

Rt Hon James Cleverley MP
Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street,
London,
SW1P 4DF

Our ref: MOPAC070224- D4869

20 February 2024

Dear Home Secretary,

Meeting the needs of victims in the criminal justice system

I write in regards to the thematic inspection published on 19th December 2023 which assessed how well the criminal justice system meets the needs of victims, from when a victim reports an offence to after the offender has been convicted.

The Mayor and I have long held supporting victims as a key priority. The Mayor's Police and Crime Plan clearly sets out the aim to provide the quality services victims of crime in London need to cope and recover from their experiences; and how important it is to support more people to pursue cases through the justice system all the way to trial.

We are determined to see that vulnerable victims of crime are supported, and that vulnerable people are protected from exploitation and harm. To that end, MOPAC has invested in the development of specialist resources, such as the Stalking Threat Assessment Centres and London Gang Exit, to bring agencies together to protect vulnerable Londoners.

The Mayor and I also remain committed to developing the concept for a Victim Care Hub to support vulnerable victims of crime. The Mayor has invested £3m a year to enable the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to enhance their Victim Focus Desk facility which will be a key feature of the future Victim Care Hub.

The Mayor has appointed Claire Waxman OBE, London's first Victims Commissioner in 2017, who has led a range of work resulting in improvements for victims in London, many of which are directly relevant to this inspection. This includes improving the information given to victims when they report crime; reviewing the standard of service provided to victims by the MPS Witness Care Units; and currently working closely with the MPS in the development and implementation of their end-to-end victim care improvement programme.

I welcome the inspection report and note that the report specified two recommendations that are relevant to the MPS.

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.

I understand that the MPS is awaiting the College of Policing and National Police Chiefs' Council to reach out to police forces in the first instance, but given the recommendation timescales we are assured that this will happen within good time.

The Mayor is investing in the capacity and capability of key frontline services to improve the experiences of victims of crime and MOPAC will work closely with the College of Policing, NPCC, and the MPS to implement minimum standards for victim needs assessments.

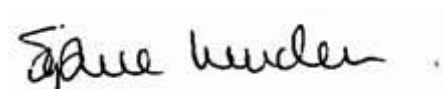
Recommendation 4

*By 30 September 2024, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Crown Prosecution Service should **agree minimum standards and consistent processes for how witness care units or functions communicate with the police**, the Crown Prosecution Service and victims to help effective, agile and timely information sharing so that victims' needs are met.*

In London, Witness Care Units are run by the MPS. The MPS will be able to feed into the conversations with the NPCC and CPS about process and minimum standards. My office will ensure that I am kept up to date with its progress.

I convene and chair the London Criminal Justice Board and this will enable partners to have a formal forum to support the work and ensure progress is made on these recommendations. In addition, the recent establishment of the London Policing Board provides a key mechanism for the Mayor to hold the MPS to account in public. The Board will be keen to ensure that victims are protected; and that the MPS puts in place reform around both systemic and cultural practices. I will use this, and existing oversight meetings to hold the Commissioner and his senior team to account.

Yours sincerely,



Sophie Linden
Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

cc. HMI Lee Freeman