

# Listening and learning:

Improving support for victims in Durham



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*“Whose responsibility is it to support victims - everyone does their own little bit and no one person seemed to care only about my needs”*

Victim of sexual violence

## 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 Durham.

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 Durham
- 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 anti-social 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 Durham (see appendix 6 for a list of organisations mapped)
- 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 is provided by a range of voluntary, public and

independent sector providers in County Durham and Darlington 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 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 provided on 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 research<sup>1</sup>, current and historical, supports victims' 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 County Durham and Darlington is falling, there are still significant issues with under-reporting of crimes such as domestic abuse and hate crime, confidence levels in the criminal justice system as expressed by those who have been a victim of crime, and a general lack of awareness among victims of the Victims' Code of Practice.

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.

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<sup>1</sup> For a full list see Chapter 7

1.4 Looking in more depth at the needs of Durham 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 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.

1.4.3 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 coordinated response from agencies and to have person-centred needs assessments.

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 would be available to help to secondary victims in the case of homicide. This would mean that all those affected by the crime would be 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. 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 that hate crime has, 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, better awareness raised 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 account of the needs of their children and wider family, as appropriate, in service provision,

- making regular assessment 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 to enable victims to make clear their own views and wishes; 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 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.

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 ensure 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. They will have a significant role to play in the commissioning of some local services<sup>2</sup> which may include services for victims of crime<sup>3</sup>.

PCCs will also have a specific duty to obtain the views of victims of crime<sup>4</sup> 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 victims of crime, witnesses, their family, friends and others affected across England and Wales.

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

<sup>3</sup> 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)

<sup>4</sup> Introduced by The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

This report was written for Durham and aims to:

- provide a picture of current support for victims in Durham
- 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 Durham.

While the project took great care to explore the full range of issues concerning victims' services in Durham 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 anti-social 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.

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<sup>5</sup> 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 Durham (see appendix 6 for a list)
- 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 Durham

The victims' services advocates (VSA) project undertook a mapping exercise to identify services for victims in Durham. 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 Durham

Durham Constabulary serves a population of approximately 604,900. Geographically, the area is predominantly rural, with half of residents living in settlements of less than 10,000 people. There are two Unitary Authorities – Darlington and County Durham. The Index of Multiple Deprivation identifies high rates of disability, long term illness and unemployment, while some areas also show low levels of educational attainment.

Both County Durham and Darlington have a history of partnership working – there are two Community Safety Partnerships – Safer Durham and Safer Darlington – and significant cross-partnership working in relation to community safety issues and strategies. Both Partnerships have operational groups focusing on what have been identified as the main priority crime issues.

All relevant strategies include references to the need to support victims.

Performance relating to compliance with the Victims' Code of Practice and public satisfaction are discussed later in this section.

### Support for Victims

In County Durham and Darlington, services that deliver support to victims are many and varied. While some are nationally commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office, such as those provided by 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 provide support to 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 30 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 services 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, to a degree, evolved 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 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 Durham told us

From autumn 2011 we held a series of focus groups and interviews with victims of crime in Durham. 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 manslaughter<sup>6</sup>.

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

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<sup>6</sup> Review into the Needs of Families Bereaved by Homicide, Louise Casey CB, July 2011

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 youth group and interviewed a group of 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 Durham

Over a six month period we spoke to a range of victims either by 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 support pathways

*“Redefining Justice”* (Sara Payne, Victims’ Champion, 2009<sup>7</sup>) 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 described common needs

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<sup>7</sup> Sara Payne (2009) *Redefining Justice*: London

irrespective of the crime they had been a victim of. Descriptions of how victims had been left feeling anxious, depressed, frightened and sometimes guilty were used across the range of crime types. As well, there were many common needs identified in relation to the wider impact on victims’ general health and wellbeing, 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 over their lives. The first point of contact was considered to be the most important, whether this was the police or another agency, not necessarily to undertake a full assessment, but to ensure that victims were aware that this was available and how it could support them, and to refer on 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. 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 Victims' Code of Practice, 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

Durham Constabulary regularly use satisfaction surveys as part of performance management arrangements. Satisfaction surveys can be a relatively weak tool when seeking information on 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 PCC will have a statutory duty to consult with 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 Durham tell us

The victims' services advocate in Durham 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 to contribute to this report include British Crime Survey (BCS) statistics, local Policing Plans, local HMIC inspection reports, Crown Prosecution Service reports, 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, County Durham and Darlington have seen rises 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.

Both Community Safety Partnerships have, over recent years, spent time in developing 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 issue of repeat victimisation, 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' needs and impact must be assessed on

an individual basis and interventions for victims based on those assessed needs.”<sup>8</sup>

“...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 anti-social behaviour and what the police are trying to achieve.”<sup>9</sup>

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 County Durham and Darlington, there is evidence 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 benefit the wider economy in terms of long term savings to health and services, and the criminal justice system, for example.



### 3.4 What the data tells us about victims and witnesses in Durham

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

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

<sup>9</sup> HMIC (2010) *Stop the Rot*, London: HMIC

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 Durham

There were 36,517 recorded crimes in County Durham and Darlington during 2010/2011 and this is an overall reduction of approximately 9%. Durham Policing Plan<sup>10</sup> notes that County Durham and Darlington has one of the lowest crime rates in the country. In common with most police force areas, Durham police force carries out regular local confidence surveys and undertakes a variety of public engagement activities.

### Perceptions of police and local council

According to BCS statistics, 35% of respondents who had been a victim of crime said they were very or fairly confident in the criminal justice system. 42% of victims strongly disagreed or tended to disagree that the criminal justice system supports victims and witnesses.

In response to how good a job the police in Durham were doing, 53% of those who had been a victim said they thought it was excellent or good.

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, 58% 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.

<sup>10</sup> Durham Policing Plan 2011-2014

While 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 22% of respondents said they had heard of the Code of Practice for victims of crime, while 83% had heard of Victim Support.



### 3.5 What partner organisations and stakeholders in Durham told us

This report could not have been produced without the generous contribution of service providers throughout the voluntary and statutory sectors in Durham, 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 needs in any given area and that it is unrealistic to expect any 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, and that these should be negotiated and agreed with input from victims. Without this input, there is a risk that performance will continue to focus on organisational outcomes rather than those of victims.

## 4 The service needs of victims of crime

This project was initially commissioned to focus on:

- 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
- 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 Durham. 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.”<sup>11</sup>*

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 Durham

Anti-social behaviour in County Durham fell from 73,823 recorded incidents in 2006/07 to 63,934 by the end of 2009/10, although it still accounts for 30% of all incidents reported to Durham Constabulary.<sup>12</sup> There were 2,153 incidents of nuisance neighbours reported to police across the county in 2010, representing a 32% increase.

Tackling anti-social behaviour is one of seven key priorities for the Safer Durham Partnership, and links to other areas such as vulnerability, alcohol and drug strategies. Addressing anti-social behaviour is acknowledged as requiring the commitment and input of a wide range of agencies and organisations.

An inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies (HMIC) in the spring of 2010 found that Durham experiences a relatively moderate level of crime per head of population, but a higher level of anti-social behaviour.

A victim satisfaction survey undertaken by HMIC indicated that Durham performs in line with the national average in terms of perceptions of anti-social behaviour generally, and the experience of reporting anti-social behaviour to the police. While 72% were satisfied with the way police handled the call overall and 81% were satisfied that the police listened to what they had to say, only 57% were satisfied with the information provided following the call, and only 55% felt that the call made a difference to the problem.

An analysis carried out by the Safer Durham anti-social behaviour delivery group (looking at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and possible threats to achieving desired outcomes) and taking account of the inspection report, identified

<sup>11</sup> Crime and Disorder Act 1998

<sup>12</sup> Safer Durham Partnership Strategic Assessment, 2010

that there had been significant achievements in relation to structure and processes for addressing anti-social behaviour, committed staff contributing towards continual improvement and good partnership working.

Areas identified for improvement included reviewing the reporting, collation and sharing of anti-social behaviour, data across agencies, more consistent use, and monitoring, of problem solving approaches across all local multi-agency problem solving groups.

### Support for victims

In supporting victims of anti-social behaviour, there are anti-social behaviour teams that investigate and collate evidence; a community action team that deals with housing and environmental issues; neighbourhood policing teams; a private landlord's initiative team; safer neighbourhood units who respond to and deal with local concerns over crime, anti-social behaviour and quality of life issues; neighbourhood wardens; a fire service community safety team and local multi-agency problem solving groups that focus on emerging and long term problems.

In addition, the Youth Offending Service works with a range of young people to prevent/reduce their involvement in anti-social behaviour. Social landlords are a key partner 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 coordinated way.

This was particularly the case where the anti-social behaviour was neighbour related and a mix of landlords was involved. Victims described being confused by the difference between civil and criminal proceedings, what is a crime and what is not, and being unclear about who was responsible for what.

The problem is compounded for those owning 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, saw little progress, but had to continue living with the problem.

*"We were really scared of reprisals, the police couldn't seem to do anything and they were as frustrated as we were. We didn't know you could help with things like alarms."*

**Victim of anti-social behaviour**



### Case study

*"We were living in a downstairs flat with a new baby and the noise from continual shouting and parties upstairs was unbearable, keeping all of us awake at night. I tried to talk to them about it but just got verbal abuse. It got so bad that we asked to be re-housed but were told that we didn't really have a priority case."*

*When things got unbearable, we split up and my partner moved out with the baby and went to live with her parents. She was eventually given a house where they now live and I visit to see them both. I'm still living in the flat and putting up with the noise and abuse but even though it's still awful, it's less of a worry now that the baby isn't there. I go out early and stay out late so that I don't have to put up with it."*

*I'm just young and so don't really have any priority for being given another property. My partner and I are still separated and I blame that on the stress of having to put up with the noise and verbal abuse and worry over the new baby."*

It would have been really useful to know what support there was for people like us and to have someone help us to sort things out."

### 22 year old victim of anti-social behaviour



#### Case Study

Darlington Borough Council has an Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Enforcement Team that is responsible for the case management of the most serious and persistent anti-social behaviour throughout the Borough. Specialist support for victims includes:

- Four anti-social behaviour assistants specifically to support victims and witnesses by keeping in regular contact with them and providing relevant support
- A pledge to take reports of anti-social behaviour seriously and keeping a detailed record of all cases
- Investigating all cases that are reported while protecting the identity of the victim
- Informing victims of progress and taking their views into account regarding any action to be taken. (Where it is necessary to take legal action, victims are consulted to ensure that they wish to be involved in this and are kept informed throughout the process).



#### 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 that 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 victims' needs with those of alleged offenders.

*"I had no real understanding of what can and can't be done so it was difficult to ask for and get support."*

**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.'<sup>13</sup>

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.<sup>14</sup>

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.<sup>15</sup>

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 advisers (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.<sup>16</sup> 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 advisers 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.<sup>17</sup>

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 Durham

The Safer Durham and Safer Darlington partnerships recognise domestic abuse as a priority area of work. Using BCS data and the "levels of violence against women and girls ready reckoner",<sup>18</sup> it is estimated that 19,962 people

<sup>13</sup> Home Office

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> CAADA, 2010

<sup>17</sup> Safety in Numbers – A Multi-site Evaluation of Independent Violence adviser Services, CAADA 2009

<sup>18</sup> Violence Against Women and Girls Ready Reckoner

living in Durham will have experienced some form of domestic abuse over the past year.

Durham Constabulary have noted year on year increases in the number of reported incidents, but it is unclear whether this is due to an overall increase in domestic abuse, or improved awareness resulting in more people reporting incidents. Despite this increase, it is thought that only about one quarter of all incidents is reported to the police.

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 genitalia mutilation and honour based violence. While there is a relatively low number of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities living in Durham, supporting victims of these crimes is acknowledged as being resource intensive. Alongside this, the need to more fully understand the scale and nature of the issue in relation to male victims, same sex relationships and transgender issues is noted as a priority in existing strategies.

### **What else do we know about domestic abuse in Durham?**

Both the Durham Safer Community Safety Partnerships acknowledge the need to work towards a more accurate understanding of the nature and scale of the problem, including the need to analyse patterns and trends rather than just the number of incidents.

Principles underpinning the priorities identified are in line with the Home Office Action Plan for Ending Violence to Women and Girls ie protection, prevention and provision. Alongside this, Durham and Darlington refer to effective partnership working, risk reduction and justice outcomes. Overall priorities for action include delivering a coordinated response, safe accessible support, increased awareness and reporting, and the need to address issues surrounding sustainable funding. More specifically, the strategy refers to providing specialist children services, reviewing the service delivery model, improving data collection, developing minimum care standards, better integration of services and joint commissioning strategies.

The Partnerships have also identified a number of current gaps relating to risk assessment procedures, and concerns that victims assessed as being at low or medium risk are not receiving targeted support. Increasing demand for, and limited availability of, some services, such as refuge support for more vulnerable victims, e.g. those who have no access to public funds, those who are substance or alcohol dependent and victims with a disability, are also considered to be significant issues. Additionally, the need for sustainable and consistent funding has been highlighted.

### **Support for Victims of Domestic Abuse in Durham**

In Durham, support for victims of domestic abuse is delivered by a range of agencies. Both Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council have designated leads, Durham Constabulary has a co-ordinator for domestic abuse, forced marriage and honour based violence. Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) arrangements are in place across the area, there are specialist domestic violence courts and the Crown Prosecution Service has established an independent scrutiny panel for cases relating to domestic abuse. NHS Durham has a domestic abuse coordinator whose primary focus is on awareness training and development, and who acts as the main point of contact for health in relation to MARAC.

There are four Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) covering the area - interestingly, and somewhat uniquely, the IDVAs in Durham are based with and managed by the police, unlike other areas where they are managed by a range of organisations independent from CJS agencies.

There are four refuges located in County Durham, and outreach services are currently delivered by Derwentside Domestic Abuse Service and Durham County Council, although this is likely to change from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 when services will be commissioned through a tendering process. The freedom programme and recovery toolkit are offered to victims referred to outreach services. There is also a "Remain Safe" scheme offering target hardening advice and practical assistance with safety and security.

Housing providers are engaged in partnership arrangements.

In Darlington, there is one refuge, floating support and a freedom programme. The Probation Trust provides a women's safety worker and women only reporting sessions. A sanctuary scheme is in operation offering advice and practical assistance around safety and security, such as additional locks, panic alarms, safe rooms and security lights. A team of housing advisors is also available to support victims with accommodation issues. Housing providers are engaged in partnership arrangements to support accommodation issues.

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

*"Everyone tells me what I should do but no-one asks me what I need."*

(Victim of domestic abuse)

Victims that we spoke to did not refer directly to either the availability or the quality of service provision. Most frequently mentioned was 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 criminal justice systems were often insensitive and seemed frustrated by what they saw as a victims' reluctance to engage fully with necessary processes.

Victims also told us that the initial contact, with whichever agency, following a report 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 are no visible signs such as cuts or bruises.

Victims also reported that having their very real fears acknowledged, having an holistic assessment, early intervention through appropriately tailored support and, crucially, being kept informed of progress of any criminal investigation, were key factors in recovery or, indeed, whether they engaged with processes designed to protect them or simply continued living with the abuse. In addition, some of the female victims that 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, having little access to money, and fear of having their children taken away from them.

*"For them it ends, for us it just begins."*

**Victim of domestic abuse**



### Case study

*"It started with bullying and name calling, always putting me down but then he started to hit me. I started to drink because I thought it wouldn't hurt as much when he beat me up. It wasn't until he raped me that I knew it had to end and called the police."*

*The police were very good and arrested him and made sure I was taken to the centre (SARC).*

*He was found guilty and was given quite a long prison sentence but of course by then I was almost an alcoholic. I didn't know there was any support for victims of domestic abuse until the alcohol worker told me and arranged for me to be seen by someone.*

*After that it was much better, I didn't feel as much alone when I knew I wasn't the only one*

who this had happened to. I started the Freedom Programme and feel it really helped me. I also felt better because I had someone I could go to if I was worried about anything or didn't understand something.”

### Survivor of domestic abuse



### Case Study

Derwentside Domestic Abuse Service provides support to survivors of domestic abuse, regardless of age, gender, disability, race, culture or sexual orientation. The service delivers holistic support to help survivors re-build their lives and also provides therapeutic help for the children of survivors, who may have also have been traumatised by their family life.

The support offered is 'tailor-made' to a person's own specific needs and can include securing safe accommodation, claiming benefits, assistance with seeking legal advice and accompanying clients to court hearings. An in-house counselling service is also provided by specially trained volunteer counsellors. The service works closely with other relevant statutory and voluntary services.



### 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 research<sup>19</sup> that if victims are listened to, receive early assessment and appropriate pathways of

<sup>19</sup> See Chapter 7 for full list

support they are better protected, recover more quickly and go on to successfully rebuild their lives.

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 LGBT relationships. There was, however, a view from victims and other stakeholders that 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 in relation to establishing the exact nature and scale of domestic abuse outside of the violence against women and girls agenda. This will be crucial if future commissioning is to be based on informed need.

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

Standing Together Against Domestic Violence<sup>20</sup> highlights a number of components that need to be in place if a coordinated response to victims of domestic abuse is to be effective:

- Encouraging a culture of inter-dependence, co-working and equal responsibility among stakeholders
- Having a full understanding of roles, capacity and boundaries leads to less confusion and fewer disagreements
- Acknowledging that specialist services are important but mainstream services are equally important in early identification and intervention and crucially, follow on support. Consequently, strategies should be aligned
- There are major benefits in voluntary sector providers acting in a collegiate manner and being mutually supportive
- Co-ordination is a system not a person – services must be designed to ensure that

<sup>20</sup>Anthony Wills with Nicole Jacobs, Bear Montique, Laura Croom - Standing Together Against Domestic Violence: In Search of Excellence, 2011

every element of a response works well both within, and between, agencies

- Support is best delivered in a systematic and collective way that makes victims and their families feel safe.

Crucially, the report points out that *“The voice of the survivor is the most powerful in any partnership – if that voice is heard.”*

There is a large amount of research and literature on the needs of victims of domestic violence, 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 Durham.

### 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.<sup>21</sup>

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."<sup>22</sup>

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."<sup>23</sup>

Since this review was undertaken, the number of rape crisis centres and sexual assault referral centres in England and Wales has increased. In Durham, the SARC is housed within the grounds of the General Hospital in Northampton.

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 advisers (ISVAs) who operate in a similar fashion to independent domestic violence advisers (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 Durham

In Durham there are, on average, 120 rapes and 300 instances of other sexual violence recorded each year<sup>24</sup>. There is thought to be a significant under-reporting, given data on self referral provided by Rape Crisis and the Sexual Assault Referral Centre and national figures suggesting that 90% of rapes are not disclosed.

The Durham Sexual Violence Strategy 2011-2014 acknowledges the difficulty of assessing the true numbers of victims with any accuracy, but also notes that this could reflect a lack of confidence in reporting to the police. Data from the Durham

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/counting-rules/count-sexual?view=Binary>

<sup>22</sup> The Government Response to the Stern Review, March 2011

<sup>23</sup> Rape: The Victim Experience Review, Sara Payne, November 2009

<sup>24</sup> Durham Constabulary Recorded Crime Figures

Local Criminal Justice Board suggests that around half of all rapes reported do not enter criminal justice processes, but of the ones that do, there is an 84% conviction rate.

While the majority of victims are female, 8% of reported rapes involved male victims. This is in line with national trends but is believed to highlight a significant under-reporting in cases of male rape and therefore the true number of male victims is difficult to establish.



### What else do we know about Sexual Violence in Durham?

Victims of sexual violence are often vulnerable in other areas and common factors identified by the strategy include previous domestic abuse, or child abuse as a young person. In almost half of all reported rape cases, the offender was reported as a partner or family member. In more than a third of cases involving sexual assault within an intimate relationship, domestic abuse was also a feature of the relationship. The majority of rapes that had been reported within intimate relationships were reported historically, i.e. more than 12 months after the rape took place. Reports of stranger rape were rare.

In a number of cases, rapes that were reported to the police did not result in a crime being recorded. One of the reasons given for this was the victim becoming uncooperative with the criminal justice process, and it is acknowledged that this could potentially be due to a lack of confidence in the criminal justice process once the crime had been reported, causing the victim to retract their complaint.

### Barriers to reporting sexual violence

The Government's response to Baroness Stern's review of how rape complaints are handled by public authorities in England and Wales noted that despite improvements, it is estimated that up to nine out of ten cases of rape go unreported

and 38% of serious sexual assault victims tell no-one about their experience.<sup>25</sup>

*Rape: the victim experience review*<sup>26</sup> highlighted the importance of first responders when sexual violence is disclosed, whether this is to the police or anyone else.

Given the already existing barriers<sup>27</sup> to both reporting and receiving help, this first response is even more critical:

- It is not unusual for children who have been sexually abused not to tell anybody about their abuse
- There is evidence that men are less likely to report sexual violence to the police than women
- For those victims who do not speak English or for whom English is not their first language, there is an immediate barrier to them reporting sexual violence and accessing appropriate support services
- People who are involved in sex work are especially vulnerable to sex crime and particularly at risk of sexual violence from people who pay for and use their services
- People with physical or learning disabilities may be even more vulnerable to sexual violence and may be targeted by sex offenders because of their vulnerability.

### Support for victims of sexual violence in Durham

Support for victims of sexual violence is currently provided by a range of services. Specialist officers are based in Durham Constabulary vulnerability unit and there is a central referral unit that has multi-agency input to help streamline joint assessment processes. The Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling service (RSACC) provides free and confidential counselling and support for females aged 13 years and over who have experienced rape, sexual violence or abuse.

<sup>25</sup> The Government Response to the Stern Review, March 2011

<sup>26</sup> Rape: The Victim Experience Review, Sara Payne, November 2009

<sup>27</sup> County Durham and Darlington Sexual Violence Strategy 2011-2014

Face to face counselling and a telephone support line are available. There is also a Support Group for female adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. There is one sexual assault referral centre (SARC) covering Durham. Durham Constabulary has a safeguarding unit and a designated lead officer for sexual violence as well as a central referral unit, and this is thought to have led to improvements and streamlining in terms of joint assessment processes. There is one Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) and a specialist ISVA for children and young people. Both ISVAs are based with, and managed by, the police.

There appear to be fewer specialist services in Durham compared with other areas. In Cleveland, for example, where the population is very similar, although there is still only one SARC there are three ISVAs and four voluntary organisations offering specialist services for victims of sexual violence. Fewer specialist services are likely to place additional pressures on mainstream services such as Safeguarding Boards, mental health services and sexual health services to deliver more tailored services.

### Feedback from victims of sexual violence

The victims that we spoke to all agreed that response times, location of services and sensitivity in the way in which they were treated by key agencies such as the police and the courts were key factors in determining whether they would engage with CJS processes, or indeed actually report their experience.

This was noted as being particularly important in the case of retrospective disclosure, where they often felt that they were not believed because of the delay in disclosing. In relation to this, a number of victims told us that it was often general services, health for example, that they disclosed to and the importance of responding quickly and appropriately was crucial to ensure provision of appropriate support.

For the victims we spoke to, the impact of their experience did not end once court processes were over and, for many, this was just the start of the recovery process.

The practical, physical, emotional and psychological demands of engaging with the

number of agencies and processes involved often left victims feeling overwhelmed. Equally, some victims described being intimidated by family and friends of the perpetrator and having to move home and find different schools for their children, adding to a growing burden of responsibilities.



### Case study

"I didn't report it at first but my husband said I had to so I went a week later. I got passed around a bit at first by the police but when I got to see the specialist officer things were much better. I went to the SARC and that was o.k. except they didn't offer me the STD or HIV test and so I had to go to the GP and he sent me to A&E and this was awful as I had to tell the story so many times.

I felt as though I didn't have control over anything, as a victim I was told not to talk about it to anyone but he was going around slandering me and spreading rumours and I think this is a form of intimidation. Eventually I had to move to get away from it.

I wasn't allowed counselling before the trial in case this influenced my evidence but he was being seen by a psychologist. I gave evidence by video link and this was awful as it had to be explicit and I had to talk about really personal and sensitive things. It was an open court so there were people in the public gallery.

I did ask for a look around the court before the trial but this never happened and I didn't have any information about where to go once I got to court or what to do. My friend who was a witness got the letter about the date before I did.

It was a not guilty verdict and some thought should have been given to what happens after the trial - I felt as though it was all my fault and lost all my self-confidence. It wasn't until after the trial that I heard about support for victims when the police arranged for me to be referred."

### Female rape victim

## Case Study

The Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre (RSACC) offers a free and confidential service for women over the age of 13 years.

Services offered include a telephone support line open four evenings a week, face to face counselling - daytime and evenings in Darlington, an outreach counselling service in Durham on Wednesday daytime and Saturday mornings, and regular telephone counselling by arrangement. Guidance, support or counselling for those who are supporting an individual who has been raped or abused is also available.



## Conclusions

*"Having someone as an advocate, mentor or just a supporter, or whatever you want to call her, made it so much easier, I didn't feel as though I was on my own and that at least one person believed me."*

**Victim of Sexual Violence**

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 support 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 BME or LGBT communities, is important to ensure that these needs are met and responded to appropriately.

*"As a male victim of rape I felt embarrassed, guilty and dirty and that no-one would believe me - if there was more openness about this, men would be more likely to come forward."*

**Male victim of rape**

#### 4.4. People bereaved by murder and manslaughter

##### What are murder and manslaughter?

Murder and manslaughter are defined as:

- murder
- manslaughter
- 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*.<sup>28</sup> 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 Durham, 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.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup>



##### Support for those bereaved by murder and manslaughter in Durham

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 (MAMA), there are little or no specialist services for those affected by murder or manslaughter. Mainstream services do offer help such as bereavement support and counselling, as do some generic providers, such as CRUSE.

Mainstream and general services, however, do 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 victims' immediate family. "*Redefining Justice*"<sup>31</sup> noted that while voluntary sector organisations will usually accept referrals from any bereaved person, support from CJS agencies is often limited and depends on the relationship between the victim and the bereaved person.

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

<sup>31</sup> Payne, S. *Redefining Justice: Addressing the individual needs of victims and witnesses*: Home Office 2009

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



### **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 case workers 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, child care, 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.

## 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."*<sup>32</sup>

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.<sup>33</sup>

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 'specky' and I tried to ignore it because it's not worth it. But when they threw the brick – that's too far."*<sup>34</sup>

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 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 anti-social behaviour 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 people.<sup>35</sup>

Hate crime is believed to be under-reported.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime. HM Government, March 2012

<sup>33</sup> Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime. HM Government, March 2012

<sup>34</sup> Quote from victim (Equality and Human Rights Commission report, 'Promoting the safety and security of disabled people', 2009).

<sup>35</sup> 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](http://www.report-it.org.uk/files/acpo_hate_crime_data_for_2010.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime. HM Government, March 2012

## Hate crime in Durham

Hate crime is believed to be under-reported.<sup>37</sup> Durham Hate Crime Action Plan recognises the difficulties of accurately measuring the scale of the problem because of under-reporting, the potential blurring of the boundaries between hate crime and anti-social behaviour, for example, and the need to be better able to identify crime that is motivated by prejudice and hate relating to particular characteristics. There is also an acknowledgement that a negative experience with the police can influence whether a crime will be reported or not.

### What else do we know about hate crime in Durham?

The Hate Crime Action Plan focuses 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 separate support services for victims of hate crime. Much of the support is delivered by organisations that have a wider remit such as Victim Support or organisations supporting identity e.g. Gay Advice Durham and Darlington, Mencap, North East Refugee Association, and many more. Adult Safeguarding services play a key role in identifying and supporting vulnerable adults subject to hate crime.

### Feedback from victims of 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

<sup>37</sup> Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime. HM Government, March 2012

and health related circumstance on an individual, was described by victims as essential to delivering appropriate support for victims of hate crime.

Some of the victims of hate crime that we interviewed 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

Seventeen year old gay man targeted since he was 'outed' at school at the age of 13. The targeting had included: being threatened with violence unless he acted as a lookout for local criminals involved in burglary activities, kidnapped at the age of 15 and held in a derelict house for 18 hours, and beaten up. None of the incidents had been reported to police but had a serious impact on his mental and physical well-being.

After being referred to a support agency by a friend, he disclosed details of being the victim of hate crimes and other incidents and the agency was able to act as liaison between him and the police, and an investigation was initiated. It was identified that his current residence and situation were becoming untenable and he needed to be placed in a position of safety, arrangements were made for him to move out of the area temporarily until local accommodation issues could be resolved.

Resolution of accommodation and support issues took several months and in the meantime, an incident in his flat sparked off a breakdown that resulted in hospitalisation in an under-18s facility dealing with mental health issues. His health had broken down to the point where he became dysfunctional and experienced rapid mood swings. He is currently home and back with his parents and essentially back to square one, but he now has support around him and a care team in place. He is approaching his 18th birthday and the future is an unknown but he is still being supported.

The case study is intended not to illustrate failure but to demonstrate that there are sometimes no simple answers, but that consistent support is necessary until solutions can be found.

### Case study provided courtesy of Gay Advice Durham and Darlington



#### Case study

Victims of LGBT hate crime in Durham are supported by a dedicated criminal justice worker employed by Gay Advice Durham and Darlington. This project has been in operation since December 2004 and reflects the priorities included in *Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime*<sup>38</sup> by:

- Challenging the attitudes and behaviours that foster prejudice to reduce hate crime, and encourage early intervention to reduce the risk of incidents escalating
- Increasing reporting of hate crime by building victims' confidence to come forward and seek justice
- Providing tailored support to victims and working with other partners to ensure robust needs assessment, appropriate referral and a seamless pathway of support

<sup>38</sup> Home Office (March 2012) *Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime*

- Providing advocacy and liaison support
- Working with criminal justice agencies to improve the experience of victims who do report.



#### Conclusions

The perceptions of the victims of hate crime that we spoke to reinforce the need for the same principles identified in a study of hate crime in relation to the members of the LGBT community<sup>39</sup> to underpin responses to hate crime:

- 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 is a key area for attention given that many victims of hate crime also have special needs in relation to communication e.g. 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 puts on capacity and associated issues of resource allocation.

<sup>39</sup> 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,<sup>40</sup> and one in six teenage girls reported intimate partner violence.<sup>41</sup>

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.<sup>42</sup> 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'.<sup>43</sup>

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.<sup>44</sup>

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.<sup>45</sup>

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. This report recommended that young victims and offenders should both have equal access to effective support services and that victims should be made aware of the services available to them.<sup>46</sup>

Without a clear idea of the protection available, young people will often keep quiet.<sup>47</sup> 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.<sup>48</sup>

Catch 22 found<sup>49</sup> 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.



<sup>40</sup> Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls, Home Office, November 2010

<sup>41</sup> NSPCC, 2009

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

<sup>43</sup> NSPCC, 2009

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

<sup>45</sup> NSPCC 2009

<sup>46</sup> *Hoodie or Goodie*, Victim Support, 2007

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

<sup>48</sup> NSPCC 2009

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

## Young victims of crime in Durham

There is little specific information available on young victims in Durham. 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 HMCPSI<sup>50</sup> acknowledged that young victims and witnesses are amongst some of the most vulnerable users of the CJS, 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 the age of 18 years will be involved in giving evidence in a criminal trial, with further young people, victims of, or witnesses to, crimes that do not end up with a criminal prosecution. It was also 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 of crime

Other than mainstream services, including Safeguarding Boards, it was difficult to identify any support specific to young victims of crime.

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<sup>50</sup> Joint inspection report on the experience of young victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system, HMCPSI, 2012

Barnardo's Bridgeway project delivers, on a 'one-off' purchase basis, therapeutic support to children aged three to 18 years who have been sexually abused. Additionally, core services of the Barnardo's SECOS (sexual exploitation of children on the streets) project are available in Darlington and can be purchased on a 'one-off' basis in County Durham.

## What young people told us

The young people we spoke to describe 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

There seems to be a lack of respect for young people, professionals can be very intimidating and if you don't understand what is happening it's quite scary. If young people had access to third party reporting they might be more willing to come forward. Also more awareness of what is a crime and what can be done to help would make young people feel safer when they needed help. Step by step leaflets available in schools, colleges and other places where young people go would be really helpful.

Young people should be involved in deciding what services and support are needed and this could be done by supporting representative models of engagement. Also, programmes delivered in schools and youth centres and safe spaces to tell people about their experience should be available.

There should be young person's champions in all organisations concerned with keeping people safe.



## Case Study

Barnardo's SECOS (Sexual Exploitation of Children on the Streets) 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 has showering, cooking and laundry facilities. The service has close links with sexual health, drugs & alcohol, 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 & well-being, and experiences of exploitation, violence and abuse.

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, 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.

The core service is currently only funded to operate in Darlington.



## Conclusions

In common with the views expressed by the adult victims that we spoke to, young people told us that not everyone will need the same level, or type, of support. This is supported by HM Government's Youth Crime Action Plan: Good Practice for Supporting Young Victims of Crime,<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> HM Government's Youth Crime Action Plan: Good Practice for Supporting Young Victims of Crime

where it is acknowledged that young people will react differently to the impact of crime and that it is not possible to determine what individual young people 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, the report acknowledges that there is no one 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.

*"Young people who experience sexual abuse don't always know they have until they are older and realise it isn't normal - there should be more support to help young people recognise and tell someone either much earlier or better support when they finally have the courage to tell someone."*

**16 year old victim of sexual abuse**

## 5 Delivering services to victims

### 5. 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 Durham. It gives a snapshot rather than a forensic examination of the service needs of victims in Durham, and there is room for further research.

We hope that this evidence will encourage the incoming PCC for Durham to understand and respond to the needs of victims in Durham, 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 account the needs of their children and wider family, as appropriate, in service provision, making regular assessment 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 clear their own views and wishes, 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 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 Durham 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 Durham. 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, and 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 up-dating 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 Durham 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 not any more 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 **46** 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 Durham.

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 licence<sup>52</sup> and analysis was completed following the BCS user guide,<sup>53</sup> using SPSS software.

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

We analysed the data using the following methods:

- cross-tabulation of public perception data at the police force area level

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

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

- 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 Durham.

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 dearth 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 vignettes 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 violence, sexual violence and hate crime; 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 10 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 was 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 Durham, we spoke to victims affected by homophobic and transgender hate crime. We were not able to speak to victims of race, disability or 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 its
- Parental and young people consent forms (distributed by gateway organisations)
- Dictaphone
- Incentives e.g. pizza

### o 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 Durham. 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 minutes**

- 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 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**

5 x interview(s): participants - 2 men; 3 women

### **Hate crime**

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

### **Domestic abuse**

2 x focus groups: 9 women participants

3 x interviews: 3 women

### **Sexual violence**

5 x interviews: 3 women; 2 men

### **Children and young people**

1 x interview: young man aged 16 years

1 x focus group: 3 young women aged 16 -21 years

## Appendix 6: Mapping Summary of local organisations and stakeholders consulted

### 1. Breakdown

The following is a breakdown of the mapping exercise we undertook and represents the picture of service provision we found across Durham 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 20 direct support services to victims of crime. In addition, we mapped partnerships and/or consortium arrangements that provide support to victims. These include:

- MARACs
- domestic abuse forums
- area action partnership.

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 **20** by telephone, e-mail or in person 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
- Carr Gomm
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Cruse Bereavement Care
- Dale and Valley Homes
- Darlington Borough Council
- Derwentside Domestic Abuse Service
- Derwentside Homes
- Durham Constabulary
- Durham Criminal Justice Board
- Durham Police Authority
- Durham County Council
- Durham Domestic Abuse Outreach Service
- Durham Tees Valley Probation Trust
- Durham Women's Refuge
- East Durham Homes
- Family Support Darlington

- Gay Advice Durham and Darlington (GADD)
- Harbour
- Home Housing
- North of England Refugee Service
- Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (RSACC)
- Relate
- Safer Darlington Partnership
- Safer Durham Partnership
- Terentia House
- The Meadows (SARC)
- Victim Support
- Wear Valley Women's Refuge
- Youth Offending Service (Durham and Darlington)

### **3. Overview of support and services**

#### **Overview of support for victims of crime in Durham**

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. Both local authorities have anti-social behaviour teams; housing providers in the area have enforcement and tenancy support officers all of whom offer support to victims of anti-social behaviour. Mediation services are generally commissioned on a needs basis. Police Safer Neighbourhood Units work closely with local authorities and communities 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. Dedicated victim support/liason officers were noted as being beneficial in that this would separate these functions and enable a more victim-focused approach. 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.

#### **Services for victims of domestic abuse**

We identified five 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 BME communities across the region.

## **The concerns of domestic abuse organisations**

The concerns expressed by the domestic abuse support services that 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
- Availability of services for victims with specific needs
- 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 CJS processes.

## **Support services for victims of sexual violence**

We mapped two services delivering support for victims of sexual violence; this includes one SARC but 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. One of the services provides support to men and women of all ages who have been raped or sexually assaulted, while the other restricts services to females aged 13 and over.

## **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 e.g. male victims, victims from LGBT communities, 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 families bereaved by murder or 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 coordinate 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 counselling.

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

## **Support services for victims of hate crime**

With the exception of Victim Support, services for victims of hate crime in Durham and Darlington are predominantly delivered by organisations that have a broader remit, e.g. Gay Advice Durham and Darlington (GADD), Black Minority Ethnic Communities network (BECON) 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**

Both 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 two services delivering specialist support to young victims of crime or those affected by specific crimes. The domestic abuse and sexual violence services also provide a level of support for young people affected by these issues.

### **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
- The need for more joined-up processes that enable early identification and intervention for young people at risk.

## 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.” ASB 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 advisor (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 advisor (ISVA)* - An independent sexual violence advisor 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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