
Meeting the needs of victims in the criminal justice system An inspection of how well the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Probation Service support victims of crime (December 2023)

Report: [An inspection of how well the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Probation Service support victims of crime \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

Response from: Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Hampshire and Isle of Wight

Supporting victims of crime is a core function of the criminal justice system (CJS), as Police and Crime Commissioner I have a key role to play. Meeting the needs of victims in the CJS, requires collaborative working and a multiagency response. Victims need to be supported at all times, heard at all times, and given every opportunity to rebuild their lives in a consistent, flexible, personalised and accessible way.

The inspection report highlights the key areas where victims are currently being let down through the CJS process. This culminates in *“a lack of good-quality information and poor communication between criminal justice bodies, added to the problems of an already overstretched criminal justice system. Criminal justice bodies need to work more collaboratively and focus on the quality of their contact with victims and not just on the process.”*

I've been committed to improving the outcomes for victims since being elected as Police and Crime Commissioner in May 2021. I have invested over £4million into developing a victim hub across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, this all-age Victim Care Hub is co-located within Constabulary estate alongside the Witness Care Unit teams and the specialist commissioned support services I fund. The victim hub provides a support system which is truly victim-led.

As chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board I work with key partners to coordinate the response for victims of crime, and I rely upon this coordinated action to ensure victims continue to receive the services they need. I continue to seek the assurance from my Chief Constable that officers and staff are complying with the victims' code and putting victims at the heart of the criminal justice system.

Donna Jones
Police and Crime Commissioner

Response from Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

Victims are at the heart of the criminal justice system and a core element of the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary policing strategy, as identified within our three force priorities of; putting victims first, the relentless pursuit of criminals and exceptional local policing. Through our force priorities we are committed to reducing the number of people who become victims of crime, providing a more timely and effective response and listening to our victims to improve their journey through the criminal justice system.

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary works alongside the College of Policing and NPCC to deliver the standards required to ensure we have good quality victim needs assessments in all cases. Within

the constabulary, work has been underway since June 2022 to seek continuous improvement in this area, challenging ourselves via our internal force performance metrics and inspection, tracking victim satisfaction and responding where there are gaps in service identified. The force continues to track the quality of VSAs and inspection responses through our HMICFRS tracking of recommendations.

This victim centred work is delivered force wide, with oversight from a Victims Strategic Lead and a dedicated Victims Inspector. Part of their role is ensuring we have skilled staff and officers who have the relevant knowledge to deliver a high standard of public service throughout all elements of the criminal justice process. Training to date has included classroom and online learning, delivered force wide during 2023 and beyond.

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary with their Independent Sexual Violence Advocate partners have successfully launched the Rape and Sexual Assault Survivors Experience of Police survey as part of Operation Soteria. Victims and survivors from Hampshire and IOW have made the fourth largest contribution to this national survey, which explores a victim-survivors experience to sexual offending, influencing service improvement.

As a part of the force's Victim Strategy we are committed to driving forward improvements internally and through effective partnership working with the OPCC and the Local Criminal Justice Board. This is illustrated by the launch of the Victim Care Hub in February 2024 in partnership with the OPCC. The hub will enable a multi-agency approach, effective communication between criminal justice agencies and enable timely information sharing. With four hub locations across the four force areas: East, West, North and Isle of Wight and co-located alongside the Witness Care Unit, this service is a victim-led support service offering support through the criminal justice process but also helping victims in their recovery ensuring their needs are met.

As we move through into 2024, new technologies are also enabling us to improve victims' accessibility to the constabulary through a range of communication methods including a new Victim Portal (CM101), which includes two-way communication enabling victims to directly access officers investigating their case for updates or for crime prevention advice.

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary remains committed to working with our partners to deliver a high standard, victim-centred response and will take into consideration the learning identified within this inspection report.

Sam De Reya
Deputy Chief Constable

Recommendations:

Recommendation 3:

By 31 December 2024, the College of Policing should work with the National Police Chiefs' Council and chief constables to develop minimum standards for the completion of victim needs assessments. These should include standards for timeliness of completion and clarity on the information to be recorded.



OPCC: As PCC I will seek assurances from my Chief Constable that he is working with the College of Policing and NPCC to develop minimum standards for the completion of victim needs assessments, and that these should include standards for timeliness of completion and clarity on the information to be recorded.