

Scrutiny & Accountability Board

Deep Dive Meeting

Victim Satisfaction

Police Headquarters

12 February 2020

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| Attendees |  |
| Police & Crime Commissioner Team |  |
| Paula Hardy (PH) | Strategic Lead for Vulnerability & Victims |
| Hannah Jenkins-Jones (HJJ) | Strategic Lead for Scrutiny, Assurance and Equality |
| Lee Jones (LJ) | Chief Executive |
| Sarah Mahon (SM) | Engagement & Assurance Officer |
| Nia Scourfield (NS) | Governance Support Officer |
| Jackie Trow (JT) | Strategic Lead for Quality, Standards and Compliance |
| Emma Wools (EW) **(CHAIR)** | Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner |
| South Wales Police |  |
| Chief Superintendent Phil Ashby (PA) | Head of Corporate Services |
| ACC Jenny Gilmer (JG) | Assistant Chief Constable - Head of Support Portfolio |
| Chief Inspector Dave Gordon (DG) | Head of Criminal Justice (Force lead for victims) |
| Caroline Smart (CS) | Corporate Services – Corporate Management |
| DCC Jeremy Vaughan (JV) | Deputy Chief Constable |
| Carol Woodward (CW) | Assurance & Inspection Manager |
| South Wales Victim Focus – External Partner Representative |  |
| Elena Williams (ElW) | South Wales Victim Focus Operations Manager |

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| No | Item | Content |
| **1.** | **Welcome & Introductions** | 1.1 EW welcomed attendees and introductions were made. Elena Williams was welcomed as an external guest who would be feeding into the first hour of the meeting.  1.2 EW provided an outline of the purpose of the meeting, which was to look at victim satisfaction and the service provided to victims. The previous minutes would be considered at the end of the meeting. |
| **2.** | **Presentation on Insights Programme** | 2.1 CW was invited to present on the Insights Programme. CW provided an overview of the work the Insights team carried out, which included speaking to victims of crime regarding the service they received.  2.2 CW stated the team regularly conducted telephone interviews with victims of domestic abuse, as this was a nationally required subject area for feedback. Surveys into other crime types, including anti-social behaviour and hate crime, were also conducted, and feedback was given to the BCU commanders in order to reflect and learn lessons on how the service could be improved.  2.3 CW stated that the Insights team was working with the Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC) team to carry out face to face surveys with victims and continued to work with other departments such as the Public Protection Unit to seek feedback and improve services. CW stated that the main theme from victim feedback was that they wished to receive updates from officers on a more regular basis with regards to their ongoing case. |
| **3.** | **Business Assurance Report: Victim Satisfaction Deep Dive Review** | 3.1 EW invited HJJ to present her report on Victim Satisfaction. The report provided an insight in to the views of case workers from South Wales Victim Focus. HJJ highlighted that victims felt they were not always given regular updates with regards to their case and they were not always made aware or did not understand the outcome of their case. HJJ felt these issues had an impact on victim satisfaction including victim confidence in being able to report future incidents to the police. HJJ also detailed other feedback received, including the timeliness of cases, victims not being referred to victim support services at the earliest opportunity and officers not providing victims with the correct information regarding the services that were available for them. HJJ made reference to the positive feedback received from victims, which included consistent contact, being kept up to date, officers providing reassurance and quick responses.  3.2 HJJ invited EWi from South Wales Victim Focus to add any additional comments she felt necessary. EWi confirmed that the main issue was lack of communication between officers and victims. She felt it was important that officers managed the expectations of the victims, specifically those who thought they would have an update of their case on a daily or weekly basis. EWi also identified other issues victims experienced including a lack of understanding with regards to their case and feeling like no one would believe them. EWi continued to say that Victim Focus worked with the victims to keep them engaged and provide constant reassurance when they felt like a case had gone on for a significant amount of time and stressed the importance of victims being referred at the earliest opportunity.  3.3 EWi referred to the statistics in relation to incoming referrals from South Wales Police and highlighted the inconsistencies across the different BCUs. For example, she stated that most referrals were received from Western BCU and she wondered whether a higher rate of referrals to Victim Focus equated to a higher level of victim satisfaction in that area. It was agreed that BCU breakdowns would be interesting to consider and report back on.  3.4 EWi felt it was important to highlight the importance of joint working with South Wales Police and shared an example of a victim of domestic abuse, who was reluctant to use the service at first, which then resulted in a positive outcome. |
| **4.** | **Complaints made by Victims of Crime : Dip Sampling Results** | 4.1 E Wools invited JT to present her report on the dip sampling that was undertaken in relation to complaints made by victims of crime.  4.2 JT highlighted the number of complaints received from September to December 2019 and stated that Western BCU had the highest number of complaints. JT advised that typically the complaints were in relation to the quality of the investigation, the attitude of the officers dealing with the incident and victims not being kept updated or informed. JT discussed the impact of poor service and the effect this would have on a person’s wellbeing and opinion of the police service.  4.3 JT referred to the data quality of correspondence, including police terminology and acronyms that were used in letters to victims, which would be difficult to understand from a non-policing perspective. JT highlighted the importance of transparency and the role of the Public Service Centre when taking a call regarding a complaint and trying to encourage the operator to deal with it straight away.  4.4 EW asked EWi to summarise what areas she felt needed to be prioritised with regards to dealing with victims and their complaints. EWi emphasised the need to listen to the victims and keep them up to date. She also highlighted the importance of the aftercare a victim received, once an investigation had been complete and the need for officers to make victims aware of the support that was available.  4.5 DG informed the board that the Victim Strategy Implementation Group was working with Victim Focus to look at the way in which victims were being updated and dealt with through internal South Wales Police systems and confirmed that a new system would be in place in 6 months. DG shared that there was a streamlined process in place, which identified the victim’s needs, vulnerability and whether they were being persistently targeted. He advised that if one of these factors was identified that they would be referred straight away and it would be documented on the system. He confirmed that the new system would also allow for reminders to be sent to officers to update victims and would highlight to Sergeants if these updates were overdue. He also referred to the development of a Victims Strategy, which would involve members of the Commissioner’s team.  4.6 SM queried whether there were any plans in place to develop how South Wales Police engaged with harder to reach groups. CW advised that this was part of the Insights Strategy although it was not a current priority. EW highlighted the need for the board to assess how victim data was collated and shared between the force, partner agencies and the Commissioner’s office.  4.7 HJJ referred to the Insights Strategy where it stated that people with mental health conditions would not be surveyed. HJJ questioned what the force was doing to understand the feedback from these service users and felt it was important that they were not excluded from being surveyed. CW explained that this referred to Home Office guidance, which stated they should consider not surveying victims who were considered as vulnerable, including people with mental health conditions, and stated this was measured on a case by case basis. CW stated that the intention was to include people with mental health conditions in South Wales surveys but that it was necessary to work out how this should be conducted appropriately. CS suggested that some people could have family members feed in on their behalf if necessary. HJJ welcomed the response that people with mental health conditions would be included as they would clearly represent a significant proportion of victims who would want to be heard.  4.8 EWi queried if there was any guidance on how many victims the force was asked to reach out to, in terms of receiving feedback. CW stated there was a detailed table in the guidance, which outlined the number of people that needed to be surveyed in order to get an appropriate response rate.  4.9 EW noted the importance of prioritising the victim element in the Performance Framework that was in development.  4.10 SM offered to share her knowledge of easyread communication with the force, which would enable victims with learning disabilities to share their views and feedback via force surveys. This was welcomed. |
| **5.** | **Victim Satisfaction: Outcomes Data** | 5.1 E Wools invited CW to present the data on Victim Satisfaction. CW firstly provided an overview of crime outcomes data for all crime and some specific crime types. It was noted that crime volume had been rising and positive outcomes decreasing. The Commissioner's team suggested it would be helpful to understand how South Wales Police data compared with other forces in terms of outcomes.  5.2 The board discussed why victims report and then withdraw consent to pursue their case and what the force was doing to inform the victims of the impact and risks of not agreeing to continue with an investigation.  5.3 HJJ shared her concerns in relation to the low number of positive outcomes in terms of stalking and harassment, which was the lowest of all crimes presented. She reminded the Board of one of the recommendations of the stalking and harassment deep dive last summer, which was to share positive stories of successful outcomes in order to encourage others to understand the benefits of reporting. CW advised that this was an area of business that was being considered internally in terms of raising awareness amongst officers through events and learning. JG agreed with the points made and suggested that action needed to be taken in relation to monitoring how to improve stalking and harassment outcomes.  5.4 The Commissioner’s team asked if the data could be broken down to reflect repeat victims and repeat offenders and discussed the possibility of separating stalking and harassment into two categories in order to be able to analyse and better understand the data in both areas.  5.5 The Board discussed the low victim satisfaction levels in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour. It was understood that ASB often involved a range of partner agencies and it was important to bear in mind that the police could only do so much in some cases. To understand how to improve victim satisfaction it was important to recognise the joint responsibilities of partners. The board discussed the importance of working with partner agencies and continuing to raise issues and share best practise in order to best support the public.  5.6 EW requested that to progress this issue the Partnerships Board should include ASB victim satisfaction within in its remit. |
| **6.** | **Conclusions & Escalations.** | 6.1 EW captured the main themes that were discussed and agreed during the meeting, including how internal governance should be more effectively used to ensure that resources were shared internally and with external partners. It was agreed that the Partnerships Board should be utilised to pursue a number of issues discussed, particularly the joint responsibilities of partners in relation to ASB victim satisfaction.  6.2 EW also requested that the forthcoming Victims Strategy should be jointly developed but ideally owned by the Commissioner and his team, given his victims remit. It was agreed that this should be escalated and noted at the Commissioner’s Strategic Board.  6.3 EW also emphasised the importance of the new Performance Framework needing to include detailed data on victims, including repeat victims. Updates on this framework would be requested. |
| **6.** | **Minutes of previous meeting** | 6.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true record. |
| **7.** | **AOB** | 7.1 It was agreed that actions and recommendations from the previous year would be reviewed between the Commissioner’s office and Corporate Development during an informal meeting planned for April. This would replace the next escalations meeting. |

**Action Table**

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| **Date** | **Meeting** | **Action** | **Owner** |
| 12.02.20 | Victim Satisfaction | Establish whether victim satisfaction can be broken down by BCU area (and provide data if possible) | Carol Woodward |
| 12.02.20 | Victim Satisfaction | Assess how victim data can be collated and shared between the force, partner agencies and the Commissioner’s office | Phil Ashby |
| 12.02.20 | Victim Satisfaction | SM to share knowledge of easyread communication with Corporate Services. | Sarah Mahon |
| 12.02.20 | Victim Satisfaction | Consider how South Wales Police data compares with other forces in terms of crime outcome rates (report back to board) | Phil Ashby |
| 12.02.20 | Victim Satisfaction | Attempt to break down available crime outcome data to reflect repeat victims and repeat offenders, whilst also separating stalking and harassment into two categories (report back to board). | Phil Ashby |
| 12.02.20 | Victim Satisfaction | JG to look further into stalking and harassment outcomes to consider any areas where improvements can be made. | Jenny Gilmer |
| 12.02.20 | Victim Satisfaction | Victim Satisfaction, particularly in relation to ASB, to be added to the Partnerships Board remit | Mark Brace |
| 12.02.20 | Victim Satisfaction | Ownership of Victims Strategy to be escalated to Commissioner’s Strategic Board | Emma Wools |