support and counselling as do some general providers such as CRUSE.

Mainstream and general services however, tend to focus on the physical, emotional and psychological recovery of the person rather than advocacy or practical help with claiming grants for funeral costs, for example. In addition, there is the issue of identifying and providing support to those outside the victim's immediate family.

³¹ Review into the Needs of Families Bereaved by Homicide, Louise Casey CB, July 2011

³² Homicide, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2010/2011: Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2010/2011

*“Redefining Justice”*³³ noted that while voluntary sector organisations will usually accept referrals from any bereaved person, support from criminal justice agencies is often limited and depends on the relationship between the victim and the bereaved person.

The relatively small, and fluctuating, numbers of homicide recorded year on year in Cleveland make it difficult to assess with any certainty the level of need.

Case study: Victim Support homicide service

The homicide service is a nationally managed service made up of five teams based in five locations around England and Wales. Each team consists of a team leader, five caseworkers and a support worker. There is a national homicide manager, completing the team of 36. On receiving a referral, a homicide caseworker carries out a needs assessment and work begins to support the bereaved person in a range of ways. Often the help at the start is very practical; help with the funeral, meetings with the police, childcare, and benefits, typically reinforced by emotional support as the relationship between the bereaved and the caseworker develops. The caseworker can also commission a number of specialist interventions such as trauma support and support for bereaved children. The homicide service was the first service that Victim Support developed and rolled out as a national rather than regional service.

Conclusions

Taking a harm based approach to delivering support would ensure that services would be available to help secondary victims in the case of homicide. This would mean that all those affected by the crime would be identified and offered support.

³³ Payne, S, *Redefining Justice: Addressing the individual needs of victims and witnesses* (2009)

4.5. Victims of hate crime

What is hate crime?

*'Any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic.'*³⁴

In 2007, the police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Prison Service (now the National Offender Management Service) and other agencies that make up the criminal justice system agreed a common definition of monitored hate crime to cover five 'strands,' in particular – disability, gender-identity, race, religion/faith and sexual orientation. Primarily, this was to ensure a consistent working definition to allow accurate recording and monitoring.³⁵

Hate crime can have a huge impact on victims – not only because of how the incident itself has affected the person, but also because bringing the offenders to justice can involve the victim having to reveal very personal and private aspects of their life.

*"They were calling me the usual names like 'speccy' and I tried to ignore it because it's not worth it. But when they threw the brick – that's too far."*³⁶

Hate crime does not only affect the targeted individual. It affects victims' families and the wider community, and can lead to further violence and aggressive behaviour.

Hate crime was included in the victims' services advocates project's work when our initial mapping of local services showed that providers across England and Wales were concerned that victims of this crime were still under-recognised and under-supported.

A particular issue that emerged from our focus groups and interviews across England and Wales

was that the boundaries between antisocial behaviour and hate crime can be blurred. It is important that victims are treated according to their individual needs, rather than according to a crime category which they appear to fit into.

It is hoped that some of these issues will be addressed by the Home Office hate crime action plan, 'Challenge it, Report it, Stop it' published in March 2012. This outlines the new national strategy for tackling hate crime by through focussing on prevention, early intervention and improving the response to victims. Aiming, among other things, to achieve better multi agency working to identify and support victims, and to reduce the grey area between ASB and hate crime, the strategy includes the following actions:

- working with police forces, councils and housing providers to improve handling of public calls about anti-social behaviour, to identify possible hate crime and victims at risk
- publishing risk assessment tools that allow police and other call handlers to identify victims of hate crime earlier in the reporting process
- engaging with communities at risk of hate crime to raise awareness of the law on hate crime, and increase reporting
- putting Safeguarding Adults Boards on a statutory footing, to increase the awareness, detection and prevention of abuse and exploitation of adults in vulnerable circumstances.

In 2010, 47, 229 hate crimes were recorded by police forces in England and Wales. Of these:

- 38,670 were racist crimes;
- 4,736 were based on sexual orientation;
- 1,959 were religious hate crimes;
- 1,512 targeted disabled people; and
- 352 targeted transgender people³⁷

³⁴ Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime. HM Government, March 2012

³⁵ Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime. HM Government, March 2012

³⁶ Quote from victim (Equality and Human Rights Commission report, 'Promoting the safety and security of disabled people', 2009).

³⁷ ACPO (2011) Recorded Hate Crime Data for 2010 for England, Wales and Northern Ireland: http://www.report-it.org.uk/files/acpo_hate_crime_data_for_2010.pdf

Hate crime in Cleveland

Hate crime is believed to be under-reported³⁸. Hate crime is acknowledged as a priority in all four Community Safety Partnerships and equally, that further work is necessary to measure the full nature and scale of the problem.

What else do we know about hate crime in Cleveland?

References to hate crime in relevant strategies and action plans focus primarily on two distinct strands of action; firstly, encouraging reporting, providing support to victims and targeting offenders, and secondly, developing community cohesion through education, awareness and encouraging understanding.



Support for victims of hate crime

There is generally very little evidence of specialist support services for victims of hate crime. Much of the support is delivered by organisations with a much broader remit such as Victim Support or organisations for communities of interest, for example Hart Gables, Mencap, North of England Refugee Service and many more. Adult safeguarding services play a key role in identifying and supporting vulnerable adults subject to hate crime.

The victims we spoke to told us that their experience of hate crime had intruded into many aspects of their lives. In addition to the impact of individual incidents, the process of bringing offenders to justice often involved delving into and revealing very personal and private aspects of their life. Understanding, respecting and providing support for the potentially devastating effect this can have on the family, social, work and health related circumstance of an individual was described by victims as essential to

delivering appropriate support for victims of hate crime.

Victims also described what they perceived as a 'hierarchy' of hate crime where some incidents were taken more seriously than others in relation to motivation and prejudice. In addressing this, we were told that more needs to be done to develop relationships with individuals as well as communities so that people were confident that reporting would be taken seriously and acted on.

Working with victims as well as those organisations currently supporting them would deliver a greater understanding in terms of identifying issues and trends, gathering 'real time' intelligence and drawing on expertise in relation to providing appropriate levels of support.

Case study: victim of homophobic and disability motivated hate crime

"I've had a lot of verbal abuse on Facebook, while out in the town and at college. I didn't report it to the police because I thought that it would just drag it all back up again and I wanted to forget about it. I did report it to Facebook and they closed the account down.

"It spoiled my life for a long time, made me paranoid and affected the relationship with my partner. I have a friend at college who, like me, uses a wheelchair, he's not gay but because we often hung around together he was getting abuse as well.

"I was lucky; I was able to talk to someone at..... (support agency) about it and had the opportunity for support in a safe place.

"Once your thoughts and attitudes change towards the verbal abuse you react differently and that can have a positive effect because people don't do it as much if they think you're not bothered. It's different for physical abuse though and people need to know more about where to get help and support and more safe spaces to report the abuse."

(Victim of homophobic and disability related hate crime)

³⁸ Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime. HM Government, March 2012

Case study: Hart Gables

Hart Gables is a registered charity providing support to LGBT communities. The organisation provides a wide range of support across the Tees Valley area such as counselling and drop-in services.

Hart Gables has a dedicated hate crime officer who will assist people who have been a victim of hate crime to report the incident and then to support them through criminal justice processes, liaising and co-ordinating as necessary and accompanying victims to court where appropriate. Reports of hate crime can be made in confidence face-to-face at their office, by telephone or via email. The organisation provides a safe space for people to disclose their experience, join peer support groups and have one-to-one tailored support to help minimise the impact of the crime.

Hart Gables also works closely with the police and other relevant agencies to raise the profile of the impact of hate crime on members of LGBT communities and support community cohesion.

Conclusions

A number of principles must underpin the development of an appropriate response to victims of hate crime³⁹:

- improved agency training in relation to understanding issues such as culture, background and special needs
- scrutiny of recorded, recognised hate crime to identify trends and learn from experience
- recognising all diversity strands
- avoiding a hierarchy of hate crime where some are seen as more important than others
- strong community engagement to build confidence, trust and encourage full reporting
- sharing good practice
- effective reporting mechanisms including carefully monitored and evaluated third party reporting

Appropriate communication and information are key areas for attention as many victims of hate crime also have special needs in relation to communication, for example provision of independent interpreters.

Finally, victims of hate crime are often already engaging with communities, networks and organisations of common interest. Many victims prefer to turn to these existing networks for support and would not necessarily feel comfortable relying on generic or victim specific services. Thought should be given to the additional burden this places on capacity and associated issues of resource allocation.

³⁹ Stonewall, Research into hate crime LGBT survey (2008)

4.6. Young victims of crime

The British Crime Survey estimated that there were 878,000 crimes affecting 10-15 year-olds in England and Wales in 2010/11. Of these, two-thirds (576,000) were violent crimes (77 per cent of which resulted in injury to the victim, mainly minor bruising or black eyes). Most of the other third (275,000) were thefts of personal property. A much smaller number of children (27,000) experienced vandalism of personal property.

Over a third of all reported rapes (36%) are against children under 16 years old,⁴⁰ and one in six teenage girls reported intimate partner violence.⁴¹

Indirect victimisation is also common among children and young people. In a recent study, almost one in five young people (22% of girls and 13.5% of boys) said they had experienced cyber bullying.⁴² Given the widespread use of social networking, this type of crime can be especially difficult to police or prevent.

Though many young people are affected by crime, they are less likely than adults to report it, seeing it more 'as a fact of life'⁴³.

A 2011 study of young people's experience of the police and criminal justice system by the charity Catch 22 found particular barriers to young people reporting crime, including:

- lack of trust in the police
- tensions between young people and the police
- fear of being perceived as 'a grass' or fear of retaliation.⁴⁴

Crime perpetrated in school can be difficult to identify and to address as teachers are not always trained to deal with issues beyond bullying. Young people can be vulnerable to further abuse

and repeat victimisation if they speak about what has happened to them. Those in same sex relationships are reluctant to report for fear of homophobia from classmates or teachers.⁴⁵

Victim Support's 2007 report, *Hoodie or Goodie*, highlighted the fact that young victims and young offenders are often one and the same. This link is particularly prominent where violence is involved.⁴⁶

Without a clear idea of the protection available, young people will often keep quiet.⁴⁷ When they do speak up about their experiences, they are more likely to tell their peers than an adult. Although peer support and counselling schemes have been established in a number of UK schools, their remit does not always extend beyond bullying.⁴⁸

Catch 22 found⁴⁹ that young victims need help in three main areas:

- feeling unsafe after reporting a crime
- dealing with living around the offender after the crime
- lacking confidence and feeling unable to trust others.

It recommended that a variety of support be made available to young victims, from updates and information from the police to intensive mentoring and counselling.

Young victims of crime in Cleveland

There are significant difficulties in identifying exact figures for victims of crime under the age of 16. These figures have only recently been included in the British Crime Survey for example, and are not yet available by police force area.

Estimates from work done to supplement British Crime Survey data⁵⁰ indicate that young men are

⁴⁰ Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls, Home Office, November 2010

⁴¹ NSPCC, 2009

⁴² O'Brien, N., Moules, T. and Walker, S. (2011) *The Impact of Cyber Bullying on Mental Health* London: NSPCC and Anglia Ruskin University

⁴³ NSPCC, 2009

⁴⁴ Catch 22 (2001) *What works: Developing a welfare approach to supporting young victims*. London: Catch 22

⁴⁵ NSPCC 2009

⁴⁶ *Hoodie or Goodie*, Victim Support, 2007

⁴⁷ Firmin, C. (2011) *This is it, This is my life: Female Voice in Violence* London: ROTA

⁴⁸ NSPCC 2009

⁴⁹ Catch 22 (2001) *What works: Developing a welfare approach to supporting young victims*. London: Catch 22

⁵⁰ Smith, K (ED), Lader, D, Hoare, J, and Lau, I, *Hate crime, cyber security and the experience of crime among*

twice as likely to be victims as young women and that, comparatively speaking, young people with a disability are more likely to be victimised (15% compared with 6%). 70% of the young people who participated in this work did not see what had happened to them as a crime; 37% said they knew something was wrong but not a crime while 33% said they thought it was “*just something that happens*”. In 56% of crimes involving children and young people the offender is well known to the victim and in over half of all cases the crime occurs in or around school.

What else do we know about young victims of crime in Cleveland?

There is little specific information about young victims in Cleveland. Generally, children and young people are far more likely to become victims of crime than adults. Direct and indirect victimisation is common among children and young people. Bullying, theft, physical and sexual abuse and trafficking are all examples of direct victimisation. Equally, children and young people are frequently indirect victims because of crimes experienced by their parents, siblings, other relatives or friends. While criminal justice systems and the media often put more emphasis on young people as offenders, they have the same fears of crime as adults and need to feel reassured that their concerns will be taken seriously and their rights protected.

A joint inspection on the experience of young victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system undertaken by Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPPI)⁵¹ acknowledged that young victims and witnesses are among some of the most vulnerable users of the criminal justice system and that if victim and witness care is to be targeted at those with the greatest need this will almost always include young people.

The report identified that in a 12 month period around 33,000 children and young adults under

children: findings from the 2010/11 British Crime Survey (March 2012)

⁵¹ HMCPPI, *Joint inspection report on the experience of young victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system (2012)*

the age of 18 years will be involved in giving evidence in a criminal trial, with further young people being victims of or witnesses to crimes that do not end up with a criminal prosecution. Further, it was acknowledged that aside from their vulnerability, children and young witnesses of today are the adults of tomorrow, and ensuring they have the confidence to report a crime and are then supported to appear as witnesses enabling them to give their best evidence, is clearly central to a healthy and well functioning criminal justice system.

Support for young victims

As well as mainstream services, including safeguarding boards, Barnardo's Bridgeway Project delivers therapeutic support to children aged three to 18 years who have been sexually abused.

As part of the Safer Middlesbrough Partnership Prostitution, Exploitation and Trafficking (PET) theme group, SECOS has developed a new initiative to engage and protect young people missing from home, which works closely with Cleveland Police and Middlesbrough Common Assessment Framework (CAF) locality teams.

The Northern Rock Foundation has recently supported the funding of a male worker specifically to respond to hate crime, cyber security and the development of services for young men and boys being sexually exploited through prostitution. This worker aims to investigate ways to contact and provide case work and protective services to a hidden population of young men and boys who are being exploited within the Tees Valley area.

In Hartlepool and Stockton, the Children's Society delivers a Youth Justice and Children's Resource Project. The service works with and supports children and young people who have offended, are at risk of offending or who have themselves been victims of crime. It also supports and delivers services to disabled children and young people. The service works in partnership with Stockton and Hartlepool Youth Offending Services, Victim Support, the police, CPS, courts and the voluntary sector to deliver solution based mediation services.

Concerns expressed by stakeholders related to areas that had no core services but rather commissioned services on a 'one off' basis according to the need of individual victims. Equally, it was considered that more joint work with the CPS could be beneficial and sharing of intelligence/information was described as crucial. Middlesbrough was considered to have fairly robust processes in place to support young victims of sexual exploitation but other areas could benefit from strengthening procedures. Doubts were also expressed as to whether the scale of the sexual exploitation of young people had been acknowledged.

What young people told us

The young people we spoke to described a variety of experiences that ranged from those perceived as relatively minor, such as theft of their mobile telephone, through to more serious bullying by peers and very serious sexual abuse.

Case study

"The police were good and they kept in touch until a few months before the trial and then they seemed to contact us less often but I don't know why. The court was awful; even though I gave video evidence I still felt as though people thought I was telling lies.

"School was awful as well, I felt as if everyone was looking at me and knew what had happened. I had to move schools eventually.

"If it hadn't been for (support agency) I wouldn't have left the house, they helped me understand what was happening, got me back into doing things and made sure the rest of my family were involved as well so I didn't feel as though I was on my own."

(13-year-old victim of sexual assault)

Case study: Barnardo's SECOS (Sexual Exploitation of Children on the Streets) project

Barnardo's SECOS project provides a day service for young people that includes one-to-one support, including child protection crisis intervention, and the provision of a safe place which includes showering, cooking and laundry

facilities. The service has close links with sexual health, substance and alcohol misuse, mental health and housing services and can support referrals across to these other agencies. An evening outreach service is also provided in non-residential areas, bed and breakfast and unsupported accommodation where young people and vulnerable adults are located. The outreach service provides an opportunity to engage young people in conversation and assessment about issues affecting them including sexual health, drug and alcohol misuse, general health and wellbeing, and experiences of exploitation, violence and abuse. There is also an ISVA specialising in work with young people.

A series of day and evening group work facilities are also available where a variety of activities are offered, including arts and crafts, poetry, film production and photography, looking at issue based activities such as sexual health, safe sex and relationships, bullying and coercion, and drugs and alcohol awareness. The aim is to offer opportunities for success and a sense of achievement to help build self-esteem and raise awareness of issues that affect their lives.

Conclusions

In common with the views expressed by the adult victims we spoke to, young people told us that not everyone will need the same level or type of support. This is supported by the report discussed above, where it is acknowledged that young people will react differently to the impact of crime and that it is not possible to determine what each individual young person will need based on the crime they experienced. The report goes on, however, to establish a number of key principles that should underpin the support available for young victims of crime:

- have a variety of ways – formal and informal – to assess young victims' individual needs
- have a variety of ways to support young victims including one-to-one sessions and group work
- use existing provision including sports clubs, youth groups and statutory services like housing and health

Similarly, this report acknowledges that there is no single agency that can successfully meet all

the needs of young people and more specifically those of young victims. Young victims of crime are best served when agencies work together, raising awareness of youth victimisation, sharing information about young people and existing provision and making referrals between agencies to ensure all needs are addressed.

5 Delivering services to victims

Issues identified and what can be done to address them

Police and crime commissioners (PCCs) have a duty to obtain the views of victims of crime before producing their policing plan.

They also have the potential to play a key role in championing the needs of victims in their local area.

This gives victims an unprecedented opportunity to have a real voice in influencing and shaping the services they receive at local level.

This report builds on the considerable work already done by partner organisations in Cleveland. It gives a snapshot rather than a forensic examination of the service needs of victims in Cleveland, and there is room for further research.

We hope that this evidence will encourage the incoming PCC for Cleveland to understand and respond to the needs of victims in (PFA), and to prioritise their needs accordingly. We propose the following actions to address the issues identified in this report:



Proposed actions

5.1 Introduction of harm/impact based model of assessment and support

The PCC should:

- recognise all victims of crime and anti-social behaviour as individuals with individual needs
- respond to crime and anti-social behaviour according to the likely harm or impact experienced by the victim
- treat victims according to their needs, taking into account the needs of their children and wider family as appropriate, in service

provision, and making regular assessments of how a victim's needs change over time

- introduce incentives for services that can demonstrate how they achieve the best overall outcome for victims.

5.2 Clear, jointly agreed, monitored and evaluated pathways for referral, assessment and support

The PCC should:

- review existing referral processes and pathways across specialist support services to ensure seamless provision
- review current flexibility of pathways into mainstream and wider support networks to support early intervention and reduce potential for re-victimisation
- develop advocacy provision to enable victims to make their own views and wishes clear, express and present their views effectively, obtain independent advice and accurate information, and negotiate and resolve conflict.

5.3 Review of communication and information standards, monitoring and evaluation

The PCC should:

- introduce standards of communication with victims of crime that include measures not only of frequency, but sensitivity, timeliness, appropriateness and tailoring to those with special communication needs and the use of appropriate language
- implement more efficient ways for victims to request/receive feedback according to their needs whilst managing their expectations
- introduce effective monitoring and reviewing of compliance
- introduce sustained awareness raising campaigns about services available to victims, especially for hard to reach groups.

5.4 Introduction of robust models of victim engagement

The PCC should:

- work with key stakeholders as well as local and national organisations to regularly gather and update information on current services and their scope, by crime type and victim demographic, and to report back on service gaps and victim needs
- create local mechanisms that are sensitive to the needs of victims to enable them to give feedback on their experiences
- identify/appoint victims' advocates/champions to work with victims and stakeholders to ensure that due care is given to victims' needs.

5.5 Explore, agree and initiate models of consortium/collaborative service delivery

The PCC should:

- acknowledge and support current partnership and commissioning arrangements
- be sensitive to the challenges that local commissioning arrangements may present, and work with relevant stakeholders to support an effective and high standard of service delivery for victims
- explore and support consortium/collaborative service delivery arrangements to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and economies of scale.

6 Appendices

Appendix 1: Methodology

The Cleveland victims' services advocate (VSA) used a variety of research methods and data to investigate issues explored in this report and address the overall aims of the project. These comprised qualitative and quantitative elements and involved conducting primary research and drawing on existing research (secondary research).

Five methods of enquiry were employed:

1. Mapping victim services in the local police force area

The first exercise we undertook in this project was to 'map' existing services available to victims in Cleveland. This was done to establish a baseline understanding of the local service landscape and to build a network for the victims' services advocates to draw on throughout the rest of the project.

We mapped provision for victims in each of the crime categories considered by this report, and further separated these into the sub-categories of:

- statutory sector
- voluntary sector
- structures/partnerships (to include representative bodies such as local criminal justice boards or regular meetings of different agencies with a service focus, such as MARACs)

We mapped services rather than organisations, in recognition of the fact that the same organisation can offer a range of services. We only mapped services that explicitly supported victims as victims, rather than those that supported a wider client group in which victims might be highly represented. This was decided in recognition of the limited time and capacity of the project but it is acknowledged that by defining the scope of the exercise in this way, some services may be missed, particularly for those victims who do not report crime. Drugs and alcohol services are a possible example of this. We mapped services for witnesses of crime mainly where witnesses were also victims.

We sought information on services including:

- geographical coverage
- summary of services offered (including who provides support to whom and whether there is a focus on a specific crime type)
- any restrictions on services available (e.g. only offer support to 11-15 year olds)
- client group
- referral routes
- number of clients supported
- local issues of concern
- sustainability (e.g. how long are they are funded for)
- current funding source

Not all the services mapped were willing to provide all the information requested; this was particularly true of questions around funding.

The mapping exercise was conducted by a mixture of phone and desk-based research, with some meetings. It was mainly collected between June and August 2011 and ongoing updating of the maps continued on an ad hoc basis for the remainder of the project period.

Many local stakeholders and organisations requested copies of the maps. The project steering group agreed in January 2012 that the maps could be circulated with the more sensitive pieces of information, such as funding information and 'local issues of concern' removed.

All services contained within the map were asked to confirm that the data contained about their services before the maps could be published. The maps are due to be published by the end of May 2012, again, with information on funding or 'local issues of concern' removed.

There were a number of limitations to this element of our research, including:

- **time-sensitiveness:** the maps were initially baselined in early September 2011, since which time many services will have emerged, developed or reduced their activities, or ceased to operate, therefore the map can only offer a 'snapshot' in time and will quickly become out of date
- **representing the full range of services:** because completing the maps placed a call on the time of those services we contacted, or relied on information available online, it may have favoured larger organisations with the capacity to assist us or those with an online presence. This may mean that smaller organisations were not mapped
- **significance of apparent 'gaps' in provision:** many of the service providers we spoke to talked about gaps in provision, citing that there was no service for a certain group in the local area. We were cautious not to draw conclusions about supply versus demand on the basis of this anecdotal evidence alone, recognising that factors such as the level of need in a local area, provision in neighbouring areas and the specific needs of victims with certain characteristics should be considered in drawing such conclusions

A textual analysis of conclusions from the mapping exercise in Cleveland can be found at appendix 6.

2. Consultation with stakeholders and organisations

Following the mapping exercise, we consulted stakeholders and colleagues in service delivery organisations to access feedback on the needs and experiences of a wider range of victims. We wanted to talk to representatives from these organisations because, as they work with large numbers of victims every year, they are able to:

- form opinions based on the experiences of a wide range of service users
- note patterns, gaps and needs
- understand the limitations on services' ability to meet these needs – from a service provider's perspective
- explain what has been tried before, and what they would like to see tried in future, based on a realistic understanding of current political trends and financial constraints
- explain what works for victims and what doesn't
- offer strategic proposals for solving the problems experienced by victims

We found it particularly valuable to consult stakeholders and organisations supporting victims we struggled to recruit to focus groups and interviews for qualitative research. Talking to professionals was one way of ensuring that victims we found harder to reach could be represented in the research. Many of these organisations offered additional help in signposting us to others which could provide additional information.

We consulted stakeholders and organisations individually throughout the project, and collectively towards the end, in drafting the proposed actions listed in chapter five of this report. We held a 'roundtable' discussion with stakeholders, seeking their feedback on the draft text of these and making amendments in response to their feedback. One of the limitations of this approach was that not all stakeholders invited to contribute were willing or able to, and, where a consensus did not appear, not all could have their views represented in the final proposed actions or wider body of the report. Therefore managing expectations was key to this element of our research.

3. Review of existing research and reports

We reviewed a selection of existing literature exploring the experiences of victims and provision of victim services. The aim of this was to gain greater knowledge and understanding of the issues and to identify how the project fits with and compares to the existing body of knowledge.

We generally only considered literature published since 2008 to the present day. Where there was a lack of recent data on certain issues we have referred to the most up to date sources. This decision was taken to ensure that the literature identified remained relevant to the current experiences of and services for victims. The time constraints of the project also meant that we had to limit our review to literature from a relatively short time period. Literature we reviewed included local and national research reports from statutory and voluntary sector agencies, as well as academic bodies; it also included the published strategies, action plans and force plans from government departments and agencies including the Home Office and individual police forces.

The search for literature was completed electronically using online search engines such as Google. In addition organisations identified in the mapping of victim services in each police area were consulted about research or publications they were aware of or had produced themselves. Hard copies were also made available to us by stakeholders.

In total 42 reports were identified and cited in this report.

This review was limited in scope as it did not use a range of search strategies to identify literature. It is therefore likely that many relevant publications were not identified. In particular the review omits empirical research not freely available online e.g. studies published in academic journals requiring subscription.

4. Secondary analysis of the British Crime Survey 2010/11 dataset

We analysed data from the British Crime Survey 2010/11 in order to understand the scale of need and the perceptions of victims and non-victims in Cleveland.

The data set used was the British Crime Survey 2010/11, non-victim user form.

Access was through the Economic and Social Data Service via special licence⁵² and analysis was completed following the BCS user guide⁵³, using SPSS software.

We extracted data against a selection of questions in the British Crime Survey which would tell us what victims in Cleveland thought of the police, the criminal justice system, and other services.

We analysed the data using the following methods:

⁵² <http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/bcs/>

⁵³ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/user-guide-crime-statistics/user-guide-crime-statistics?view=Binary>

- cross-tabulation of public perception data at the police force area level
- calculation of average incidence rates for key crime categories at the police force area level

We did not carry out significance testing of BCS data. Therefore the figures are quoted based on observed difference rather than proven statistical significance.

5. Qualitative semi-structured interviews and focus groups

The aim of the qualitative element of the research was to explore the experiences and perspectives of individuals who had been a victim of one of the crime categories in the last two years. This was done by conducting 1-1 interviews and focus groups with victims of crime in Cleveland.

The focus groups conducted with children and young people differed slightly from the other four crime categories as participants were not required to have been a victim of crime in the past two years. This option was taken firstly because there are very few dedicated services for young victims of crime from which participants could be recruited and secondly because, when talking to groups of young people per se, such as youth groups, we did not want to single young people out as victims. Most importantly, we did not want the lack of dedicated young victims' services to prevent young people having their voices heard in this research.

As a consequence the topic guide was not designed to focus on personal experiences but instead used scenarios to draw out opinions and perspectives in a sensitive and safe way. More detailed information about the part of the project is found in Appendix 2.

Rationale for the approach:

We used a variety of methods of research to enable us to examine the issues through a number of different lenses and achieve a deepening and a widening in understanding. We wanted to ensure that we triangulated our findings from these different research methods and data to give our findings validity.

There were also more pragmatic reasons for using a variety of methods. The project's aims could not be addressed using a single method of inquiry. For example, while qualitative interviews with victims provided information about their individual experiences, opinions and access to services, these did not provide an effective and systematic method for mapping all the existing services in the local police force area. Similarly, consulting professionals about the needs and experiences of victims would provide some information about the needs and experiences of victims, however this would be from the perspective of the professional rather than victims themselves. It is also worth noting that, as is the case with all projects, the research methods were in part shaped by the time and resource constraints of the project.

Appendix 2: Qualitative semi-structured interviews and focus groups with victims

The following provides more detail about the qualitative element of the research which was designed to explore the experiences and perspectives of victims of crime.

The approach:

The aim of the qualitative element of the research was to capture the experiences and opinions of victims in the five crime categories: victims of anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, sexual violence and hate crime and young people affected by crime – whether or not they had been victims themselves. The use of an in-depth qualitative approach enabled participants to raise issues that were important to them, drawing on their own experiences and using their own words. The data collected through a qualitative approach is useful for understanding individuals' perspectives on particular issues and the meanings that they attach to their experiences and behaviour.

The limitations of qualitative research have been well documented. While qualitative research can provide rich, in-depth data, it can also be small in scale and dependent on context. Because of this, generalisations cannot be made about the experiences of the wider population on the basis of this research. In addition qualitative research can be seen as more subjective than quantitative data both in terms of data collection (researcher influence) and data analysis. We hoped to overcome these limitations to some extent by the use of different methods to explore the issues of concern to this study i.e. consultation with professionals as well as victims, analysis of the 2010/11 British Crime Survey, review of relevant literature and mapping existing services for victims.

Design of research tools:

A semi-structured topic guide was developed in consultation with Victim Support's research manager. This helped to ensure that key issues were explored with each participant and gave interviewers the flexibility both to adapt their style to meet the needs of individual participants and to probe and explore issues in detail and with sensitivity. The topic guide was piloted with five participants initially to test out questions, gain feedback and make appropriate modifications. A copy of the topic guide used is provided at Appendix 4.

Conduct:

Originally the project planned to use focus groups as the sole qualitative method for investigation. This decision was in part influenced by the time constraints of the project, whereby it was envisaged that the use of focus groups would enable the project to reach a greater number of victims in a restricted time period allocated for fieldwork. In addition the use of focus groups was decided upon because the method for recruiting participants was primarily via gateway organisations and it was felt that it would be beneficial to make use of pre-established groups, as these would have the advantage of being able to provide victims with support before and after a focus group should they require it. It was also felt that the group dynamic of a focus group would enable participants collectively to develop creative ideas to put to police and crime commissioners.

Early on in the data collection stage it became clear that the data collection methods needed to be flexible to account for the needs of victims and ensure everyone who wanted to participate could do so. For example many prospective participants were not comfortable taking part in a focus group for a variety of reasons (e.g. nervousness about speaking in groups, not wanting others to hear about their experiences etc) however they were happy to participate in a face to face interview. Others were unable to gather easily in one central location due to the limitations of geography, particularly in rural areas. The needs and requirements of the participants therefore dictated the use of a combination of focus groups and interviews.

For similar reasons, while the majority of interviews were conducted face to face with the interviewer, some were conducted over the telephone in order to meet the needs of the participant and facilitate the participation of those who were unable or unwilling to participate in a face to face interview. For some a telephone interview enables more control over the situation and provides a certain anonymity and privacy not available in a face to face interview.

With the permission of the participants, the interviews/focus groups were recorded using a digital recording device. Where permission was not granted the researcher took notes. The recordings were retained for a maximum of ten days and during this time the interviewer inputted information into the framework developed for sorting the data prior to analysis. The reason for this was to ensure that no data captured on the recording devices that could potentially identify participants was retained unnecessarily. In addition, between recordings being made and the data being entered into the framework analysis, recording devices were kept in locked cabinets so that the data they contained could not be accessed.

Criteria for participation:

Except in the case of children and young people, criteria for participation were that:

- the prospective participant had been a victim of at least one of the crime types in the last two years (except in the case of historic sexual abuse, victims of which often do not access services or report the crime until many years after it took place), and
- the prospective participant was aged over 18 years

We decided to focus on experiences that occurred in the last two years to ensure the relevance of those experiences to the existing provision of services in the local area and to avoid difficulties and inaccuracies in recall. The age restriction was put in place as it was agreed early on in the project to focus on the experiences of children and young people as a distinct part of the project and to reflect the additional ethical, safeguarding and welfare considerations of working with those under the age of 18 (see more information about children and young people below).

Sampling:

The aim was to reach a minimum of five participants in each local police force area in each of the crime categories. Inclusivity of participants across diversity strands was attempted by applying the conclusions of an equality impact assessment conducted at the beginning of the project.

Recruitment of participants:

Participants were recruited primarily through gateway organisations that were already providing or had provided support to the participants. This was partly dictated by pragmatic considerations (e.g. the gateway organisations already had access to the individuals that the project was looking to consult and could identify those who met the participation criteria) and partly due to ethical considerations (e.g. the gateway organisations were there to provide support to the participants after the research was completed and already had an understanding of their needs.) Host organisation Victim Support was also treated as a gateway organisation and trained Victim Support staff and volunteers offered immediate emotional support to participants drawn from both Victim Support networks and beyond. Participants were also recruited through local organisations and stakeholders. The interviews and focus groups took place between October 2011 and March 2012.

Ethical considerations:

The wellbeing and safeguarding of participants were paramount in the conduct of the interviews and focus groups. Key elements of the ethical approach taken included:

- providing prospective participants with the information needed to make an informed decision about whether to take part or not
- recording participants' decisions to take part via a consent form and providing them with the opportunity to withdraw consent
- explaining carefully to participants the steps taken to maintain confidentiality and the limitations to preserving confidentiality in accordance with Victim Support policies
- maintaining participant anonymity by removing all information that could potentially identify an individual
- minimising distress to participants during fieldwork e.g. conducting interviews and focus groups in a private and safe space; researcher sensitivity to the needs of participants, having a trained Victim Support staff member or volunteer available during the fieldwork to provide support if and when required etc.
- making referrals to specialist support services should further support be required by the participants
- recruitment of interviewers (victims' services advocates) with experience of working with victims of crime and/or other vulnerable groups
- the provision of detailed guidelines, briefings and training sessions to all researchers to prepare them for the role and taking into account areas of possible sensitivity (specific training was delivered to prepare VSAs for working with children and young people and victims of sexual violence)
- mandatory safeguarding training and Criminal Records Bureau checking of all interviewers before they could conduct interviews or focus groups

Children and Young People

We took a different approach to researching the experiences of children and young people firstly in recognition of the fact that there are few dedicated services for young victims around the country.

We wanted to make sure that we did capture the views of children and young people but did not consider it to be within the capability of the project to recruit one-off focus groups specifically of young victims of crime outside the support systems that a gateway organisation, such as a youth group, would provide. We therefore contacted existing groups and requested the opportunity to hold a focus group as part of an existing, planned session.

We did not want to ask the young people to talk about their personal experiences or indeed to single young people out as victims in a group environment so we used a fictional character, 'Alex', as a point of discussion and asked the young people to explain how Alex might feel as a victim of crime.

An amended topic guide was used for these sessions and can be found at appendix 3. This was developed with the advice of specialist young people's workers within Victim Support. Findings from the research with young people were captured on a separate framework to that used for adult participants and therefore data from the young people cannot be compared with that from the adults in a meaningful way.

Analysis:

The analysis of the interviews and focus groups was undertaken using a framework analysis approach. This approach was chosen as it offered a transparent and systematic method for analysing qualitative data which enables the research to stay focussed on the specific priorities of the study. The transparent procedural approach of framework analysis is valuable as it would allow another researcher to repeat the

process in order to verify findings. It is also a relatively straightforward approach which could easily be explained and adopted by all the researchers working on the project and which did not require the use of complex and expensive computer assisted qualitative data analysis software.

The first stage involved the researchers familiarising themselves with the data (through reading notes and/or listening to recordings) and then systematically sifting, summarising and sorting the data from each interview or focus group into a pre-designed thematic framework. The framework comprises a series of subject charts in Excel. The broad theme headings that made up the thematic framework used for this research were:

- impact of victimisation
- support needs of victims
- experience of the police, experience of other criminal justice system agencies
- experience of other agencies
- barriers and facilitators to accessing support, and
- recommendations

These broad themes were broken down further into sub-themes and there was also space within the framework for researchers to record information that did not fit into these themes but might still be important to the study. This meant that emerging and unexpected themes could be identified and recorded.

Researchers also recorded verbatim quotations from participants in the framework. Basic context information about each interview or focus group was recorded including whether it was a focus group or interview, the number of people participating, the crime type area and basic demographic detail.

Once the data was summarised and sorted in the framework then in depth analysis was conducted. Like all qualitative data analysis this was an iterative process and involved the researcher:

- reviewing the summarised data;
- systematically, comparing and contrasting the different accounts, experiences and perspectives;
- searching for patterns, contradictions or connections within the data;
- seeking explanations for patterns and associations and
- making interpretations grounded in the data.

Each crime type area was analysed separately initially to identify the concerns and issues specific to that victimisation experience. Where time was available all victim crime types were analysed together to identify where there were issues and concerns relevant to all victims interviewed.

Limitations of the qualitative research

As with all research this approach had certain limitations. Some of these were inherent in the methodology and others related to the specific response achieved for this study. Some of the limitations have been considered here:

- **Recruitment:** this was largely through gateway organisations and therefore may not have reached those victims that had not accessed services at all and may have the greatest needs/most unmet needs
- **Diversity of sample:** because of the small numbers of victims involved, we aimed to be inclusive rather than fully representative of all victims locally who had experienced each crime type. Generalisations about all victims representing a particular diversity strand cannot therefore be drawn on the basis of this research

- **Complexity of hate crime as a crime category:** because hate crime can be motivated by hostility on the basis of multiple diversity strands, it was not possible, with the small sample interviewed by this research, to gain the views of people affected by all types of hate crime. In Cleveland, we spoke to victims affected by racist, homophobic, transphobic and disability (mental health related) hate crime. We were not able to speak to victims of religiously motivated hate crime, so this research can only give a partial picture of the impact of hate crime locally.
- **Combination of interviews and focus groups:** because, led by the needs of participants, we conducted our research in a combination of group sizes, there is a risk of overstating data captured in interviews as it is more detailed and in depth
- **Retrospective views and past experiences:** because we were reliant on the recall of victims, there is a risk that this recall can be flawed, especially if events took place some time ago
- **Interviewer effect:** as with any research captured in person, there is a risk that interviewers will represent victims' views through a filter of their own personal perspective
- **Social desirability:** particularly in a group setting, there may be a risk of participants saying what they think is socially acceptable rather than what they really think
- **Bias of self-selection:** those who have had negative experiences with services may have been more motivated to take part, especially if they were likely to feel more strongly or want to have the opportunity for redress. Victims who had had more positive experiences may have felt less inclined to come forward
- **Only one part of the story:** because we didn't hold focus groups asking the same questions of agencies providing services to victims, we were unable to capture the same level of detail from their perspective about the challenges and difficulties facing agencies or the criminal justice system in meeting the needs of victims, However it was beyond the scope of this project to investigate this in detail as our priority was capturing the voice of victims

Appendix 3: Children and Young People topic guide

Topic Guide – VSA research (CYP)

Materials needed:

- Flipchart and pens
- Flashcards
- Post it notes
- Parental and young people consent forms (distributed by gateway organisations)
- Dictaphone
- Incentives e.g. pizza

Introduction

The group leader should introduce the VSA to the group, set ground rules and be on hand for any challenges that may arise throughout the session. Ground rules should be provided by the gateway organisation where possible; if they do not already have a list of ground rules then VSAs should use the ground rules document in the CYP toolkit.

“Good Afternoon/Evening. Thank you all for letting me take some of your time. I would like to start by introducing myself and explaining a little about the work I am doing which I hope you will be able to help me with.

My name is [insert name] and I am Victims’ Service’s Advocate for Cleveland. Part of my role is looking at what help and support there is available for victims and witnesses of crime and looking at ways that things may be improved for those affected by crime. I am here today to get your thoughts and opinions on policing and crime to help feed into this work.

This is connected to a big change that is coming up in how police are run - Police & Crime Commissioners (PCCs), who will be elected in November 2012 in each of the 42 police force areas in England & Wales.

PCCs will be responsible for setting what the police in the local area should focus their efforts and money on. They will also be responsible for deciding whether to start or support other services relating to crime, including services/support for victims of crime.

We want to try and make sure that one of the things they focus on is looking after victims. So part of my job is to write a report in a few months time on what the PCC should do to support victims of crime – including young victims.

Please be aware that I am not here to talk about any experiences personal to yourself, I am just looking at how you feel about some of the issues identified by victims and witnesses of crime. If over the course of the session you do wish to discuss something personal then please do discuss with the group leader after the session [confirm this with group leader].

Finally, anything that we do discuss will be in confidential and we will not be using anyone's names in the report we write. The only time we will break confidentiality will be if we believe you or someone else is in danger of harm. Please also respect the confidentiality of each other and do not disclose what is discussed in this focus group to others. "

- **Opening the discussion – 5 minutes**
 - **Ice breaker:** Ask young people to introduce themselves – their name and what they enjoy doing in their spare time (or similar)
N.B. This should be facilitated by the group leader with the VSA as participant
- **Support needs – 15 minutes**
 - **Case Study: Alex**
 - This is Alex (VSA draws picture of a boy on flip chart)
 - How old is he? (elicit feedback and write down answer on flip chart)
 - What does he like to do? (elicit feedback and write down answer on flip chart)
 - **VSA reads:**
 - Alex was out with some friends one evening. Whilst waiting at the bus stop with a friend a group of lads came up to them and demanded their phones and money.
 - Alex refused and when he did one of the lads punched him in the face badly cutting his lip.
 - Alex and his friend handed over all their money and phones and when the lads had gone they ran to a nearby phone box to call the police.

Q. What would they need from the police?

Prompts could include:

- Regular update on progress
- Signposting
- Sensitive to your needs
- Quick Response

Q. What other support might they need?

Prompts could include:

- Emotional support
- Specialist support
- Medical help
- Safer community (lighting, CCTV etc)

Q. Where could they get that support from?

Prompts could include:

- Local organisations
- Family and friends
- GP

Agree/Disagree – 10 mins

- Everyone stands in the centre of the room and **Agree** and **Disagree** signs are placed on either side of the room
- The facilitator reads out a specific point of view from the **CYP statement flashcards** on policing and crime e.g. “There is no point reporting abusive neighbours; nobody does anything about it anyway!”
- Ask people to move according to how far they agree or disagree with the statement; and ask why

What things do you think would help young victims of crime like Alex? - 5 minutes

- Make a list of things the young people think the PCC should do to help victims of crime. Include things such as ‘better communication with the victim’ and ‘provide more funding to local organisations’ etc
- Once the list is compiled split the young people into groups (max of 4 per group) and give each group a few post-it notes, then ask them to put down the three things they personally would like to see the PCC focus on. They can use items from the list or think of their own
- Collect them in, make a definitive list of main priorities on the flipchart and elicit a response from each group as to why these things are important

Conclusion

- Thank young people for their time and contribution
- Ask if there are any final questions or comments
- Ask if the young people are interested in seeing the report / being kept informed of progress – advise this will be available via the gateway organisation
- Communicate that a report will be available from May 2012

Closing the discussion (optional) – 5 minutes

A closedown activity (similar to the opening icebreaker) is recommended to closedown the discussion. **N.B. This should be facilitated by the group leader with the VSA as a participant.**

A closedown activity example is as follows:

- Ask everyone to stand in a circle.
- Each person says what they had for breakfast
- The next person then repeats what has already been said and adds their own For example: “This morning I had 1) an apple 2) a bowl of cereal and 3) an xxx for breakfast”
- This continues until everyone has had their go; the VSA should be the last person in the sequence

Appendix 4: Adult focus group topic guide

Materials needed:

- Flipchart and pens
- Consent forms
- Dictaphone
- Change for reimbursing travel

Introduction – 10-15 minutes

Introduce yourself

- Go over VSA project and purpose of focus groups:
- This is connected to a big change that is coming up in how police are run - Police & Crime Commissioners (PCCs), who will be elected in November 2012 in each of the 43 police force areas in England & Wales
- PCCs will be responsible for setting what the police in the local area should focus their efforts and money on. They will also be responsible for deciding whether to start or support other services relating to crime, including services/support for victims of crime
- We want to try and make sure that one of the things they focus on is looking after victims.
- This research is being done as part of a project to identify what victims in each area need in terms of services and support, so that the PCCs can know where they should focus police resources in relation to services and support for victims
- What you tell us in this group will be used to make a briefing paper for the incoming Police & Crime Commissioner for your area, aimed at highlighting what victims most need and influencing them to act to better meet that need

Confidentiality

Explain that:

- All the information provided will be treated confidentially – it will be kept secure and only be seen by members of the VSA research team. It will not be shared with other VS staff, the gateway organisation (if relevant) or anyone else
- They will not be identified in the report – we may cite their experience or views and quote them in the report but we would not use their name, and would change any details which might identify them
- Participants should respect the confidentiality and anonymity of each other and not disclose what is discussed in the focus group to others
- Emphasise the limits of confidentiality i.e. if someone shares something which suggests a vulnerable adult or a child is at risk, or they are at risk, the researcher has an obligation to share this information the relevant Victim Support manager, who may have to inform social services

Practical issues

Explain that:

- The focus group will last around 2 hours
- There will be a 5-10 minute break half-way through
- Travel expenses will be reimbursed at the end
- They do not have to answer questions if they do not want to
- They can leave at any time and for whatever reason

- They will be given information about support services available (where applicable) and the name and contact details of a volunteer who will be available to talk to them about any issues or queries they have. If needed they are also on hand if they should wish to go out and talk to someone
- Ask permission to record the interview
- Housekeeping – fire procedure, toilets etc
- Ask them to give each other a chance to speak, respect each other's views and try not to talk over each other

Consent

- Check if they have understood the above
- Hand out consent forms and ask to sign
- Emphasise that consent can be withdrawn at any point and they would need to inform the researcher if they wanted to do so

1 Opening the discussion – 15 minutes

Icebreaker: ask people to introduce themselves – their name and what they had for breakfast (or similar). Ask participants to each tell a little bit about their experience of being a victim of crime: explain they can share as much or as little as they want but would be useful if they included whether the crime was reported to the police and, if it was, what the outcome of the investigation was (e.g. no-one caught - case dropped, offender charged – sentenced).

2 Support needs for dealing with the police and CJS – 30-40 minutes

First, we want to look at the service that victims of [relevant crime type] get from the police – what do victims need from police and why?

EXERCISE 1: WHAT VICTIMS NEED FROM THE POLICE

Draw line down piece of flipchart with header 'WHAT' on one side and 'WHY' on the other.

We want to find out from you what you think it is most important that police do when dealing with victims of [relevant crime type], and why.

So first, what is most important about how the police deal with victims of [relevant crime type]?

MODERATOR INSTRUCTION: Note in the 'WHAT' column, if participants also say why it is important, note in 'WHY' column.

PROBE:

- Responding to report of crime quickly
- Taking incident seriously
- Taking (quick) action to investigate
- Explaining process / next steps
- Keep victim updated and informed about what they were doing
- Being understanding and responsive to concerns of victim
- Treating victim with consideration and respect
- Linking victim to other support services

Why are these things important?

MODERATOR INSTRUCTION: Note in the 'WHY' column. Ask if the police did do any of these things in their case, and if they did, what was valuable about it for them.

PROBE:

- Reassurance
- Understanding of process / what to expect
- Able to access other support
- 'Closure'

Ask if the police did not do these things in their case and, if they didn't, what effect that had on them.

PROBE:

- Worsens distress
- Felt alone/isolated/unsupported
- Emotional wellbeing deteriorates/self-doubt/stress/possibly ill mental health
- Made fear for safety
- Affected trust/confidence/loss of respect in police
- Made less likely to report crime or engage with police in future

Ask each if they could say which of these things are the most important for victims of [relevant crime type] overall (in their view).

So we now have a list of things that victims of [relevant crime type] want or need from police: how well do you think police in this area meet these needs?

What could they do to improve?

PROBE:

- Manner – more understanding, respectful etc
- Information and communication with victim – updating on progress and outcome, explaining process and next steps etc
- Linking with other services – e.g. referring to information and support services like VS

Independent organisations are sometimes able to help victims deal with the police e.g. by explaining what rights/entitlements they have as victims and how the process works, or by helping to get information from police officers such as updates on their case.

Did you have any independent support to help with the police? Would you have found it useful to have this in your experience of dealing with the police? (or perhaps you did get it?)

PROBE:

- How do you think such support might have helped you in dealing with the police?

Do you think victims of [relevant crime type] generally would benefit from this type of support to help deal with the police and other criminal justice agencies? PROBE:

- Why/why not?

Does anyone have experience or views of other criminal justice agencies that they want to share e.g. CPS, courts?

PROBE:

- Good points
- Bad points

BREAK – 5-10 minutes

3 Support needs for dealing with impact of crime – 30-40 minutes

In the next part we want to look beyond the police at what victims of [relevant crime type] need to deal with the impact on their lives. We know that being a victim of crime can have all sorts of effects on your life: it can be traumatic and affect your emotions and confidence; it can affect your employment, your finances, your

health; and, as well as dealing with strictly policing matters, the Police and Crime Commissioners will be able to do something about these things as well, through commissioning services and support for victims.

EXERCISE 2: SUPPORT NEED

On flipchart make 4 columns headed 'WHAT', 'WHY', 'WHEN', 'WHO'.

We want to find out from you what aspects of your life being a victim of [relevant crime type] had the biggest impact on, and what type of help you needed to deal with it.

Ask each person in turn to say what, if anything, they most needed help with in terms of dealing with the impact of the experience on their life. Note in the 'WHAT' column. *NOTE: prompt, using support type list if necessary*

PROBE:

- Why was this needed? – note in the 'WHY' column
- Was there a particular point that it was needed? – note in the 'WHEN' column

Ask each: what forms of help do you think is most important for victims of [relevant crime type] overall? So we have what, why and when. What about 'who'? Who would you want this type of support from?

PROBE:

Is there a certain organisation or type of organisation that's most appropriate or best placed to provide this support?

Which, if any, of the following do you think are important for *these* types of services (services identified by the participants in the previous question):

- To be independent of police or government
- To be specialists in supporting victims
- To be specialists in supporting victims of [relevant crime type]
- To be specialists in supporting people from under represented communities e.g. with disabled people, people with mental health problems, people from an ethnic minority group
- Have legal knowledge/knowledge of how system works

Is this type of help available in this area?

Were you aware it was available?

Would you know how to find out about it?

PROBE if yes:

- How? - leaflet, website, word of mouth etc

Do independent services link up well enough – so if you were supported by an independent service did it link in with other support services to assist you?

Was the quality of the support good enough?

- Why/why not?

4 Overall messages on victim needs – 10-15 minutes

Finally, we want to see if we can distil what we've discussed into some key messages to take to the PCCs.

If you could tell the new PCC one thing about what they should be doing for victims of [specific crime type], what would that be?

If you could tell the new PCC one thing about what they should be doing for victims generally in [name of police force area], what would that be?

5 Conclusion – 5 minutes

- Thank participants for their time and contribution
- Ask if there are any final questions or comments

- Give out information sheet and reiterate that follow-up support is available

Ask if people are interested in seeing the report / being kept informed of progress – take contact details of those who are. Communicate that a report will be available from May 2012

Appendix 5: List of victims consulted

The VSAs consulted the following victims when researching this report:

Anti-social behaviour

1 x focus group: 2 men, 2 women

9 x interviews: 3 men, 6 women

Hate crime

3 x interviews with victims of homophobic and transphobic hate crime: 3 men

1 x interview with victim of disability (mental health) motivated hate crime: 1 woman

1 x focus group with victims of racist hate crime: participants 1 man, 3 women

Domestic abuse

1 x focus group: 4 women

3 x interviews: 3 women

Sexual violence

3 x interviews: 3 women

Children and young people

2 x interviews: 2 young women, age 13-15 years

Appendix 6: Summary of local organisations and stakeholders mapped

1. Breakdown

The following is a breakdown of the mapping exercise we undertook and represents the picture of service provision we found across Cleveland at that time. We endeavoured to map all services providing direct support to victims or witnesses of crime, but we will have missed some.

We also recognise there are many other more general services that would provide support to victims in a less targeted way. Youth services, church groups and general support for older people are examples of services we did not map as their target service users do not explicitly include 'victims of crime'.

Furthermore, the funding climate means many services we mapped will have since changed in scope, been cut or maybe even grown. This should be borne in mind in drawing conclusions on the basis of our mapping.

We mapped 34 direct support services to victims of crime. In addition, we mapped partnerships and/or consortium arrangements that provide support to victims.

Please note that the position of the person we spoke to varied and so the views given were not necessarily the view of the service or organisation.

Of the services we mapped, we spoke to 25 service providers (in person, by e-mail or by telephone) about their main issues of concern, both for their service users and their organisations. The position of the person we spoke to varied and so the views given were not necessarily the view of the organisation. The following tables provide a breakdown of organisations we spoke to.

2. List of organisations mapped

The following is a list of all the organisations we mapped.

- Barnardo's
- Children's Society
- Cleveland Child and Family Trust
- Cleveland Police
- Cleveland Criminal Justice Board
- Cleveland Police Authority
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Cruse Bereavement Care
- Durham Tees Valley Probation Trust
- EVA
- Harbour
- Hart Gables
- Hartlepool Borough Council
- Helen Britton House
- Middlesbrough Borough Council
- Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency
- My Sister's Place
- North of England Refugee Service
- NSPCC Adult Treatment Programme
- Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council

- Relate
- Stockton Borough Council
- SODA
- SPARC
- Safer Hartlepool Partnership
- Safer Middlesbrough Partnership
- Safe in Redcar and Cleveland Partnership
- Safer Stockton Partnership
- Safe in Tees Valley
- Teesside Positive Action
- Teesside Sexual Violence Strategy Group
- Victim Support
- Women's Support Network and Jigsaw
- Youth Offending Service (Middlesbrough, Stockton, Hartlepool, Redcar and Cleveland)

3. Overview of support and services

Overview of support for victims of crime in Cleveland

Victim Support provides volunteer support to anyone affected by crime, whether or not the crime has been reported; this includes victims and witnesses, their friends, family and other people caught up in the aftermath. Practical and emotional support and information are provided over the phone and in person by a victim care officer.

Services for victims of anti-social behaviour

The main providers of services for victims of anti-social behaviour are the police, local authorities and housing providers. All four local authorities have anti-social behaviour workers and some have dedicated victim liaison/support officers. In addition, housing providers in the area have enforcement and tenancy support officers all of whom offer support to victims of anti-social behaviour while some also have victim liaison officers and organised support groups. Mediation services are generally commissioned on a needs basis. Police neighbourhood teams work closely with local authorities and there are multi-agency partnerships established to address anti-social behaviour issues. There are few independent services.

The concerns of anti-social behaviour organisations

Many of the concerns expressed were around frustration at long drawn out processes and the resource intensive nature of investigating and progressing reports of anti-social behaviour while trying to support victims. In addition, in areas where there is a mixture of landlords – private, owner occupied and social landlords – there can be confusion over where responsibilities for action lie.

Support services for victims of domestic abuse

We identified seven services that specifically offer direct support to victims of domestic abuse excluding refuge accommodation. These are in addition to the support offered by the local authorities, housing associations, police and mainstream services such as health. While some of these specialise in supporting victims of sexual violence, because of the link between domestic abuse and sexual violence they have been included here as well as in the later section. There are no local services that specifically support victims from ethnic minority backgrounds, male victims, same sex or transgender victims. While some of the services can and do support these victims, others are restricted to females only. We also spoke to one service based in Newcastle but delivering support to women from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities across the region.

The concerns of domestic abuse organisations

The concerns expressed by the domestic abuse support services we spoke to included:

- sustainability and consistency of funding
- limited opportunity for future development given short-term funding
- increasing demand
- limited availability of support for victims with no recourse to public funds
- increased partner violence between young people
- availability of services for victims with specific needs
- availability of emergency housing
- the need to take a broader view of, and subsequently invest in, the support required by survivors of domestic abuse rather than simply focus resources on criminal justice system (CJS) processes.

Support services for victims of sexual violence

We mapped six services delivering support for victims of sexual violence; this includes one sexual assault referral centre (SARC) but again excludes mainstream service support. As noted earlier, given the overlap that is often evident between domestic abuse and sexual violence, services of necessity have to span both. Five of the services provide support to men and women of all ages who have been raped or sexually assaulted. Only one service restricts referrals to women.

The concerns of sexual violence support organisations

The concerns expressed by those we spoke to include:

- limited availability of specialist services for victims of sexual violence, for example male victims, victims from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities, black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, etc
- sustainability and consistency of funding
- increasing demand
- funding doesn't always reflect the need for support beyond the end of CJS processes.

Support for people bereaved by murder and manslaughter

Victim Support runs the homicide service to support people bereaved by violent death across England and Wales. Every family bereaved by a homicide is offered a Victim Support homicide caseworker to co-ordinate help and support for them by their police family liaison officers. Specially trained homicide volunteers provide practical and emotional support, advice and information about issues such as compensation and access to counseling.

Other services that support people bereaved by murder or manslaughter tend to be mainstream, for example NHS counselling services or generic, for example Cruse Bereavement Care.

Support services for victims of hate crime

With the exception of Victim Support, services for victims of hate crime in Cleveland are predominantly delivered by organisations that have a broader remit, for example Hart Gables, Teesside Positive Action, SPARC (Society for the Promotion and Advancement of Romany Culture), and North of England Refugee Service. Adult safeguarding boards have an important role in identifying, protecting and escalating the potential for vulnerable people to become victims of hate crime.

The concerns of hate crime organisations

The following concerns were highlighted:

- the perceived lack of understanding by the police of the nature and scale of hate crime
- the under-reporting of hate crime
- the sometimes blurred boundaries between hate crime and anti-social behaviour
- the need for sustainable, consistent funding.

Support services for young victims of crime

All four youth offending services in the area are key players in delivering support to young victims of crime as well as mainstream social and health services. In addition, we identified three services delivering specialist support to young victims of crime or those affected by specific crimes. A number of the domestic abuse and sexual violence services also had some funding to provide support specifically for children and young people.

Concerns of organisations working with young people

The following concerns were raised by those we spoke to:

- inconsistent availability of services specialising in the support of young victims
- the need for more robust information sharing and intelligence gathering in relation to the numbers of children and young people being victimised
- the potential for dilution of services if funding is reduced.

Appendix 7: Glossary

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) - Defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as “behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator.” Anti-social behaviour includes conduct that is and is not already covered by existing criminal offences, such as criminal damage and harassment.

British Crime Survey (BCS) - a systematic victim study, currently carried out by BMRB Limited on behalf of the Home Office. The BCS asks people aged 16 and over living in households in England and Wales about their experiences of crime in the last 12 months. These experiences are used to estimate levels of crime in England and Wales.

Black and minority ethnic (BME) - a term used to describe any minority race, nationality or language & culture in the UK.

Criminal Justice System (CJS) - the system of practices and institutions of governments directed at upholding social control, deterring and mitigating crime, or sanctioning those who violate laws with criminal penalties and rehabilitation efforts, includes policing, courts and corrections services.

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) - the Government Department responsible for prosecuting criminal cases investigated by the police in England and Wales.

Domestic abuse - Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) - a collective term for a range of procedures which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is sometimes referred to as female circumcision, or female genital cutting.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) – independently assesses police forces and policing across activity from neighbourhood teams to serious crime and the fight against terrorism.

Independent domestic violence adviser (IDVA)- provide proactive independent support to victims; involving the assessment of risk, safety planning and facilitating effective partnership working within multi-agencies, throughout the victims engagement with the criminal justice process.

Independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) - An independent sexual violence adviser offers confidential advice and support to both males and females who have been the victims of sexual violence.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) – an acronym that collectively refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

Multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) - meetings where information about high risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies. By bringing all agencies together at a MARAC, a risk focused, coordinated safety plan can be drawn up to support the victim.

Police and crime commissioner (PCC) –elected by the public to hold chief constables and the force to account; effectively making the police answerable to the communities they serve. Police and crime commissioners will ensure community needs are met as effectively as possible, and will improve local relationships through building confidence and restoring trust. They will also work in partnership across a

range of agencies at local and national level to ensure there is a unified approach to preventing and reducing crime.

Police force area - the area for which a designated police force has responsibility for providing policing services and enforcing criminal law.

Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 – legislation setting out reform for police accountability and governance, including the creation of the MOPC and replacing police authorities with directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners.

Sexual assault referral centre (SARC) - specialist services for people who have been raped or sexually assaulted. Provides medical care and forensic examination following assault/rape, counselling and in some locations, sexual health services. SARCs are mostly able to assist in the immediate aftermath of an assault but do not offer long term services that are provided by Rape Crisis Centre.

Sexual offences investigation team (SOIT) - specially trained officers, who have to attend a rigorous training course. They ensure that the immediate physical, mental and welfare needs of the victim are met. They will explain the criminal justice process and gather evidence and information from the victim to support the investigation.

The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (VCOP) – code which governs the services to be provided in England and Wales by organisations in regards to victims of criminal conduct which occurred in England and Wales.

Victims' services advocate (VSA) – individual employed by the victims' services advocates project to research and promote the service needs of victims of crime in preparation for the introduction of elected police and crime commissioners and, in London, the MOPC.

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