

MOPAC MPS Oversight Board

21 September 2021

Victim Care Team update

Report by: A/CI David Hobson-Smith

1. Purpose of this Paper

This paper is to brief the Oversight board as to the progress of the MPS in relation to victim care. Commander Jon Savell leads as Head of Profession for Investigation supported by Detective Superintendent Andrew Wadey as Lead Responsible Officer. In turn Continuous Policing Improvement Command Victim Care team consist of Acting Chief Inspector David Hobson-Smith, Detective Sergeant Iqbal Meah and PC Marcia Lindsay.

Although there has been a change of staffing, the team's mission remains the same: We are responsible for improving the care of victims of crime across London, treating victims as individuals and providing support for their individual needs. We work with MOPAC and partners to achieve this. In the last quarter we have established a forum made up of Victim's from London's diverse backgrounds to support us in asking the questions we don't know to ask. All work is overseen by the Victim Care Board, chaired by Deputy Assistant Commissioner Barbara Gray.

Details are set out below:

2. Recommendations – that the Oversight Board:

- a) Note the progress of the MPS Victim Care team and the actions being progressed; and
- b) Note the Met's position on compliance with the revised Victims' Code of Practice.

3. Information for Consideration

- **Governance** – MPS governance structure has been recorded and shared with MOPAC.

- **MPS Victim Care Performance Framework** – A VCOP performance dashboard is being designed to help monitor Victims' Code of Practice (VCOP) compliance. Digital Policing have experienced issues with the data feed from CRIS which was delayed the dashboard. HQ Strategy and Governance hope to have the VCOP dashboard ready by October 2021. Once the VCOP dashboard is complete, this will allow BCU's to drive performance. In the interim The Victim Care Team utilise a quarterly performance pack which is presented to the Victim Care Board and BCU SPOC's.
- **Victims' Advisory Group** – A 'Victim Care Improvement Forum' has been set up with the first meeting held in July 2021, further meetings will be held every quarter. The group consists of 17 members who, live, work or have a significant connection to London and identify themselves as a victim of crime. This is a diverse group to represent the diverse make up of London. The aim of the forum is to allow members to provide critique in relation to proposed changes and projects we are working on. It's also mechanism to consider questions which may not have occurred to the MPS.
- **Victim Information Leaflet** – The Victim Information Leaflet (VIL) was rolled out across the MPS in February 2021. The VIL explains to victims their key rights under VCOP and signposts victims to support agencies. An electronic version of the VIL should be provided to all victims via email. Hard copies are also available for those victims without access to email or internet. The VIL has also been translated into over 50 different languages. We are currently in the process of updating the VIL to include QR Codes which will provide easier access to LVWS and the MPS website. Q1 data for 2021/22 from the USS indicates at present 34% of victims are receiving the VIL. The drive to increase the use of the VIL is being pushed to the BCU's via the local Victim Care SPOC's. Data from the USS indicates a strong correlation between victims who are provided with the VIL and overall satisfaction. Q1 2021/22 data show 22% satisfaction improvement across all crime types and demographics.
- **Victims' Right to Review (VRR) Scheme** – Since June 2020, all VRR request should come via email (vrr@met.police.uk). This mailbox is centrally managed by the Victim Care Team. Each BCU has a nominated SPOC who is responsible for allocating reviewing officer to conduct the review.

Between June 2020 – June 2021, 306 VRR requests were received which met the criteria for review. 253 have been resulted and 53 still await an outcome. 5% of completed reviews lead to charges following either review, further enquires or CPS advice being sought. VRR data is also presented quarterly to the Victim Care Board.

VRR Outcome		Cases Charged
The original decision to take no further action is upheld	180	N/A
The original decision is overturned and suspect is charged or summonsed;	3	3
The original decision is overturned and the suspect is dealt with by way of an out of court disposal;	0	N/A

The original decision is overturned and the case is referred to the CPS for a charging decision;	23	4
It is determined that further enquires need to be completed before the reviewing officer can make their decision;	46	6
The original decision is overturned but the case is statute-barred and proceeding cannot be instigated.	1	N/A
Cases still awaiting outcome	53	N/A

- **MOJ VCOP Compliance** – A self-assessment has been completed providing an update on the work being done by the MPS to meet the 12 VCOP rights. The final RAG scores will be populated by MOPAC and returned to MOJ by the end of August 2021. Once feedback has been provided by MOJ, partner agencies will meet and agree on suitable next steps
- **Digital Solutions** – CRIS was updated in April 2021 to ensure compliance with VCOP changes. The data provided by the CRIS update will be used to create a VCOP dashboard, available to all officers and delivered to every BCU. This is expected to be available in October 2021.
- **Restorative Justice (RJ)** – Inspector Fenoughty at Met Prosecutions has taken on responsibility for Restorative Justice within the MPS. He and his team are responsible for the process alongside Calm Mediation while the Victim Care Improvement Team are responsible for provision of information to victims of crime and the public. The VIL provides information to victims on RJ and how they can access this.
- **Improving the Victims' Journey** – We are working with MPS Directorate of Media and Communications (DMC) to create short YouTube style videos to capture the experience of different victims including domestic abuse, sexual abuse & hate crime. This project was placed on hold due to lockdown restrictions but work will now recommence. We are also working on High Harm Survey to further understand the victim experience (see below).
- **User Satisfaction Survey (USS)** – Overall satisfaction relating to the service provided by the MPS has been consistent over the past 3 years. The figure at the close of the last performance year was 69%. Quarter 1 of this performance year shows overall satisfaction at 66%. We are reviewing this data to identify key causes for the dip. A new 'High Harm Survey' (HSS) is in development to capture the experience for victims impacted by some of the most serious and harmful crimes (USS only covers Burglary, Assault, Hate Crime and Robbery). The crime type and question set has been agreed following consultation. Notably DA was excluded from the HSS due to the potential risk of the perpetrator being made aware of victim contact with police, which could expose the victim to further harm. We understand many victims manage their own safety, however making unexpected contact from police to victims, represents a significant risk. This decision was made by Commander Savell, Head of Profession for Investigation. This followed consultation with the Lead Responsible Officer for Domestic Abuse. The MPS intends to survey victims of Domestic Abuse and we understand the knowledge gap at present, but this survey must be conducted following specialist risk assessment. The next step is to agree on the delivery method for the High

Harm Survey. Following Victims' Commissioner Claire Waxman's notification of concern we are again reviewing potential delivery methods to attempt to identify safe methods for Domestic Abuse victims.

- **Compensation** – The VIL details how victims of qualifying crime can apply for compensation via the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA).
- **Evidence Based Prosecutions** – A new guidance document was created to provide officers with information on how to progress investigations through to charge in the absence of a supporting victim or if the victim decides to withdraw during the investigation. There is a MPS wide drive to reduce the number of crimes being closed due unsupportive victim, this includes training officers and monitoring data compliance.
- **Communications strategy** – The VIL is hosted online and internally on the MPS intranet. The 'Victims' section on the MPS intranet now also hosts the VIL in over 50 translations. Internal communication goes via BCU and OCU SPOCs across the MPS. We are also working on external campaign on Victim's Right. This will be supported by two poster designs, the first will be used internally in writing rooms directing officers toward VCOP and seeking to drive attitudes. The second poster will be public facing intended for front offices, using the QR codes to direct members of the public to support services.
- **Training** – VRR training has been delivered to all BCU SPOC's. We have collaborated with Babcock's to develop victim care training for student officers. This was rolled out at the end of January 2021, with the first cohort of officers completing classroom based training in July 2021. Training staff have made improvements to the course based on feedback provided by the first cohort. A new NCALT (National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies) designed by the College of Policing to correspond with the latest update to VCOP is also available for all frontline officers.
- **Victim Personal Statements (VPS)** – A pilot scheme to take VPS remotely using digital signature capture via 'DocuSign' remains delayed pending data sharing approval. We are also working with the MPS Transformation Command to dip sample VPS. At present, we are discussing with His Honour Judge Edmunds of Isleworth Crown Court and Senior Magistrate Featherstonehaugh to create a scrutiny panel for feedback of an anonymous dip sample of VPS. This will help to identify common failures in VPS as well as good practice to feed into our continuous professional development. The VIL also provides information on VPS. Officers also have access to VPS template and also Business Impact Statement (BIS). This guides officers to record appropriate impact. This also feeds into special measures below.
- **Special Measures** – VIL details special measures for vulnerable and intimidated (V&I) victims. CRIS updates allows this to be better monitored. Met Prosecutions have created a new streamlined MG2 form to request special measures. This will link in to the Needs Assessment.
- **Victim Needs Assessment** – The Victim Care Team have designed the 'Victim Needs Assessment' (VNA) in consultation with MOPAC. The aim of the VNA is to identify early in the investigation what support the victim requires. Currently a pilot is under way on NW BCU to assess the impact on frontline officers. The Victim Care Team will work with Digital Policing and MET Prosecutions in terms

of a digital solution to storing and sharing the VNA. Our medium to long-term ambition is to share this with criminal justice agencies and victim support partners. This will require compliance with Data Protection and suitable IT infrastructure.

For more information on the above updates, please contact the Victim Care Team.

4. Equalities and Diversity Issues

- 4.1. USS data indicates satisfaction gap with victims who identify as mixed ethnicity, LGBT+ and having disability being less satisfied than those without these characteristics. The Victims reference group has a diverse representation (including mixed ethnicity, LGBT+ and disability), will be used to discuss the satisfaction at the next meeting planned for September 2021. Increasing the uptake of the VIL is one of the ways the gap could be narrowed.
 - 4.2. Equality Impact Assessment is underway in relation to the Victim Needs Assessment. The first draft has been reviewed by the Strategic and Diversity Inclusion Unit, additional commentary has been requested. The Victim Needs Assessment seeks to have a positive impact in identifying victims who require additional support including victims who are disabled or pregnant.
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