

# Justice Matters: Victims Matter

MOPAC Evidence & Insight

September 2017



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# Introduction: MOPAC and victims



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# Integrated Victim and Witness Services

- London now accounts for nearly a fifth of all crime in England and Wales
- MOPAC and victims' commissioning responsibility
- Police and Crime Plan – victims at the heart
- Role of the Victims' Commissioner
- Three-year, £47m programme to transform current provision



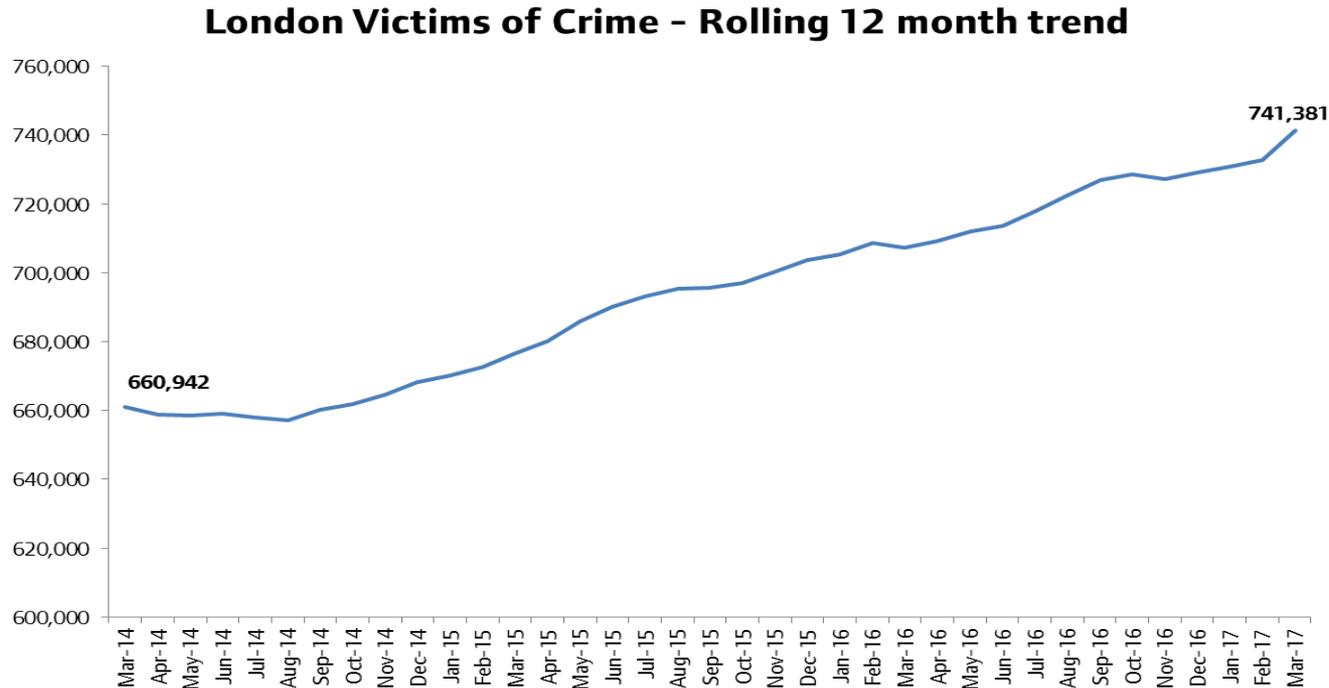
# Victimisation in London



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# Currently there are more victims of crime in London than at any point in the last 3 years



- There were approximately a three quarters of a million victims of crime within the last year.
- The number of recorded victims of crime in London has increased by more than 12% (over 80,000 more victims) over the last 3 years.
- During the month of March 2017 there were 67,000 victims of crime in London. The highest number of victims recorded in an individual month in the last 5 years.

# One in eight victims experience repeat victimisation

- According to MPS data: in July 2017 there were 8,389 victims who had experienced at least one other offence in the preceding year. This means that one in eight victims in that month had experienced repeat victimisation.
- The rate of repeat victimisation varies considerably across boroughs ranging from just 6 in 100 victims in Westminster to 17 in 100 in Sutton.
- Repeat victims were more likely to have been victims multiple times in the previous year of Violence Against the Person offences.
- One in five repeat victims in May were victims of multiple theft offences in the preceding year.
- 15% of victims within the USS report had been a victim repeatedly within the last 12 months.  
**Repeat victims are less satisfied than first time victims** (76% vs. 60%).
- Wider research indicates repeat victims are significantly more likely to experience worse mental health than those who have been victimised only once, and have been found to suffer worse mental health in terms of length, intensity and number of mental health issues.

# One in ten victims are recorded as vulnerable

10%

~75,000 victims of crime in 2016/17 were recorded as vulnerable by the MPS. Higher rates were recorded in sexual offences (46%), violence (19%) and robbery (22%).

48%

Of all victims recorded as vulnerable were by way of feeling intimidated by the offender.

26%

Of all vulnerable victims were described as having mental health issues

48%

Of all vulnerable victims were recorded as BAME.

Victims tell us that if their vulnerability is **identified** and **dealt with by police**, they are **MORE** satisfied (88%) than those who report that vulnerability was not catered for (41% satisfied). Source USS data



# **Victim's Code of Practice (VCOP)**

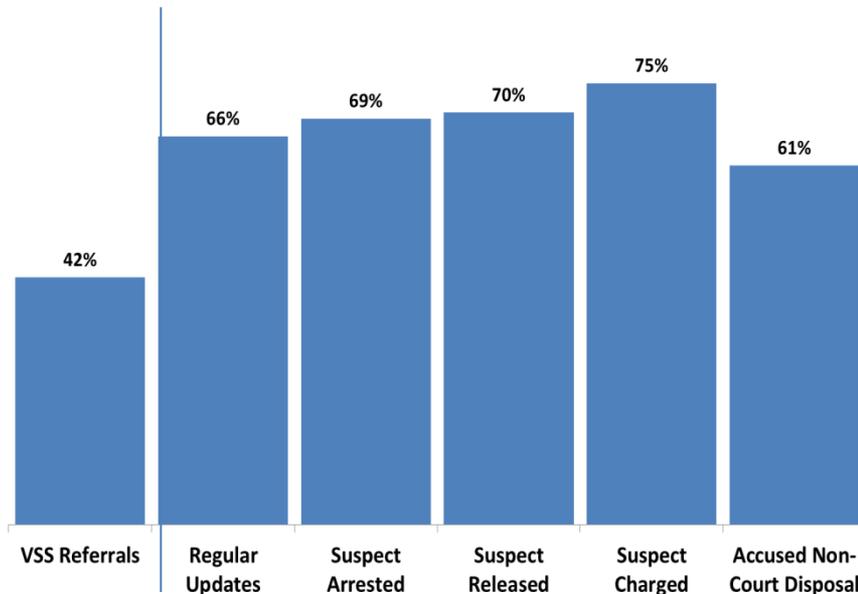


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# VCOP compliance – Met Police

## VCOP Compliance – MPS (July 2017)



The number of victims in London is increasing, yet the proportion of these that are VCOP applicable has remained stable (79%). This creates a greater demand on the MPS with regards to maintaining VCOP compliance.

**To monitor VCOP compliance the MPS publish figures on the percentage of victims informed on:**

- Regular Updates
- Suspect Arrested
- Suspect Released
- Suspect Charged and
- Accused Non-Court Disposal

The snapshot from July 2017 shows that between 61% and 75% of victims receive the information at each point within the required timescales.

Compared to July 2014 all areas (except Suspect released) have seen long term reductions:

Victim receives Regular Updates - **12%** (78% - 66%)

Suspect has been arrested - **12%** (81% to 69%)

Suspect given non-court disposal - **10%** (71% - 61%)

VSS Referrals are only at 42%. This is likely due to the stipulation that victims must give consent before their information can be passed on to victims services.

# Victim experience of VCOP compliance differs across entitlements and crime types

- New measures are now included in the MOPAC USS to capture victim experience around VCOP compliance. The results, based on approximately 3,000 responses, show:
  - **59%** of respondent agree that a **Victim Support referral** was offered
  - **45%** agree that the opportunity for a **victim personal statement** was offered
  - **20%** agree that they were offered **information on restorative justice**
- Preliminary modelling shows being offered **information on restorative justice** and the **opportunity to complete a victim personal statement** both have a significant positive association with **satisfaction with police actions**. However other aspects of service are more important; for example police providing reassurance.

# Victim experience of VCOP compliance in relation to 'High harm' Crime

As a proxy for 'High Harm' Crime, the below table groups Violent Crime and Hate Crime from the USS together.

**% of respondents answering 'yes'**

Crime Experienced	Victim Support Referral	Victim Personal Statement Offered	Victim Offered Information on RJ
Burglary	66%	37%	16%
Vehicle Crime	51%	30%	15%
"High Harm" Crime	60%	61%	25%

- Results differ slightly across crime groups with, violent crime and hate crime victims reporting higher levels of compliance across all questions except Victim Support referral, where compliance for burglary victims is highest.
- Compliance is lowest for victims of vehicle crime for all questions.



# Case Study



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**“I feel like the whole system is there for the offender, not the victim”**

# Victim of stalking: A case study

## Key findings

- **Poor communication** from all key agencies (police, CPS, support services, WCU)
  - The case was handled by multiple police officers and only recently the victim was provided with a police SPOC, which led to mistakes, delays and re-victimisation.
  - No one explained the victim what to expect at Crown Court.
  - He was not kept informed about the progress of the case, both in terms of the police investigation and the court trials.
- **Lack of advocacy and support from key victim support services** – including Victim Support and WCU. The only reason for why a SPOC was obtained is because the victim contacted Voice4Victims who became the advocate for the victim.
- **Civil court hearings as a part of harassment** - despite the restraining order in place, the stalker was “within his rights” to take the victim to civil court, sit next to him during hearings and cross-examine him. The victim has battled with getting the CPS to recognise that the stalker taking the victim to civil court is a breach of the RO. V4V assisted the victim with a VRR.
- **Special measures offered** – when attending hearings at the Crown and magistrates’ court, the victim was offered special measures (i.e. screens), which he found useful.

2010	2011	2012	2013	2013-2014	Jan 2015	Oct 2016	2017	Currently
Disagreement at victim’s place of work  Death threats & defamatory comments on social media began	Offender arrested, charged and pled guilty;  Given restraining order	Further breaches to restraining order  Order updated with further restrictions	Stalker took victim to civil court – tried to sue for damages  Claim was thrown out as baseless	More breaches to restraining order  Stalker was imprisoned three times	Stalker applied to civil court again - victim had to attend several hearings (taking time off work to do so)	Civil case finally dismissed after almost 2 years	Further online breaches  V4V assisted the victim with a VRR – resulted in stalker being charged for taking victim to Civil court	Victim now attending court for stalker’s further breaches of the RO  Victim forced to take more time off work to attend court

**“I feel like the whole system is there for the offender, not the victim”**

## **Victim of stalking: A case study**

**“I had to search and save the evidence myself”** - 60% of his reports have been dismissed due to lack of evidence

**“We haven’t got the resources to investigate”** – the victim heard from the police

**“Police lost some evidence at some stage and my computer had to be searched again to gather necessary evidence for the case”** – further delays and re-victimisation

**“I wrote a letter to Croydon Borough Commander and he hasn’t responded”**

**“Trying to get hold of services is a nightmare”** – found it difficult getting an adequate response from Victim Support

**“The police didn’t know how to investigate online harassment on social media”**

**“I had to sit in a court waiting room for 2 days, only for the trial to then be postponed”**

### **Impact on victim’s life**

#### **Wellbeing & health**

- *“My stress levels are through the roof”*
- He has become short-tempered
- *“I’m constantly thinking about him and looking online for evidence”*

#### **Relationships and family**

- Victim’s marriage has been affected, *“I almost lost my family”*
- His son was beaten up at school because of defamatory comments on social media

#### **Employment**

- He lost his job because of defamatory comments
- He has had to take days off work in order to attend court on multiple occasions
- Hearings have been often adjourned – he lost a lot of his time off work



# Satisfaction with CJS

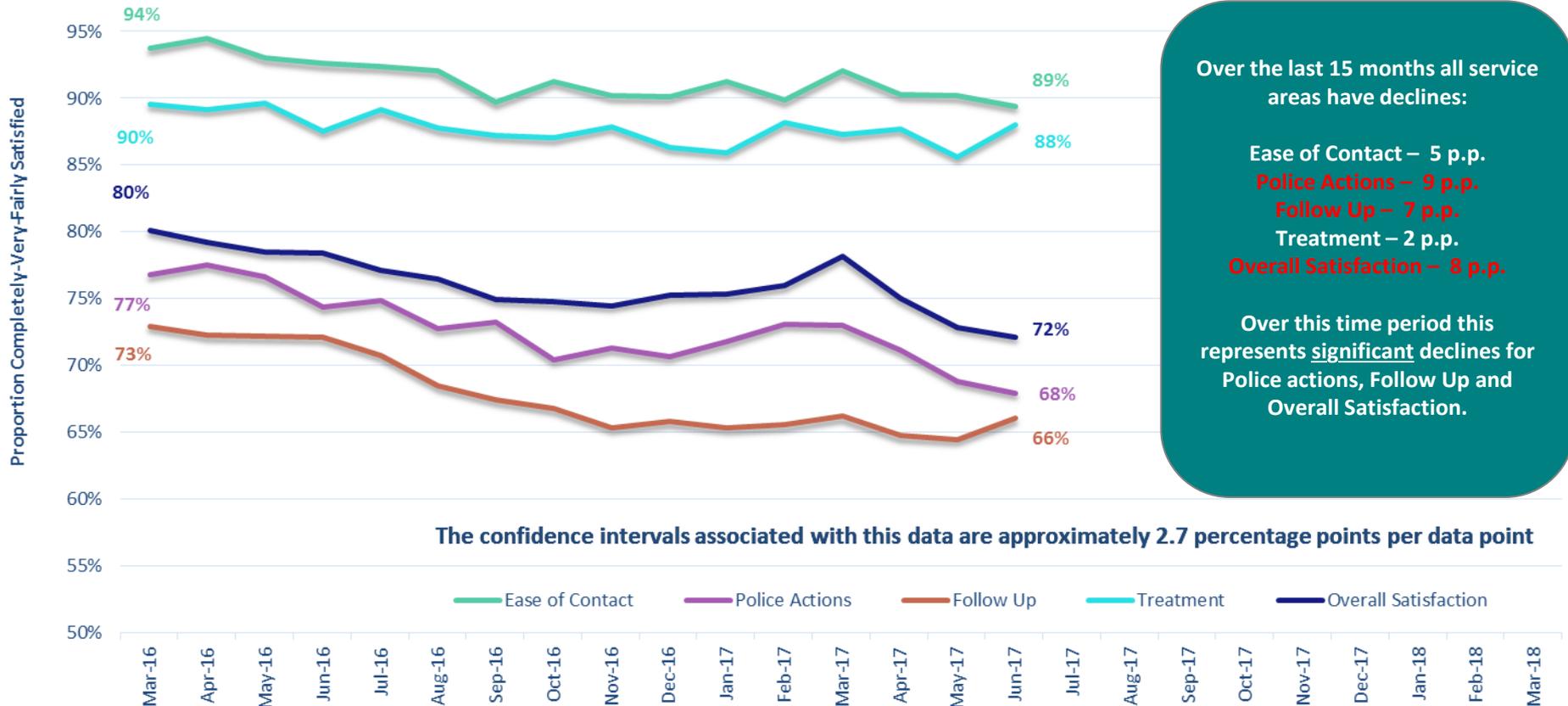


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# A tool for victims satisfaction with the police - Victim satisfaction with the police is falling after a period of stability

- The USS interviews approximately 13,000 victims per year.
- Victims of Domestic Burglary; Violent Crime; Vehicle Crime and Hate Crime are interviewed 6-12 weeks after the report of their incident.
- Exclusion criteria: Under 18; Domestic Violence; Police Officers on duty.
- Overall satisfaction is now at the lowest levels since before FY 12-13.



Over the last 15 months all service areas have declines:

- Ease of Contact – 5 p.p.
- Police Actions – 9 p.p.
- Follow Up – 7 p.p.
- Treatment – 2 p.p.
- Overall Satisfaction – 8 p.p.

Over this time period this represents significant declines for Police actions, Follow Up and Overall Satisfaction.

The confidence intervals associated with this data are approximately 2.7 percentage points per data point

# ...and variation and inequality exists across London

## Overall Satisfaction broken down by borough Rolling 12 months data

Proportion Completely-Very-Fairly Satisfied

The confidence intervals associated with this data are approximately 4.3 percentage points per borough data point and 0.7 for the MPS data point. Boroughs outside of these boundaries are highlighted green (above) or red (below)

MPS Avg. 75%

The three lowest performing boroughs are Newham, Redbridge & Hackney.

Compared with the previous 12 months, Redbridge sees a particular decrease in satisfaction (-8 pp.), bringing it into the lowest three boroughs. Satisfaction has also fallen in Hackney (-6 pp.) and Newham (-4 pp.) over this time.



The USS is an essential tool – giving us insights into performance, drivers, all the way to inequalities (i.e. victims with mental health issues are less satisfied, black and mixed ethnicity respondents less satisfied)...

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# But we don't have in-depth learning for the *whole journey* for Victims

## At the moment – there is a valuable CPS Victim and Witness Survey:

- This survey is conducted every few years with the next due during 2017
- Nationally, 37,688 people approached for the survey, with 7,723 interviewed
- This equals **only 128 interviews** within London
- 2015 analysis showed that 67% of victims said they were satisfied overall with the CPS (though this figure was slightly lower in London at 63%)
- Previous research has robustly identified a link between compliance with the Victims' Code and wider satisfaction with the Judicial System

## MOPAC proposal to pilot a new London Court Satisfaction Survey complementing the National CPS survey

- This is designed to be an in-depth survey asking questions primarily about the victim experience of courts (before and during trial, outcome of trial).
- **Robust local justice area data would be available.**
- A sample size of **5,400 would represent 30% of Crown and 12% of Magistrate** victims in a year.
- The proposed approach is an effective use of a 10min survey.
- This pilot would test the value of the survey and the data collated. There would be potential for regular performance data if this work is successful, and was taken forwards as a continuous project.
- The CSS will seek to go beyond the current snapshot of data and offer timely and regular feedback on victim experience.