

Duty of care Improving support for victims of crime



Chair's foreword



Too often the support given to victims and survivors of crime by the police, and other agencies that make up our criminal justice system, is simply not good enough. They are let down by the system designed to protect and care for them.

This is borne out by low victim satisfaction rates – the Metropolitan Police has the lowest victim satisfaction rate in the country. There clearly needs to be a step-change in the quality of service offered to all victims of crime in London.

We heard from victims who recounted problems with initial reporting, lack of subsequent information as to the progress of their case, and from support organisations who consistently raised concerns about the quality of police training in victim care.

But not all the evidence we heard was about poor service. We also heard accounts of some excellent support offered by the police and other agencies, but this was not consistent and it needs to be. If victims are confident and feel supported they are more likely to support subsequent prosecutions and bring criminals to justice.

This report makes recommendations which are practical, achievable and we believe, if adopted, would make a significant impact in improving the quality of service offered to victims. We believe they are needed if the MPS is to come anywhere near its target of achieving the highest levels of victim satisfaction by 2016.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to our investigation.

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Role of the Police and Crime Committee

The Police and Crime Committee examines the work of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and reviews the Police and Crime Plan for London. The Committee can also investigate anything that it considers to be of importance to policing and crime reduction in Greater London and make recommendations for improvements.

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Executive Summary

Victims in London do not always get the service they deserve from the MPS and other statutory services.

Providing a good quality service to victims is a crucial aspect of the police and other criminal justice agencies' roles. However, victims in London do not always get the service they deserve from the MPS and other statutory services. The Committee heard concerning evidence showing that not all victims are treated with respect or sensitivity by police officers when they report a crime. We also found that victims are not always given information they need about the progress of their case, and can be frustrated by different statutory agencies failing to work together effectively. As a result, victim satisfaction with the MPS is the lowest in the country, and the further victims get into the criminal justice system, the less satisfied they become.

The Committee found examples of good practice in victim care in parts of the MPS. We heard from some victims who were impressed by the service they had received from the MPS and felt that they had been provided with all the information, support and advice they needed. However, the MPS must make sure frontline officers and staff get the training they need to provide every victim with this level of service. The MPS should involve organisations that support victims in the development and delivery of its victim care training to ensure the quality of the training, and to effectively challenge some officers' preconceptions about certain groups of victims. The MPS must also improve the quality and accessibility of the information provided to victims about the progress of their case.

Victims of crime need to receive a consistently better service as they progress through the criminal justice system. Criminal justice agencies including the London Probation Trust and Crown Prosecution Service are working to improve some aspects of the victim experience. However, criminal justice agencies must develop better and more efficient information sharing systems so that victims receive the information and protection they need, when they need it. The Committee recommends the establishment of a multi-agency task group to improve information sharing, and to drive forward improvements throughout the victims' journey.

MOPAC must set the MPS challenging targets for increasing victim satisfaction

The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) has responsibilities for engaging with victims, and for holding the MPS to account. One of the key measures of MOPAC's success will therefore be how it oversees improvements in the service the MPS provides to victims. In order to achieve these improvements, MOPAC must set the MPS challenging annual targets for increasing victim satisfaction, and assess success using a balanced evidence base. MOPAC will also be taking on responsibilities for commissioning victim care services across the capital over the next

few years. The Committee recommends that MOPAC uses this opportunity to improve the currently patchy and inconsistent provision of support services across London.

The MPS is implementing Total Victim Care, a new corporate strategy to improve the service victims receive. This strategy has the potential to make a positive difference to victims' satisfaction. However, at the same time, the MPS is undergoing a major change programme: restructuring its frontline and back office functions, with cuts to the number of administrative staff and supervisors, and neighbourhood teams taking on investigative responsibilities. It is essential that these changes do not have a negative impact on victim care.

The Police and Crime Committee has decided to revisit this topic in 12 to 18 months time. By then, the Committee should be able to assess the impact of Total Victim Care and the MPS change programme on victim satisfaction. This update review will also provide an opportunity for the Committee to assess the impact of the recommendations set out in this report.

1. Background

a. Introduction

Without victims who are prepared to report crimes and who have the confidence to give evidence, cases will not get to court and offenders will not be prosecuted.

Providing good care and support for victims of crime is integral to the role of the police and to the effectiveness of the criminal justice system. The service victims receive in London affects public confidence in, and the reputation of, the police and all the other criminal justice agencies. Without victims who are prepared to report crimes and who have the confidence to give evidence, cases will not get to court and offenders will not be prosecuted. The Police and Crime Committee therefore decided to review victim care and support, with the aim of improving the service victims receive from the MPS and other criminal justice agencies. The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) is responsible for holding the MPS to account for how it delivers victim care, and will be taking on a role in commissioning victim care agencies, so the Committee also looked at how MOPAC can effectively deliver its responsibilities to victims. This report, and its findings and recommendations are focused on victims' experiences. However, some of the findings and recommendations are also relevant to witnesses.

This report is based on evidence from a wide range of sources. To develop the scope of the review, the Committee held a formal meeting in June 2012 with representatives of the Metropolitan Police Service, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and Victim Support, a national charity providing information as well as practical and emotional support to victims of crime. In September 2012, the Committee held round-table meetings with representatives of 13 voluntary sector organisations that support different groups of victims. We gathered victims' views directly through five focus groups organised on our behalf by voluntary sector organisations that support victims of crime. The Committee received written views and information from a number of organisations, and made a site visit to Victim Support London to meet staff working across London and locally to support victims of crime. More information about how the review was conducted can be found in Appendix 2.

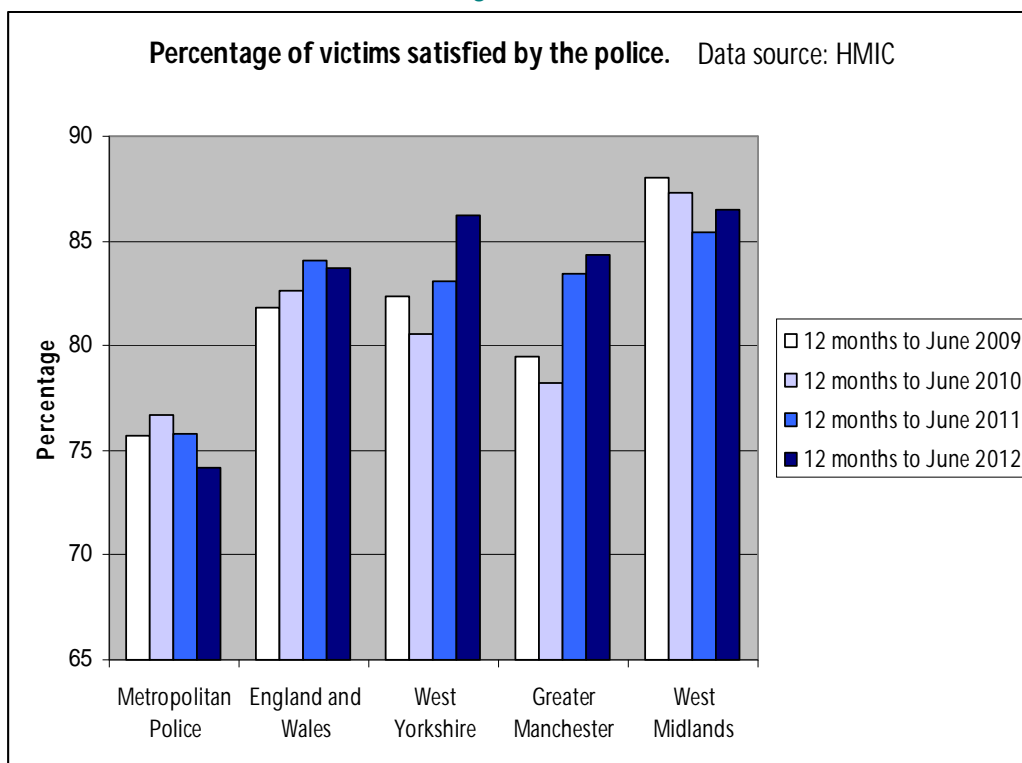
b. Victims' low satisfaction with the MPS

The MPS has the lowest victim satisfaction rate in England and Wales. In the 12 months to June 2012 the percentage of victims satisfied with the MPS was 74 per cent.¹ During this 12 month period, 16 per cent of victims were dissatisfied, with 10 per cent of victims neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.² As the MPS recorded 718,809 victim-based crimes in the 12 months up to June 2012³, **this means that up to 115,000 victims were not satisfied with the service they received from the MPS over that period.**⁴

Over the past four years MPS victim satisfaction rates have been significantly lower than the national average and lower than all the "most similar forces", as illustrated in the graph below.

Over the past four years MPS victim satisfaction rates have been significantly lower than the national average and lower than all the most similar forces

Figure 1: Overall victim satisfaction with the Metropolitan Police Services, similar forces, and the national average.⁵



Satisfaction with the MPS is lower among certain groups, and in certain areas:

- 72 per cent of victims from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities were satisfied with the MPS in 2011/12, compared with 77 per cent of White British victims.

- 70 per cent of disabled victims were satisfied with the MPS in 2011/12 compared with 76 per cent of non-disabled victims.
- Just 46 per cent of victims who perceive themselves as vulnerable, but do not think the police have acknowledged their vulnerability were satisfied with the MPS in the 12 months to September 2011. Over the same period 79 per cent of vulnerable victims whose vulnerabilities were identified by the police were satisfied with the police service.⁶
- Less than 70 per cent of victims in Hackney, Enfield and Tower Hamlets are satisfied with the MPS, compared to 80 per cent or more of victims in Kingston and Sutton.⁷

There are a number of possible reasons behind lower victim satisfaction with the MPS. As shown above, demographics affect satisfaction rates. London's population contains a higher than average proportion of people from BAME groups, who tend to be less satisfied with the police than other groups, and a lower than average proportion of older people, who tend to be more satisfied with the police than younger age groups.⁸ In addition, a senior MPS officer told the Committee that the MPS' poor victim satisfaction results are linked to a previous lack of corporate focus on victim care. As a result of this lack of focus, local teams and individuals were not always effectively held to account for the service they provided to victims, and the quality of service victims received was very variable.⁹ MPS representatives and organisations that support victims agreed that in certain parts of the capital, including Sutton, senior leaders strong commitment to effective victim care had resulted in a positive impact on victim care, and therefore on victim satisfaction.¹⁰

The MPS' poor victim satisfaction results are linked to a previous lack of corporate focus on victim care.

c. Total Victim Care – a new approach by the MPS

In April 2012, the MPS introduced Total Victim Care, a new corporate approach to improving the service they provide to victims of crime, and to improve victim satisfaction. Total Victim Care has the following strategic outcomes, which the MPS aims to achieve by 2016:

- Ensuring victim care is central to MPS activity and culture
- Achieving the highest level of victim satisfaction in UK policing
- Consistent satisfaction across London boroughs and across different communities

Under Total Victim Care, Borough Commanders are held to account for local victim satisfaction ratings and delivery of a local Total Victim Care Action Plan at monthly Crimefighter meetings.

The Committee welcomes Total Victim Care as evidence that the MPS understands the urgent need to improve its service to victims. However, it is too early to tell what impact this new approach will have on victim satisfaction. A representative from HMIC told the Committee that it could take up to two years to show the full impact of a new strategy to improve victim care.¹¹ At the time of writing this report, only a few months of victim satisfaction data was available for the period following the introduction of the new strategy, which is not enough to judge the impact of the Total Victim Care.

The Committee welcomes Total Victim Care as evidence that the MPS understands the urgent need to improve its service to victims.

The MPS is going through a major change programme. The proposals for change include reviewing the Estate, reducing the number of supervisors and administrative staff, and Safer Neighbourhood Teams taking on some responsibility for investigative work. The full impact of these proposals on victim care will only become clear when the plans are finalised and implemented over the next year. However, in the short-term these changes are likely to lead to a period of turbulence, which could affect the MPS' service to victims. In addition, the Committee heard that a lack of supervision of frontline officers could be linked to poor victim care, and so a reduction in supervisor numbers could potentially have a negative effect on the service victims receive.¹²

The MPS is going through a major change programme. The full impact of these proposals on victim care is not yet clear

In light of the potential impacts of the MPS change programme on the services provided to victims, and the lack of clear evidence to date on the impact of Total Victim Care, the Committee has decided to revisit this issue in 12-18 months time. At that point, the Committee should be able to assess the full impact of Total Victim Care, and the impact of the MPS restructure on victim care.

The Committee will revisit the topic of victim care in 12 to 18 months' time, to assess the full impact of Total Victim Care on victim satisfaction. In the meantime, from April 2013, MOPAC should provide the Committee with quarterly updates on MPS victim satisfaction, and should also publish this data online.

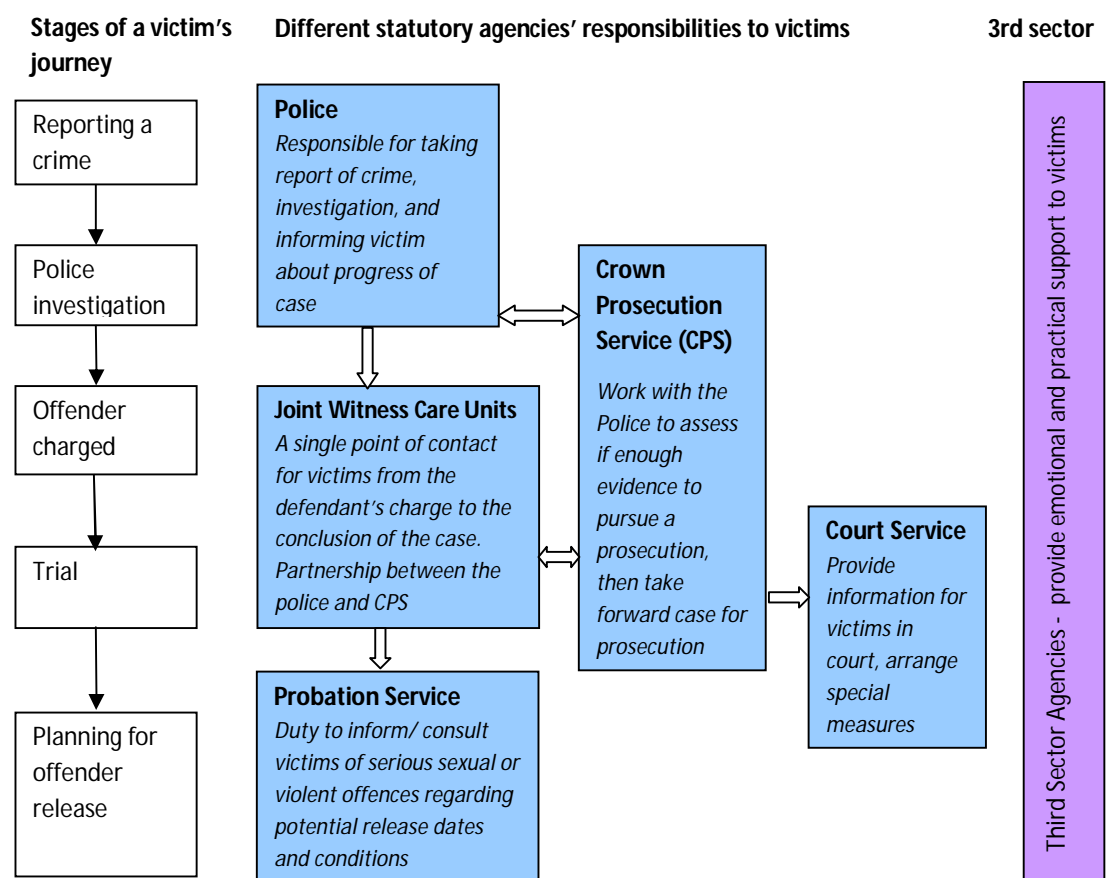
2. Victims' journey through the criminal justice system

If the case reaches court, victims can come into contact with a range of organisations that should provide them with information and support.

When a victim reports a crime to the police, they start a journey through the criminal justice system. If the police cannot find sufficient evidence to charge an offender, this journey can be short. However, if the case reaches court, victims can come into contact with a range of organisations that should provide them with information and support. The Victims' Code of Practice, which came into effect in 2006, provides national guidelines on the roles and specific responsibilities of different agencies in relation to victims of crime.¹³ These roles are summarised in the diagram below, and are listed in more detail in Appendix 3.

This chapter of the report follows the victims' journey from reporting a crime to the conclusion of the case. At each stage of the journey, the report highlights victims' positive experiences, and issues of concern. The report makes recommendations for action that aim to tackle victims' concerns whilst taking into account existing work on these issues.

Figure 2: A victim's journey through the criminal justice system



A. Reporting a crime

Summary

The quality of service received by victims when they report a crime is variable, and can be very poor. MPS officers need better training so that they all understand how to provide a good quality service to victims, how their behaviour affects victims and, in particular, how to provide support that meets victims' individual needs.

The victim's experience of the police when they report a crime is crucial. If trust and confidence are not established at this early stage, victims could become more sceptical of the criminal justice system, and less inclined to report crimes in the future.¹⁴

Our evidence shows that most victims find it easy to report crimes to the police, and are able to do this at a police station, by phone, and in some cases online. As a result, more than 90 per cent of victims are satisfied with how easy it is to contact the MPS.¹⁵ However, the current MPS Estate Review is likely to lead to changes in public access to the police. The review includes proposals for closing 65 existing front counters and opening new shared public access points, in shops, libraries and other existing facilities.¹⁶ Victims from BAME communities and survivors of rape and other sexual offences are more likely to report a crime at a front counter than other victims.¹⁷ BAME victims are likely to have language support needs, and victims of rape and other sexual offences may need to access a wide range of other services when they report a crime. Consequently, the Committee is clear that following this review, MOPAC and the MPS must maintain a sufficient network of appropriate public access sites across the capital with the facilities needed (such as private rooms and language support services) to enable any Londoner to report a crime directly to the police if they wish to do so.

The MPS must maintain a sufficient network of appropriate public access sites... to enable any victim to easily report a crime directly to the police

The Committee heard that victims' experiences of how they are treated when they report a crime to the police are very varied. Some victims have very positive experiences of police behaviour and actions when they report a crime. These victims were impressed by how seriously the police took the report, and the support and advice they were offered by the police. In contrast, some victims felt that the police did not believe them, did not deal with them sensitively or did not treat them with respect. This behaviour from police officers can add to the trauma of a victim's experience.¹⁸

Victims' views – reporting a crime to the police

"It was quite easy to report... the CID were on the phone straight away, partly because they were aware that this was part of an ongoing pattern... They came to meet [the victim] and talked him through everything, including what special measures he could have at court so his attackers couldn't see him. The service provided by the police was brilliant." Mother of victim of grievous bodily harm and harassment

"I received an appalling service. The PCSOs treated my report as a complete joke, I actually felt intimidated by them... They just didn't believe me... They're in the wrong job if they can't treat you with respect and believe you." Victim of harassment and stalking

When I went to report at the police station, the Detective said: "you seem very intent on reporting this – so where's the marks then?" I don't think he believed me and he was very intimidating. "[I was] flustered, shocked and wanted to cry. You are a person in a position of authority and look how you've just treated me." Domestic violence survivor¹⁹

Support organisations told the Committee about how prevailing police culture affects officers' response to certain victims. Repeat victims of domestic violence, victims with mental health problems, victims who have previously withdrawn allegations and sex workers feel they are treated less seriously, and with less respect than other victims.²⁰ People from BAME communities, particularly young men, can feel that the police see them through a filter, perceiving them as more likely to be a perpetrator than a victim.²¹ These findings are reflected in a recent MPS employee survey, which found that almost three in ten employees think that some victims are more deserving of a good service than others.²²

"The police need to be policing themselves on sex worker cases. Some work has been done to encourage sex workers to report ... but many sex workers still feel that rape is an occupational hazard and that if they report it will not be taken seriously."
Yvonne Traynor, Rape Crisis South London

These views may well be a factor behind the MPS's lower victim satisfaction rates.

Victims and support organisations have concerns about the police's ability to identify and respond to victims' individual needs when reporting a crime. Some victims of domestic violence reported that the police did not separate them from the perpetrator when asking what had happened. As a result, these victims felt unable to give a full and frank report of what had happened to them.²³ The Committee heard examples of MPS officers failing to meet victims' access or language support needs in an appropriate or timely way. We were told that unsuitable people, such as family members, are sometimes used as interpreters when a victim who does not speak good English reports a crime. A representative of an organisation that supports disabled women told us that it took the MPS more than two months to arrange an accessible interview room with video recording equipment and a female British Sign Language interpreter to enable a deaf victim of domestic violence to give her statement.²⁴ The failure to meet the needs of disabled victims and BAME victims who do not speak English is likely to be one of the reasons behind lower satisfaction with the MPS among these groups.

Victims and support organisations have concerns about the police's ability to identify and respond to victims' individual needs when reporting a crime

Senior officers at the MPS are aware of issues with frontline officer behaviour at the time of reporting.

"In terms of the initial actions that we take at the scene, some of that piece around the behaviour and attitude of the officers...identifying vulnerabilities, giving practical advice, is not where victims of crime expect it to be." Deputy Assistant Commissioner Stephen Kavanagh²⁵

The police should offer every victim the opportunity to make a personal statement to outline how the crime has affected them, and to highlight any support needs they may have. However, victims in London are less likely to recall having the chance to make a Victim Personal Statement than victims anywhere else in the country. Just 29 per cent of London victims remember being offered the chance to make a Victim Personal Statement, compared to 44 per cent of victims nationally.²⁶ A personal statement should then be used by all the criminal justice agencies involved in a case to help them assess and meet the victim's individual needs. If a defendant is convicted, the personal statement can also be taken into account in the sentencing decision. Having the opportunity to make a personal statement is therefore likely to increase a victim's satisfaction with the police, and with other criminal justice agencies.²⁷

One in four of the crimes that the MPS records as 'no crime' should actually have been recorded as a crime.

The Committee has concerns about MPS practice in crime recording and its impacts on victims. A recent HMIC report found that one in four of the crimes that the MPS records as 'no crime' should actually have been recorded as a crime. This report places the MPS at the bottom of all forces nationally in terms of appropriate recording of crimes.²⁸ Information received by the Committee suggests that the police may sometimes record a hate crime as anti-social behaviour, even if the victim perceives the crime to be a hate crime, in which case it should be recorded as a hate crime. If victims feel that the police have not acknowledged the seriousness of a crime and its impact on them, or have failed to record a crime as a crime, they may be less inclined to report in the future.²⁹ Furthermore, crimes that are inappropriately recorded as no crimes will not be investigated, leaving victims frustrated, and potentially vulnerable to repeat victimisation.

The Total Victim Care approach contains a number of initiatives to try to improve the police's initial response to victims. These initiatives include the offer of a home visit to every victim who reports a crime to offer reassurance and crime prevention advice as well as to collect evidence; Victim Care Cards that summarise the service commitments every victim should expect from the MPS; and Quality Call Backs, which involve victims being asked to rate their experience of dealing with the MPS. The Quality Call Back approach means that good and poor practice by individual officers can be identified and dealt with appropriately by supervisors. Victim care training for different levels of officers and staff is also being reviewed under Total Victim Care.³⁰

We heard about good practice in victim care in parts of the MPS:

- Support organisations described how the MPS in Richmond-upon-Thames, Wandsworth and Barnet have given their officers extra training in working with victims with learning disabilities. Officers from these boroughs are now better able to tailor their response to a victim's individual needs: They might, for example, interview victims in a place they feel comfortable, with the police officers not in uniform.³¹
- The MPS has signed up to the Stand by Me campaign to improve the way disability hate crime is tackled.³²

- The Sapphire Unit, which deals with victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence is felt to be a beacon of good practice, providing high quality victim care, linked to the extra training officers receive.³³ The Committee also heard about a pilot Sapphire scheme that involves victims being taken directly to one of the Havens (multi-agency treatment and support centres for victims of sexual violence) following a simple triage process by frontline officers. This pilot has been designed to reduce the number of people a survivor has to give similar information to, but will also reduce the time survivors spend with frontline officers who have limited specialist training in sexual offences.³⁴ The Committee welcomes this approach.

The Sapphire Unit is felt to be a beacon of good practice, providing high quality victim care, linked to the extra training officers receive

Despite these initiatives and good practice, a consistent message from all the evidence we heard is that training in victim care for frontline officers is insufficient and ineffective. We heard evidence that current training does not give frontline officers and staff the tools and knowledge to understand, identify and meet victims' individual needs, or to challenge preconceptions about different groups of victims.³⁵ Specialist support organisations told the Committee that the amount of training frontline officers receive on victim care issues such as dealing with domestic violence does not adequately reflect the significant amount of time these officers spend dealing with these issues.³⁶ The Head of the Sapphire Unit informed the Committee that his officers provide ongoing support to frontline officers on how to provide a good service to victims/ survivors of rape and other sexual violence, which suggests that the formal victim care training frontline officers currently receive is inadequate.³⁷

"Senior officers know what's needed [to support victims], the frontline, where it matters, don't". Shaminder Ubhi, Ashiana Network³⁸

"A lot of officers have good will but an extraordinary lack of knowledge. Officers don't have the tools to deal with disabled people" Ruth Bashall, Stay Safe³⁹

Changes are needed to the way MPS training is delivered. MPS training on victim care is often delivered by generic trainers, but evidence received during our investigation indicates that it would be much more effective if it was delivered in partnership with specialist victim support organisations. These organisations have an in-depth understanding of how crimes affect victims, and how to identify and meet victims' needs.⁴⁰ The MPS Commissioner stated that he appreciates and welcomes the involvement of specialist support organisations in delivering training, as long as they have the capacity to deliver the volume of training required.⁴¹ Some MPS victim care training is delivered through online packages, which are not felt by support organisations to be nearly as

effective as face-to-face training for challenging attitudes and changing behaviour⁴² – a view shared by the MPS Commissioner:

"You are talking to the world's worst supporter of computer training. It can play a part... but I am afraid, if you want behavioural change a computer rarely does it. For me the face-to-face usually has more profound effect." Commissioner Bernard Hogan-Howe⁴³

The Committee has been informed that the MPS is developing new Total Victim Care training courses for different types of staff.⁴⁴ This provides an excellent opportunity for improving frontline training so that all victims receive a high quality service. The quality of this training programme would be enhanced by delivering the programme through face-to-face sessions rather than online packages and by involving organisations that support victims in its design and delivery. The MPS should also consider how to mainstream good practice in victim care training from Sapphire and other teams into frontline officer training.

The Committee is concerned about the potential impacts of changes to public access on victims' ability to report crimes face to face. Consequently, we conclude that the MPS and MOPAC must make sure that all new public access facilities are suitable and adequate for all types of victims to report crimes.

Recommendations

1. The MPS should involve specialist support organisations for victims in the design and delivery of a new face to face training programme for frontline officers on victim care. This new training programme must ensure officers have the tools they need to identify and meet victims' individual needs, and must address officers' preconceptions of certain groups of victims. The new programme should also be developed in line with good practice in victim care training from within the MPS.
2. Through its joint Estate Review, the MPS and MOPAC must maintain a sufficient network of appropriate public access sites across the capital with the facilities needed (such as private rooms and language support services) to enable any Londoner to report a crime directly to the police.

The MPS and MOPAC should respond to the Committee by April 2013 setting out progress towards achieving these

recommendations.

B. After reporting: providing victims with information and support

Summary

Good quality, timely updates about the progress of a case are of the utmost importance to victims. However, only around two thirds of victims are satisfied with the follow-up from the MPS. The MPS are working to improve the timeliness of follow-up communications, but must also focus on tailoring updates to meet victims' needs.

The provision of timely, clear information about the progress of a case is one of the key drivers of victim satisfaction with the police. Once a victim has reported a crime, they want to be kept updated about their case and about possible next steps. It is the police's responsibility to provide this information, until the point when an offender is charged, or the investigation is closed with no charge. Regular updates enable victims to feel that they are an important part of the investigation process, and that their report of a crime is being taken seriously. Conversely, a lack of information about their case can lead to victims feeling frustrated and powerless; it can affect their confidence in - and willingness to engage with - the police and the wider criminal justice system.⁴⁵

We heard evidence that victims' experiences of updates from the MPS vary widely. Average victim satisfaction with follow-up is lower than with any other aspect of their contact with the police service.⁴⁶ Some victims feel they receive a good service, with officers proactively providing updates on progress, explaining what the next steps would be, and informing and supporting them as the case progresses. However, others are frustrated by the lack of timely updates from the MPS, and when they decide to contact the police proactively, they can still find it difficult to get hold of the information they need.⁴⁷

A lack of information about their case can lead to victims feeling frustrated and powerless

Victims' views – police updates

"I was updated every couple of days. I was shocked actually by how good they were...I even had home visits from the police; they were seeing how I was getting on." Victim of attempted murder

"I have to keep phoning, phoning, phoning for a progress update. There's only been one time when they've contacted me to go to the station to give DNA evidence, but when I got there, the officer was not there to do it." Victim of Grievous Bodily Harm

"Officer D (who had taken the statement) went off sick, and I heard nothing from the Met for 7 weeks... The 7 weeks with no contact from the Met were incredibly stressful and worrying. I had a stake in a process I had no control over and no access to information on what was going on. It was very disempowering and frustrating." Victim of fraud and deception⁴⁸

As part of our scrutiny, Members visited Victim Support London to discuss with staff and volunteers how they support victims of crime and how they work with criminal justice agencies. At this visit, Victim Support staff outlined some issues they face getting information and data from the MPS. The MPS are responsible for providing Victim Support with victims' contact details so that Victim Support staff can then speak to the victim and assess what help and support they might need. Victim Support provides a range of practical and emotional help to victims who have reported a crime, and can also signpost them to more specialist help if needed. However, the information Victim Support get from the MPS about a victim and their experience is sometimes incomplete or inaccurate, which can delay or prevent a victim getting the help and advice they need. If information is incomplete then Victim Support has to contact the MPS, and if they are unable to contact the relevant officer or crime management unit, they may have to use the generic 101 police number to try to get further information on the case. This process can be time-consuming and frustrating for Victim Support staff, and needs to be improved as a matter of urgency.

Total Victim Care includes initiatives to improve the timeliness of communications with victims such as the introduction of software that reminds officers when to provide case updates. The Victim Care Card given to all victims who report a crime face-to-face includes information on when victims can expect updates on progress from the MPS⁴⁹.

However, we heard from victims and those who support them that as well as providing information in a timely manner, the MPS also needs to focus more on the quality and clarity of the information it provides, and how this information is given to victims. Victims value information being given to them sensitively, and in a way that meets their individual needs – a particular issue for victims who do not have English as a first language, or who have communication difficulties.⁵⁰ The MPS should therefore work with organisations that support victims to ensure that officers provide information in a sensitive way and that victims receive updates tailored to their individual needs.

The MPS needs to focus more on the quality and clarity of the information it provides.

The MPS could consider commissioning an organisation that supports victims to undertake follow-up work on its behalf, as a way of improving satisfaction. The model of a police force employing a third-sector organisation to undertake follow-up work has been piloted by Leicestershire Police, where it has been shown to have a positive impact on victim satisfaction.⁵¹ We understand that the MPS is looking into the feasibility of a similar approach for London. **In its assessment of whether to employ an external agency to undertake follow-up with victims, the MPS should liaise with Leicestershire Police to ensure it learns relevant lessons from their experiences. The MPS must also consider how it would safeguard confidentiality, data protection and service quality if it was to employ an external agency to undertake follow-up.**

Recommendations

3. The MPS should work with organisations that support victims to improve the quality of information provided to victims after they report a crime. In particular, the MPS must ensure follow-up communications are delivered in a sensitive way, and in formats that meet victims' individual needs. This work should be undertaken over the next six months.
4. The MPS should work with Victim Support to resolve the issues of poor quality victim data being sent to Victim Support, and of problems Victim Support staff face in rectifying inaccuracies quickly. The MPS should complete this recommendation by April 2013.

The MPS should respond to the Committee by April 2013 setting out progress towards achieving these recommendations.

C. From charging an offender to the conclusion of a case

Summary

The overall service for victims as they progress through the criminal justice system needs to be improved. In particular, the different agencies should communicate more effectively so that victims receive the information and protection they need, when they need it. Communication could be improved by establishing a multi-agency task group to develop and drive forward improvements in the service provided to victims.

Victims often face delays in receiving important information about their case, which can cause anxiety and even put them in dangerous situations. Witness Care Units involve the CPS and the police, and are responsible for communicating with victims from the point at which an offender is charged until the conclusion of the case. However, our evidence shows that staff at these units do not always update victims in a timely manner, and as a result victims were given inadequate notice of important events, such as an offender being released, or a court date. We heard of a case where a survivor of domestic violence was not informed that the perpetrator in her case had been released on bail until three weeks after it had happened, leaving her in a vulnerable situation.⁵² Representatives of support organisations told the Committee that they often resort to calling the Court Service for updates on cases because Witness Care Units can be slow to provide this information.⁵³

Victims often face delays in receiving important information about their case, which can cause anxiety and even put them in dangerous situations

The different agencies making up the criminal justice system do not always work together effectively and have different working practices and separate data management systems. This can lead to victims having to repeat similar information to the different agencies involved, and to delays in the criminal justice process.⁵⁴ A lack of effective partnership working can mean that information about issues such as victims' needs for special measures (such as giving evidence from behind a screen) is not always passed between agencies. If special measures are not put in place, victims can feel threatened or unsafe and may decide not to attend court.⁵⁵ Poor information sharing and delays in providing important information to victims mean that the further victims get into the criminal justice process the less satisfied they tend to become.⁵⁶

"If I was to target a particular area where we all need to work better, it tends to be from seeing the system from the victim's point of view rather than our individual agencies." Bernard Hogan Howe, MPs Commissioner⁵⁷

Victims' views – delays and poor communications between agencies

"Going to court was a nightmare. We got less than a week's notice of the court date, which was stressful as I needed time to prepare [her son, the victim, has learning disabilities]. Then the witness service didn't know we were coming, then the CPS hadn't done their part, they hadn't given the evidence to the other lawyers. It was all very stressful, it felt like the left hand didn't know what the right hand was doing, and in the end they had to arrange another court date." Mother of victim of harassment and grievous bodily harm

*"[I] was advised to ask a number of questions relating to the case to ascertain if I might be called as a witness if there was a trial... It took 6 weeks from my initial request to receive that email [response from the MPS] and the information it contained was incorrect and incomplete. I used Google in the meantime to look for information on the case and found a recent court date. The court had then given me further details and what [MPS officer] had sent me did not tally with the courts information."*⁵⁸ Victim of fraud and deception

Witness attendance rates are lower in the capital than elsewhere.⁵⁹ Good witness attendance rates depend on getting cases to court quickly and processing them quickly through the courts system. Witnesses are also less likely to be willing to participate if a case has to return to court a second time.⁶⁰ Criminal justice agencies in London must therefore tackle inefficiencies and delays in the system in order to improve witness attendance rates.

"If we do not have victims and witnesses who are prepared to come and give evidence, then we do not have a case to take to court. So it is as fundamental as that." Alison Saunders, CPS London⁶¹

Criminal justice agencies are putting initiatives in place to improve their service to victims. CPS London is planning to provide refresher training for prosecutors about their obligations towards victims and witnesses. CPS London has also developed specialist homicide teams, and rape and serious sexual offence teams, with expertise in dealing with the particular needs of victims and their families on these difficult and sensitive cases. Support organisations praised these specialist teams, stating that they effectively identify and meet victims' needs.⁶² London Probation Trust has been working to make its services more accessible and sensitive to

the diverse needs of Londoners: they provide interpreters and materials in a range of languages, and train employees to be responsive to victims' needs relating to their gender, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation.⁶³

The Committee heard that criminal justice agencies are also working together to reduce inefficiencies and duplication. The MPS and CPS are introducing electronic case files to speed up information sharing. The relevant agencies in London are also working together to reduce the number of cracked or ineffective trials (trials that are postponed or are concluded on the first day, for example because the prosecution drops the case).⁶⁴ The London Criminal Justice Partnership, which involves all of the key criminal justice agencies in the capital, is overseeing these projects. The Committee welcomes these initiatives, which should help to improve efficiency and joint working across the criminal justice system.

Nonetheless, it is not clear that these initiatives will be enough to address victims' concerns about the criminal justice system. All the existing initiatives focus on improving aspects of the criminal justice process, rather than taking an end-to-end approach to improving the victims' experience of every stage of the criminal justice system. As a result, the initiatives underway will not necessarily tackle all the issues raised with the Committee, such as updates not being provided to victims in a timely manner or victims having to repeat information to different agencies. Furthermore, the Committee understands that Witness Care Units are being restructured from 32 borough based services into five sub-regional hubs, with the aim of providing greater resilience and a more effective, tailored service to victims and witnesses.⁶⁵ However, this restructure could lead to Witness Care Unit staff being more remote from the police officers, CPS staff and other local staff involved in taking cases forward, which could make information sharing and joint working more challenging.

The Committee calls on the London Criminal Justice Partnership to set up a task group to look at the victim's journey through the criminal justice system, highlighting and tackling any issues with victim care that are not being addressed by existing initiatives. This group should also monitor the impacts of the restructure of Witness Care Units on joint working and information sharing. In undertaking this work, the London Criminal Justice Partnership may wish to consider the Merseyside Criminal Justice Board's approach to improving victim care. The Merseyside Criminal Justice Board has used evidence from a range of sources to assess victims' key concerns with the criminal justice system. Initiatives to tackle victims' concerns have then been developed and

delivered through multi-agency groups that take on joint responsibility for delivering improvements, advised by organisations that support victims. One group that has been set up is focused on improving end to end communications with victims, which is looking at how to improve communications each stage of the criminal justice process.⁶⁶

Recommendation

- 5. The London Criminal Justice Partnership should set up a task group to transform victims' journeys through the criminal justice system. This task group should involve organisations that support victims in the development of their plans, and should focus on providing victims with a seamless, efficient and high quality service that meets victims' individual needs. This group should be set up within the next six months.**

The Chair of the London Criminal Justice Partnership should respond to the Committee with views on this recommendation and progress towards fulfilling it by April 2013.

D. Third sector support for victims

Summary

The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime is taking on the power and budget for commissioning most non-statutory support services for victims in London. MOPAC should use its new commissioning responsibilities to ensure victims across the capital can receive the support they need, no matter where they live. MOPAC must develop a set of commissioning priorities and guidelines that will meet the needs of victims.

For victims, getting the right help following a crime is vital. Much of this help is delivered by voluntary and community sector organisations that support victims of crime at different stages of their journey through the criminal justice system. This support can range from help getting doors and windows fixed after a burglary, to the provision of refuges for survivors of domestic violence or to the provision of advocacy and support to victims who appear at court. Victims really value the practical help, advice and emotional support they get from these services, which can help them deal with the trauma of their experiences. As a result, victims who access third-sector support tend to be more satisfied with their experience of the criminal justice system than those who do not.⁶⁷

Victims who access third sector support tend to be more satisfied with their experience of the criminal justice system than those who do not

Victims' views – support from the third sector

"I was in a state, all over the place, suicidal. Victim Support helped me to find the right organisation [to provide specialist support]. They [Ashiana Network] believed me and took me seriously. It's very structured respite for me...a refuge with counselling... key time work and monthly assessments." Domestic violence survivor

Through Newham Monitoring Project, I was able to become aware of what could and should be done. They provided me with information on processes and procedures, and helped me with finding out what police were doing. A victim of racially motivated hate crime

"The IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advocate) just helped to slow everything down a bit so that I could understand what was going on and to think about everything." Domestic violence survivor⁶⁸

The Government is giving Police and Crime Commissioners the power and budget to commission non-statutory services to support victims in their area from 2014/15.⁶⁹ However, a handful of support services will continue to be commissioned on a national basis, including support for victims of trafficking, and some national helplines.⁷⁰

The current landscape of support services in London is patchy and inconsistent. Services have developed over time in a piecemeal way in response to factors including funders' different priorities, the different needs of different communities, and varying capacity in different areas to deliver services. In addition, funding for these kinds of support organisations has been cut in recent years. As a result, there is a lack of services for certain groups of victims, including young victims of crime, those injured in road crashes, and LGBT and male victims of domestic violence.⁷¹ There is also a shortage of refuge places in the capital for survivors of domestic violence. This shortage can lead to survivors being placed outside London, which could have implications in terms of access to support services and relevant criminal justice services.⁷²

IDVAs and ISVAs are an example of good practice in victim care, where better provision across the capital would bring significant benefits to victims

Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs) are an example of good practice in victim care, where better provision across the capital would bring significant benefits to victims. These specialist advisers work with survivors of domestic or sexual violence who are deemed to be at high risk of harm. Their role is focused on ensuring the safety of the survivor, but they also help survivors understand their experiences and their options for next steps, and provide advice and guidance through the criminal justice process. IDVA and ISVA programmes have been shown to make survivors safer and to significantly increase the proportion of successful prosecutions. They can also reduce long-term costs to the police, other criminal justice agencies, the NHS, and local authorities.⁷³ Unfortunately, IDVA and ISVA provision is patchy across London, and has recently been affected by funding cuts.⁷⁴

The new commissioning arrangements provide a good opportunity for MOPAC to ensure that victims across the capital can receive the support they need, no matter where they live. Service provision changes regularly, linked to the short-term nature of much available funding.⁷⁵ Therefore, the Committee welcomes MOPAC's plans as outlined in the draft Police and Crime Plan to undertake a comprehensive analysis of victim support services during 2013/14 – the year before it takes control of commissioning.⁷⁶

As a part of this needs assessment, MOPAC should consider how to ensure sufficient independent advocacy services for victims across the capital. The Mayor has pledged to maintain the number of IDVAs in the capital, but the Committee is concerned that current provision is not sufficient to meet demand, with only a small proportion of at risk survivors getting help from these advocates.⁷⁷ The Committee therefore calls on the Mayor to go further and to use MOPAC's upcoming commissioning responsibilities to assess how well both IDVA and ISVA provision in the capital meets demand, and then explore options for increasing provision if necessary. The Committee also calls on MOPAC to explore the potential for the IDVA/ ISVA model being replicated for other victim groups who would particularly benefit from individual specialist support throughout the criminal justice process – in particular victims who have learning disabilities.

MOPAC must engage with organisations that support victims in the development of its commissioning plans. MOPAC should consult support organisations about the strengths and weaknesses of current commissioning structures, and potential issues with the way MOPAC's commissioning process could work. For example, the Committee heard warnings from support organisations about the implications of commissioners making decisions on price rather than quality. This approach can lead to specialist support organisations being priced out of service delivery, and replaced by more generic support services that provide a more limited range of services and have less expertise in dealing with specific victim groups.⁷⁸ Longer-term funding is preferable for third sector organisations because of the high resource requirements of applying for funding, and also because it can take time for projects to deliver results.⁷⁹

*MOPAC must
engage with
organisations that
support victims in
the development
of its
commissioning
plans*

The Committee therefore calls on MOPAC to develop commissioning priorities and guidelines to explain how the commissioning process will work, and how it will judge funding bids. These priorities should be based on an assessment of victims' needs, and the guidelines should take into account support organisations' concerns about the way commissioning works. The guidelines and priorities should be published at least three months before MOPAC invites bids for funding, to enable support organisations to start planning their bids in advance and to form consortia, if appropriate. Smaller, specialist support organisations, in particular, need time to prepare funding bids as they often have less capacity for this kind of work. MOPAC should also look at the potential for a wider roll out of IDVA and ISVA services, including an assessment of the potential for using this kind of support for other groups of victims.

Recommendations:

6. MOPAC should develop priorities and guidelines that explain how it will commission victim care services, and judge funding bids. The priorities and guidelines should be in line with victims' needs and reflect support organisations' concerns about current commissioning processes, including the drawbacks of short-term funding. The guidelines and funding priorities should be published at least three months before organisations are invited to bid for funding.
7. MOPAC should work with partner agencies to establish the extent to which IDVA and ISVA provision meets demand across London. MOPAC should complete this work by December 2013. If demand outstrips supply, MOPAC should then work with partners to increase provision.
8. MOPAC should assess the potential for the IDVA support model to be introduced for other types of victims, such as victims with learning disabilities, and consider including this model as a funding priority for its new commissioning role. MOPAC should complete this assessment by December 2013.

MOPAC should respond to the Committee by April 2013 setting out progress towards achieving these recommendations.

3. MOPAC's role in holding the MPS to account

Summary

MOPAC must set the MPS challenging targets to improve victim satisfaction. MOPAC has set a target for improving public confidence in the MPS, but on its own that will not be enough to address inconsistencies in victim care.

One of the key measures of MOPAC's success in holding the MPS to account will be whether it oversees an improvement in victim care. MOPAC has recognised the need for more victim focused services, but has not set the MPS any targets for improving victim satisfaction. MOPAC has set the MPS a target of improving public confidence by 20 per cent.⁸⁰ However, since victim satisfaction is only one of the drivers of public confidence, this target alone will not ensure improved victim care.

One of the key measures of MOPAC's success will be whether it oversees an improvement in victim care

In Total Victim Care, the MPS states that it aims to achieve the highest level of victim satisfaction in England and Wales by 2016. The Committee welcomes this ambitious aim. However, unless MOPAC sets targets for the MPS on victim care, there is a danger that MPS work to increase victim satisfaction could become relegated in status behind meeting the key targets MOPAC has set the MPS. The Committee therefore concludes that MOPAC should set the MPS challenging annual targets towards achieving the highest national level of victim satisfaction by 2016, and include these targets in its Police and Crime Plan.

"What doesn't get measured doesn't get done." Prof Marian Fitzgerald, speaking to Police and Crime Committee about policing targets, 17 January 2013

MOPAC should also consider setting targets for the MPS to improve specific aspects of its service to victims where there are particular issues. As discussed in section 2, London victims are less likely to recall being given the opportunity to make a Victim Personal Statement than victims elsewhere, and MOPAC may therefore wish to consider developing a target for the MPS to increase the proportion of victims who recall being offered the opportunity to make a Victim Personal Statement.

MOPAC should ensure it uses evidence from a wide range of sources to assess performance against its annual victim satisfaction targets for the MPS. The main tools used by the MPS to assess victim satisfaction are the User Satisfaction Survey and the Quality Call Back Survey. Although

these surveys involve large sample sizes and produce useful findings, certain groups are excluded from taking part. The groups who are not surveyed include young victims (under 16), and survivors of domestic violence. MOPAC will need to use or commission further evidence to assess victim satisfaction among these groups. The MPS has recently started a new online victims' survey, advertised through Victim Care Cards.⁸¹ This new self-selecting survey provides an additional opportunity to gather victims' views, including those victims who are excluded from other surveys. MOPAC may find this survey to be a useful additional tool for assessing MPS performance, depending on the number and types of victims who respond to it.

Recommendations:

- 9. MOPAC should set challenging annual targets for the MPS towards its aim to achieve the highest national rating for victim satisfaction by 2016. These targets should be included in the Police and Crime Plan.**
- 10. MOPAC should assess performance against these targets by using a balanced evidence base that includes the views of a wide range of victims. MOPAC should publish performance data on victim satisfaction and report it to the Committee on a quarterly basis, commencing in April 2013.**

4. Conclusions

The police and other statutory agencies have a duty to support victims through the criminal justice process and provide them with information and advice to help them deal with their experience. However, in London, the quality of the service victims receive from the MPS and other statutory agencies is mixed and can be very poor.

The Committee welcomes Total Victim Care, the MPS' new corporate focus on victim care, which has the potential to improve the service victims in the capital receive from the police. However, it is too soon to tell what impact the new strategy will have on victim care. In addition, the Committee concludes that further work is needed to address victims' concerns regarding police attitudes and behaviour and their need for better information about the progress of a case. The MPS should redesign its training programme with input from organisations that support victims so that frontline officers are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to provide all victims with a high quality service.

MOPAC must effectively hold the MPS to account for improving victim care. To achieve this, MOPAC should set annual targets for the MPS to improve victim satisfaction. Annual targets would help the MPS maintain momentum towards achieving their aim of the highest national victim satisfaction rates, and prevent work to improve victim care becoming a lower priority than MOPAC's other targets for the MPS. These targets should be included in MOPAC's Police and Crime Plan.

Criminal justice agencies must improve the timeliness and quality of information provided to victims about the progress of their case. They must also work together more effectively to share information, and to ensure safeguards to protect victims are always put in place, so that victims do not have to repeat information to different agencies.

MOPAC will shortly be taking on responsibility for commissioning non-statutory services to support victims. These new commissioning powers provide a good opportunity to work towards ensuring that victims can get the support they need, wherever they live.

The Committee will revisit this important topic in 12 to 18 months time, in order to assess the impact of Total Victim Care, but also to look into how the proposed changes to MPS staffing and the MPS Estate are affecting victim care. This will also provide an opportunity for the Committee to follow-up on its recommendations.

Appendix 1 – Summary of recommendations

The Committee requests a response setting out progress towards meeting each of the following recommendations by April 2013.

1. The MPS should involve specialist support organisations for victims in the design and delivery of a new face to face training programme for frontline officers on victim care. This new training programme must ensure officers have the tools they need to identify and meet victims' individual needs, and must address officers' preconceptions of certain groups of victims. The new programme should also be developed in line with good practice in victim care training from within the MPS.
2. Through its joint Estate Review, the MPS and MOPAC must maintain a sufficient network of appropriate public access sites across the capital with the facilities needed (such as private rooms and language support services) to enable any Londoner to report a crime directly to the police.
3. The MPS should work with organisations that support victims to improve the quality of information provided to victims after they report a crime. In particular, the MPS must ensure follow-up communications are delivered in a sensitive way, and in formats that meet victims' individual needs. This work should be undertaken over the next six months.
4. The MPS should work with Victim Support to resolve the issues of poor quality victim data being sent to Victim Support, and of problems Victim Support staff face in rectifying inaccuracies quickly. The MPS should complete this recommendation by April 2013.
5. The London Criminal Justice Partnership should set up a task group to transform victims' journeys through the criminal justice system. This task group should involve organisations that support victims in the development of their plans, and should focus on providing victims with a seamless, efficient and high quality service that meets victims' individual needs. This group should be set up within the next six months.

6. MOPAC should develop priorities and guidelines that explain how it will commission victim care services, and judge funding bids. The priorities and guidelines should be in line with victims' needs and reflect support organisations' concerns about current commissioning processes, including the drawbacks of short-term funding. The guidelines and funding priorities should be published at least three months before organisations are invited to bid for funding.
7. MOPAC should work with partner agencies to establish the extent to which IDVA and ISVA provision meets demand across London. MOPAC should complete this work by December 2013. If demand outstrips supply, MOPAC should then work with partners to increase provision.
8. MOPAC should assess the potential for the IDVA support model to be introduced for other types of victims, such as victims with learning disabilities, and consider including this model as a funding priority for its new commissioning role. MOPAC should complete this assessment by December 2013.
9. MOPAC should set challenging annual targets for the MPS towards its aim to achieve the highest national rating for victim satisfaction by 2016. These targets should be included in the Police and Crime Plan.
10. MOPAC should assess performance against these targets by using a balanced evidence base that includes the views of a wide range of victims. MOPAC should publish performance data on victim satisfaction and report it to the Committee on a quarterly basis, commencing in April 2013.

Appendix 2 – How we conducted this review

Formal Committee meeting

The Committee held an initial meeting on 14 June 2012 to gather views and information to inform the review, and to help set the scope for the review. The following guests attended this meeting:

- Deputy Assistant Commissioner Steven Kavanagh, Metropolitan Police Service
- Commander Nick Ephgrave, Metropolitan Police Service
- Stephen Greenhalgh, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime
- Javed Khan, Chief Executive, Victim Support
- Chief Superintendent Steve Ashley, Chief of Staff for Joint Agency Inspectorate, HMIC

The transcript of this meeting is available at www.london.gov.uk/assembly

Terms of reference

Following the meeting on 14 June, the Committee set the terms of reference for the review which were:

- To identify the reasons for low victim satisfaction with the MPS, and assess MPS plans to improve satisfaction rates.
- To examine MOPAC's role in engaging with victims of crime and its role in commissioning services to support victims.
- To make recommendations to the MPS and MOPAC about improving victim care and support.

Roundtable meetings with support organisations

Members of the Committee then held a series of roundtable meetings with organisations that represent or support different groups of victims.

These meetings aimed to discuss the specific issues these groups of victims face, particularly in terms of their treatment by the police and other criminal justice agencies. The meetings were also used to explore how MOPAC could most effectively take forward its new responsibilities for commissioning victim support services and engaging with victims on local policing issues.

Meetings were held with organisations that support and represent women who have experienced violent crime, disabled victims of crime and BME victims of crime. These groups of victims were selected because

they tend to be less satisfied with the MPS, and/ or because of particular issues these victims face in dealing with the police and other criminal justice agencies. The following organisations were involved in these roundtable meetings:

- Refuge
- Imkaan
- Rape Crisis South London
- Women and Girls Network (who manage the West London Rape Crisis Centre)
- Ashiana Network
- Runnymede Trust Stopwatch Project
- Race on the Agenda
- Newham Monitoring Project
- Ethnic Minorities Advisory Group
- Victim Support, North East London
- Mencap
- Stay Safe Waltham Forest
- Inclusion London

Focus groups with victims

To ensure the Committee heard victims' views directly, five focus groups with victims were organised for the Committee by third sector agencies that provide support services for victims. Victim Support London organised one focus group with victims from across the capital who had experienced crimes ranging from harassment and stalking to attempted murder. Imkaan organised a focus group with women who had experienced violent crime. Refuge organised three focus groups with survivors of domestic violence. The focus groups were all held between July and October 2012. In total, the focus groups involved 33 victims.

Written call for views and information

The Committee issued a call for written views and information which elicited 10 responses from the following organisations:

- MOPAC
- A London victim of crime (anonymous)
- RoadPeace
- Victim Support London

- Cruse, the bereavement charity
- Merseyside Police
- London Probation Trust
- Crown Prosecution Service London
- Jimmy Mizen Foundation
- End Violence Against Women Coalition

Site visit

On 13 September, Members of the Committee visited Victim Support's Victim Care Unit and Victim Support Southwark and Lambeth, to speak to staff about how they support victims, how they work with the MPS and other agencies, and to discuss future commissioning of support services with victims.

Appendix 3 – the roles of different organisations in victim care

The police

The police's role involves: dealing with the report of the crime; identifying vulnerable or intimidated victims; ensuring the victim has access to information about local support services; gathering evidence; and providing follow-up information to the victim about the progress of the case.

CPS and Joint Witness Care Units

The police work with the Crown Prosecution Service in Joint Witness Care Units. These units aim to provide the main point of contact for victims and witnesses, from the point where a defendant is charged through to the conclusion of a case.

The CPS also has additional responsibilities about informing victims if a decision is made to drop or substantially alter charges.

Court Service

The Court Service has a role in ensuring victims' visits to court are as straightforward and positive as possible. They must ensure that victims are directed to a separate waiting area and seat in the courtroom away from the defendant's family and friends, and that special measures are in place if requested.

Probation Service

The Probation Service has a duty to inform and consult victims of serious sexual or violent offences where the offender is sentenced to 12 months or more in custody, about the timescale for the offender's release, and the conditions of their release.

Third sector agencies

Third sector organisations provide a range of practical help and support for victims throughout their journey through the criminal justice system. These roles include: provision of refuge places, counselling, help with benefits, and help in making homes safe. Some agencies provide advocacy services to support victims on their journey through the criminal justice system.

Appendix 4: Endnotes

¹ <http://www.hmic.gov.uk/crime-and-policing-comparator/#chart2>

² <http://www.hmic.gov.uk/crime-and-policing-comparator/#chart2> . Data on percentage of victims dissatisfied and neither satisfied nor dissatisfied received from MPS by email, 7 January 2013

³ <http://data.london.gov.uk/datastorefiles/datafiles/crime-community-safety/mopc-mps-recorded-crime-figures.xls>. This MPS dataset shows there were 718,809 victim based crimes from June 2011 to May 2012

⁴ However, because some victims may have experienced more than one crime in this period , it is important to note that the actual number of dissatisfied victims may be lower than this figure, hence the phrasing “up to 115,000” – 16% of 718, 809 = 115,009

⁵ HMIC Crime and Policing Comparator Data <http://www.hmic.gov.uk/media/victim-satisfaction-june-2012.csv> ; MOPAC monthly report to the Police and Crime Committee, June 2012;

⁶ Data in first three bullet points from: MPS User Satisfaction Survey Quarter 2 2011/12 Report, 2011, MPS; Evidence and Performance: Support for Victims of Crime, June 2012, MPS Corporate Development Team for the Police and Crime Committee.

⁷ User Satisfaction Survey April 2011 to March 2012, Borough Figures, MPS

⁸ Satisfaction gap between white and BME victims of crime, April and September 2009, two reports by the MPS for the Metropolitan Police Authority's Strategic and Operational Policing Committee; Evidence and Performance: Support for Victims of Crime, June 2012, MPS Corporate Development Team for the Police and Crime Committee; Focus on London: Population and Migration, 2010, GLA, <http://data.london.gov.uk/datastorefiles/documents/FocusOnLondon-PopulationAndMigration.pdf> ; Focus on London 2009, GLA <http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/foI09-full.pdf>

⁹ Transcript of Police and Crime Committee, 14 June 2012; Written submission: Victim Support

¹⁰ Notes of roundtable meeting with organisations representing disabled victims of crime, Transcript of Police and Crime Committee 14 June 2012, Email from MPS, November 29 2012

¹¹ Transcript of Police and Crime Committee 14 June 2012

¹² Note of roundtable meeting with organisations supporting women who have experienced violent crime, September 2012

¹³ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/victims-and-witnesses/working-with-witnesses/victims-code.pdf>

¹⁴ Written submission: Cruse; Notes of round-table meeting with organisations representing BAME victims of crime.

¹⁵ Victim Satisfaction – stocktake of progress October 2012, MPS; Evidence and Performance: Support for Victims of Crime, June 2012, MPS Corporate Development Team for the Police and Crime Committee;

¹⁶ Draft MOPAC / MPS Estate Strategy 2013-16 for consultation, January 2013; Police and Crime Plan, 2013-17 Consultation Draft, January 2013, MOPAC

¹⁷ <http://www.policeauthority.org/Metropolitan/committees/cecf/2010/101213/10/index.html>
<http://policeauthority.org/Metropolitan/dsvb/2011/0215/01c/index.html>

¹⁸ Focus groups with victims of crime organised by Refuge, Victim Support and Imkaan between July and October 2012; Written submission: Cruse

¹⁹ Notes of focus groups organised by Victim Support and Imkaan in September to October 2012

²⁰ Notes of round-table meeting with organisations representing women who have experienced violent crime; September 2012

²¹ Notes of meetings with organisations representing BAME victims of crime, disabled victims of crime and women who have experienced violent crime; September 2012,

- ²² <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/nov/03/police-met-officers-poll?INTCMP=SRCH> reporting on Your Views Count survey of MPS employees, a survey conducted in January to February 2012 of more than 13,000 employees
- ²³ Notes of focus groups with survivors of domestic violence organised by Refuge and Imkaan between July and October 2012 on behalf of the Police and Crime Committee
- ²⁴ Notes of round-table meetings with disabled victims, women who have experienced violent crime; and BAME victims of crime, September 2012
- ²⁵ Transcript of Police and Crime Committee, 14 June 2012
- ²⁶ Victim Personal Statements: their use and under-use, 2011, Victim Support; analysing data from the national Witness and Victim Experience Survey 2009/10, Ministry of Justice
- ²⁷ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/news/press-releases/victims-com/vps-research.pdf>
- ²⁸ <http://www.hmic.gov.uk/media/review-police-crime-incident-reports-20120125.pdf>
- ²⁹ Notes of round-table meetings with organisations representing disabled victims of crime, and BAME victims of crime; September 2012
- ³⁰ Total Victim Care Strategy and Total Victim Care Territorial Policing Action Plan, 2012 MPS, note of informal officer meeting with MPS representatives on Total Victim Care, November 2012
- ³¹ Notes of round-table meeting with organisations representing disabled victims of crime, September 2012
- ³² Notes of round-table meeting with organisations representing disabled victims of crime, September 2012
- ³³ Notes of round-table meetings with organisations representing disabled victims of crime and women who have experienced violent crime; September 2012
- ³⁴ Letter to Joanne McCarthy from DCS Duthie, Sapphire Unit, 14 December 2012
- ³⁵ Notes of round-table meetings with organisations representing disabled victims of crime, BAME victims of crime and women who have experienced violent crime;
- ³⁶ Notes of round-table meeting with organisations supporting women who have experienced violence, September 2012
- ³⁷ Transcript of 15 November 2012 Police and Crime Committee
- ³⁸ Notes of round-table meetings with organisations representing BAME victims of crime, September 2012
- ³⁹ Notes of round-table meeting with organisations representing disabled victims of crime, September 2012
- ⁴⁰ Notes of round-table meetings with organisations representing disabled victims of crime, BAME victims of crime and women who have experienced violent crime; September 2012
- ⁴¹ Transcript of Police and Crime Committee, 29 November 2012
- ⁴² Notes of round-table meetings with organisations supporting women who have experienced violence, and disabled victims of crime, September 2012
- ⁴³ Transcript of Police and Crime Committee, 29 November 2012
- ⁴⁴ Territorial Policing Total Victim Care Action Plan, submitted to the Committee by the MPS in June 2012; note of informal officer meeting with MPS representatives on Total Victim Care, November 2012
- ⁴⁵ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/victims-and-witnesses/working-with-witnesses/victims-code.pdf>;
http://www.victimsupport.org.uk/About%20us/News/2011/03/~/_media/Files/Policy%20and%20research/Breaking%20the%20cycle_VS%20response%20March%202011_FINAL
http://www.londoncjp.gov.uk/publications/briefing_notes/2010/2010_03_26_01.pdf

Left in the dark: Why victims of crime need to be kept informed, 2011, Victim Support; Written submission: CPS London

⁴⁶ MPS User Satisfaction Survey Quarter 2 2011/12 Report, 2011; Evidence and Performance: Support for Victims of Crime, June 2012, MPS Corporate Development Team for the Police and Crime Committee

⁴⁷ Notes of focus groups with victims of crime organised by Refuge, Victim Support and Imkaan July to October 2012. Note of round-table meeting with organisations representing BAME victims of crime, September 2012

⁴⁸ Quotes from notes of focus groups with victims of crime organised by Refuge, Victim Support and Imkaan July to October 2012 and written submission to the Committee, from an anonymous victim of crime

⁴⁹ Total Victim Care Strategy and Total Victim Care Territorial Policing Action Plan, 2012 MPS, note of informal officer meeting with MPS representatives on Total Victim Care, November 2012, Transcript of Police and Crime Committee 14 June 2012

⁵⁰ Note of round-table meeting with organisations representing disabled victims of crime September 2012, Written submission: Victim Support; Listening and learning: improving support for victims of crime in London, 2012, Victim Support

⁵¹ Transcript of Police and Crime Committee 14 June 2012

⁵² Notes of round-table meetings with organisations supporting women who have experienced violence, September 2012

⁵³ Notes of round-table meetings with organisations supporting women who have experienced violence, September 2012

⁵⁴ Note of round-table meeting with organisations representing disabled victims of crime, September 2012; Transcript of MOPAC Challenge July 2012;

⁵⁵ Note of meeting with organisations supporting BAME victims of crime, September 2012

⁵⁶ Steve Ashley, Chief of Staff or Joint Agency Inspection, HMIC, Transcript of Police and Crime Committee 14 June 2012

⁵⁷ Transcript of MOPAC Challenge, July 2012, available at www.london.gov.uk

⁵⁸ Written submission, anonymous victim of crime

⁵⁹ The rate of witness attendance at trials in London is lower than national average. 2011/12 witness attendance in London was 82% compared with 88% nationally. Information from Alison Saunders, CPS London.

⁶⁰ Alison Saunders, CPS London speaking at Police and Crime Committee round-table meeting, September 2012

⁶¹ Transcript of MOPAC Challenge July 2012

⁶² Note of round-table meeting with organisations supporting disabled victims of crime, September 2012

⁶³ Written submission, London Probation Trust

⁶⁴ Written submission, CPS London

⁶⁵ Email from London Criminal Justice Partnership representative 20 December 2012

⁶⁶ Written submission from Merseyside Police and follow up email from TACC Ian Pilling sent 14 November 2012; <http://www.hmic.gov.uk/publication/joint-inspection-victims-and-witnesses/>

⁶⁷ Written submission: Victim Support; Transcript of Health and Public Services Committee, 14 June 2012;

⁶⁸ Notes of focus groups with victims conducted for the Committee by Refuge July to September 2012, case study of hate crime victim from "Listening and Learning: improving support for victims in London"; 2012, Victim Support

⁶⁹ Written submission from MOPAC, MOPAC Draft Police and Crime Plan January 2013

⁷⁰ Getting it right for victims and witnesses, the government response, 2012, Ministry of Justice; Written submission from MOPAC to the Police and Crime Committee which states that the Government has yet to confirm whether the new arrangements for local commissioning will come into force in 2014/15 or 2015/16

⁷¹ Listening and learning- improving support for victims of crime, 2012, Victim Support; Notes of round-table meetings with organisations supporting women who have experienced violence; Transcript of Police and Crime Committee, 15 November 2012; Written submission: RoadPeace.

⁷² Transcript of Police and Crime Committee 15 November 2012 and 20 December 2012

⁷³ http://www.caada.org.uk/commissioners/A_Place_of_greater_safety.pdf ;
http://www.met.police.uk/thehavens/leaflets/i_amnot_a_victim_full_report.pdf
<http://www.henrysmithcharity.org.uk/documents/IslandsintheStreamexecutivesummary2011.pdf>

<http://www.henrysmithcharity.org.uk/documents/SafetyinNumbers16ppSummaryNov09.pdf>
Notes of round-table meeting with women's support organisations, September 2012

⁷⁴ <http://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/VAWG%20Full%20report.pdf> Fighting crime in London, 2012, Boris Johnson (part of the 2012 Johnson manifesto)

⁷⁵ Listening and learning- improving support for victims of crime, 2012, Victim Support

⁷⁶ Draft Police and Crime Plan, January 2013, MOPAC

⁷⁷ Transcript of Police and Crime Committee, 15 November 2012

⁷⁸ Note of round-table meeting with organisations supporting women who have experienced violent crime September 2012; Transcript of Police and Crime Committee, 15 November 2012

⁷⁹ Transcript of Police and Crime Committee, 14 June 2012, Transcript of round table meeting with organisations supporting women who have experienced violent crime

⁸⁰ Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017 Consultation Draft, January 2013, MOPAC

⁸¹ Transcript of Police and Crime Committee, 14 June 2012

Appendix 5: Orders and translations

How to order

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Chinese

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Vietnamese

Nếu ông (bà) muốn nội dung văn bản này được dịch sang tiếng Việt, xin vui lòng liên hệ với chúng tôi bằng điện thoại, thư hoặc thư điện tử theo địa chỉ ở trên.

Greek

Εάν επιθυμείτε περίληψη αυτού του κειμένου στην γλώσσα σας, παρακαλώ καλέστε τον αριθμό ή επικοινωνήστε μαζί μας στην ανωτέρω ταχυδρομική ή την ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση.

Turkish

Bu belgenin kendi dilinize çevrilmiş bir özetini okumak isterseniz, lütfen yukarıdaki telefon numarasını arayın, veya posta ya da e-posta adresi aracılığıyla bizimle temasa geçin.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਡਾਕ ਜਾਂ ਈਮੇਲ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Hindi

यदि आपको इस दस्तावेज़ का सारांश अपनी भाषा में चाहिए तो उपर दिये हुए नंबर पर फोन करें या उपर दिये गये डाक पते या ई मेल पते पर हम से संपर्क करें।

Bengali

আপনি যদি এই দলিলের একটি সারাংশ নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে ফো করবেন অথবা উল্লেখিত ডাক ঠিকানায় বা ই-মেইল ঠিকানায় আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کا خلاصہ اپنی زبان میں درکار ہو تو، براہ کرم نمبر پر فون کریں یا مذکورہ بالا ڈاک کے پتے یا ای میل پتے پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

Arabic

الحصول على ملخص لهذا المستند بلغة،
فجراء الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو الاتصال على
العنوان البريدي أو عنوان البريد
الإلكتروني أعلاه.

Gujarati

જો તમારે આ દસ્તાવેજનો સાર તમારી ભાષામાં જોડતો હોય તો ઉપર આપેલ નંબર પર ફોન કરો અથવા ઉપર આપેલ ટપાલ અથવા ઇ-મેઇલ સરનામા પર અમારો સંપર્ક કરો.

Appendix 6: Principles of scrutiny

An aim for action

An Assembly scrutiny is not an end in itself. It aims for action to achieve improvement.

Independence

An Assembly scrutiny is conducted with objectivity; nothing should be done that could impair the independence of the process.

Holding the Mayor to account

The Assembly rigorously examines all aspects of the Mayor's strategies.

Inclusiveness

An Assembly scrutiny consults widely, having regard to issues of timeliness and cost.

Constructiveness

The Assembly conducts its scrutinies and investigations in a positive manner, recognising the need to work with stakeholders and the Mayor to achieve improvement.

Value for money

When conducting a scrutiny the Assembly is conscious of the need to spend public money effectively.

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