

MOPAC MPS Oversight Board

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Progress on Victim Experience

Report by: Jon Savell

1. Purpose of this Paper

The purpose of this paper is to provide a progress update on work on Victim Care Team, Victim Care Action Plan and MOPAC recommendations. The paper seeks to explain how this will help in monitoring of Victims' Code of Practice (VCOP) compliance, and the monitoring of other recommendations for which the Met is responsible – such as in the VCOP Review.

In addition, given the anticipated update of the VCOP (which is expected imminently), and the introduction of a 'Victims Bill' (which is due to start consultation later this year), this paper addresses how the Met is considering the position on ensuring compliance with the revised code once published, and ensuring adequate monitoring.

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. Progress on Victim Experience

- 3.1. A new Victim Care team for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) was established in August 2019 consisting of a Victim Care Improvement Coordinator (Inspector Lorraine Busby-McVey) and overseen by a lead responsible officer (Superintendent Tania Coulson). A detective sergeant and constable joined the team in March 2020 to help deliver the objectives set by the MPS Victim Care Strategy. A detailed delivery plan and action tracker have been developed alongside the national, regional and local victim care strategies which includes the London Victims' Commissioners' VCOP recommendations that the MPS have adopted.
- 3.2. The work of the Victim Care team is presented to the Victim Care Board chaired by MPS Victims' Lead Deputy Assistant Commissioner Laurence Taylor. Below is a list of actions that are currently being progressed:
 - **Governance** – the team have mapped out the MPS Victims' Governance structure – currently with Lead Responsible Owner (LRO) and Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) for review. Once agreed a second meeting with MOPAC and London Victims' Commissioner will be arranged in September or October.

- **MPS Victim Care Performance Framework** – a new performance framework has been designed to help monitor Victims' Code of Practice (VCOP) compliance and the recommendations from the VCOP Review. The performance framework has been submitted to Commanders Savell and Bennett for comment. It will be sent to all Victim Care Board members once they have reviewed the content. The action tracker provides monthly updates from the work that is ongoing. The performance framework will form part of the MPS Basic Command Unit (BCU) Flex meetings.
- **Victims' Advisory Group** – The Victim's Voice Forum (VVF) was run bi-weekly during COVID, hosted by the Continuous Policing Improvement Command (CPIC), to bring together 40+ Pan London Critical Friends (Charities, MOPAC, Domestic Abuse Commissioner, Home Office) to ensure a joined up response to Domestic Abuse during lockdown. July 2020 – refreshed VVF membership and introduced an updated Terms of Reference for members to sign and abide by, to improve working relationships, align expectations, ensure confidentiality and ensure engagement with hard to reach communities. Forums are being arranged with other victims/survivors and critical friends to provide feedback on our policy and process reviews. Our next forum will review our 'needs assessment passport'.
- **Victims' Leaflet** – the new Victims' Leaflet provides information for all victims of crime including information on their rights and entitlements under the 'Code' and the support services available and how to access services.
- **Victims' Right to Review (VRR) Scheme** - a new process has been introduced for MPS - all victims of crime are provided details in how they can request a review if the police make a decision not to prosecute. Since June we have received 70 VRRs.
- **MOJ VCOP Review** - the second phase of consultation is complete. All forces have responded to the NPCC lead ACC Emma Barnet who is providing the formal update to the Ministry of Justice (MOJ). MOJ have announced they will inform all stakeholders on the new amendments by end of the year.
- **Improving the Victims' Journey** – the team is working with the MPS Directorate of Media and Communications (DMC) to capture a number of victims experiences of the criminal justice journey including survivors of DA and sexual offences, hate crime and MDS. This will be shared with other victims in similar situations. In addition, changes are being made to CRIS to improve the victims journey and once updated will allow for data searches and monitoring.
- **Digital Solutions** – A business justification paper has been submitted to the Digital Policing Board in Sept to agree/sign off the Crime Report Information System (CRIS) changes to be VCOP compliant (includes the proposed amendments to VCOP). Costs are now £300K+ - if approved work expected to begin Sept with go-live date of Feb/Mar 21.
- **Restorative Justice (RJ)** – Delays with the Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) between the MPS and CALM have impacted on referrals to this service, we are awaiting an update from the Information Assurance Unit. The team met with Op Hampshire to offer this service to all officers who are assaulted on duty or suffer hate crime. Op Hampshire have raised concerns that any RJ involvement will reduce an offender's sentence. The team are running an RJ event in the autumn with Op Hampshire, Fed and interested stakeholders to highlight the benefits of RJ and to seek agreement of running a pilot. Our Victims' Leaflet provides information to victims on RJ and how they can access this.
- **Victim Personal Statements (VPS)** - A pilot has been agreed to increase the offer of taking a VPS from victims through written statement, digital e-statement and via an online portal. Training is being given to officers to trial this pilot. Some IT issues delayed the launch but it is expected to begin in September/October 2020. VPS also forms part of the digital solutions within our CRIS change request. Our Victims' Leaflet provides information on VPS.

- **User Satisfaction Survey (USS)** - Changes to the USS have now been implemented for the telephone and TDIU survey. Due to these changes we have seen an increase in victim satisfaction over the past 3 months. A new high harm victim survey is also in development. The team is drafting a paper for the MPS Performance Board working with the Central Specialist Crime team and Public Protection Unit on the methodology and recommendations. A decision is expected in October 2020 to take this forward.
 - **Compensation** - The new Victims' Leaflet being issued to all victims of crime has details of how victims of violent crime can apply for compensation through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA). We are consulting with CICA for our 'needs assessment passport.'
 - **Evidence Based Prosecutions** – A new policy has been drafted to provide officers with information on how to progress investigations through to charge if a victim disengages or decides to withdraw from the process.
 - **Communications strategy** – internal and external communications are being developed with DMC to highlight the work that is ongoing. The new Victims' Leaflet is due to be launched in the coming weeks.
 - **Training** – we are committed to delivering quality victim care training to all new recruits, frontline staff, supervisors, detectives, family liaison officers, sexual offence investigation trained officers, evidential review officers and telephone and digital investigation unit officers. VRR training has been delivered. We have collaborated with Babcock's to develop victim care training for student officers. Trauma- informed training is being designed for RASSO (Rape & Serious Sexual Assault) officers and will be launched late autumn. A new NCALT (National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies) Victim Care package for all officers is being designed by the team working with L&D that will enable effective joined-up victim care and incorporates the VCOP entitlements.
 - **Special Measures** - The Victims' Leaflet has details about special measures for vulnerable and intimidated (V&I) victims. Our Met Police website is being updated to inform V&I victims on special measures. The changes to CRIS will ensure special measures are explained at the outset to keep victims engaged in the process.
 - **Needs Assessment passport** - Meetings were recently held with the Transformation team and CICA to develop the 'needs assessment passport' and the new MPS risk assessment toolkit. We are collating all needs assessments from MPS, WCU, LVWS, CPS and CICA and will design a first draft which will be sent out to all partners for consultation in Sept 2020.
 - **Peer Support** – a meeting is being arranged with Victim Support for initial discussions around peer support groups for victims.
- 3.3. The Victim Care team continue to work closely with all internal and external stakeholders including; MPS departments and BCUs, LVWS, CALM Mediation, CICA, Witness Care Unit (WCU), Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), MOPAC and the London Victim Commissioner's office.
- 3.4. In 2019 the MPS agreed to make necessary VCOP changes to the CRIS system to ensure compliance and monitoring with the 'Code'. Since the MOJ announced (July 2019) that amendments were being made to the 'Code' work on CRIS was stopped until the consultation process had completed. The Victim Care team have carefully taken into account the MOJ VCOP review and the anticipated changes that are being considered. Most of the proposed amendments to VCOP have not significantly affected our planned changes to CRIS. However, we have amended some of our requirements to reflect the proposed amendments to VCOP. Once the MOJ VCOP amendments and the Victim's Bill is published we will review our compliance again to ensure that adequate monitoring will be embedded into our new CONNECT system.