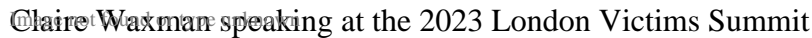


The London Victim Attrition Review

Reflections and Recommendations from London's Victims' Commissioner

Claire Waxman speaking at the 2023 London Victims Summit

Key information

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1. Context

Since first beginning in my role as London's Victims' Commissioner in 2017, it has been clear that a significant proportion of victims who report to the police drop out of the justice process, known as 'victim attrition'. On the face of it, there is little wonder why. Trust and confidence levels in the justice system have taken a considerable hit in recent years, investigations and charging decisions are taking huge amounts of time, and – as seen through my London Rape Reviews – can often involve victims sharing a significant amount of personal information. For those who do see their offender charged, the record and ever-increasing Crown Court backlogs mean that, as of writing, cases are being listed as far away as 2029, with a record 77,000 cases waiting to be heard in Crown Courts, 17,500 of which are in London – a 9% increase just in the last quarter. Victims endure these record waits while the prospect of a gruelling cross examination at court hangs over them.

Despite the seemingly obvious nature of why victims are withdrawing, it became evident there was a disconnect between what I was hearing from justice agencies and what victims had to say. The police would often say that many people reported the crime to have something on record, but without the intention to actually pursue it. When speaking with victims and their advocates though, a different picture would emerge; one where victims reported a crime in the hope of seeking justice, but where the justice system's response would quickly dissuade them from staying engaged.

It was becoming clear there was a lot more to this than first thought, which is why in 2022 I commissioned the Evidence and Insight (E&I) Team in the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) to undertake this research to fully understand when, but also crucially why, victims are disengaging from the justice process.

We thank the Metropolitan Police, CPS, and other justice agencies for engaging with us and supporting this research. Through allowing access to their data, they are helping to improve the response to victims of crime, not only in London but nationally, as we know the concerns picked up through this research are not confined to the Metropolitan Police.

We also thank the victims who took part in this work. Victims are arguably the most important part of our justice system; without them, cases do not progress, offenders are not brought to justice, and the public are left at greater risk. Keeping victims engaged in the lengthy justice process should be a key priority for all agencies, and for Government.

We need to ensure justice is being done, and we cannot do that without victims.

2. Overview

The research from the E&I Team, [which can be found in full here](#), is the first of its kind in providing a comprehensive look at victim attrition across crime types and throughout victims' journeys, from first reporting the crime all the way through to a court outcome. The research looked at over 270,000 crimes reported to the police between April 2021 and March 2022; looking at data from several years ago was necessary due to the length of the justice process meaning that cases take years to conclude. This research focused on select priority offences with one victim and one suspect, including Arson, Criminal Damage, Robbery, Public Order, Violence Against the Person, and Sexual Offences. The research also looked at CPS data from April 2021 through March 2025, and Home Office outcome codes from April 2021 through March 2024.

Alongside this quantitative approach, we spoke directly with more than 20 victims and survivors, and heard from more through an online survey, who shared their experience of the justice process and why they chose to withdraw, or more accurately how they felt pushed out by the system. Our ambition was to engage with more victims, however it proved difficult to find those who had reported to the police and withdrawn. One of the findings of this review was that victims engaged with support services were less likely to withdraw from the justice process, and this was borne out through the difficulty in identifying relevant victims to speak with through our colleagues in the sector. Victims receiving support were more likely engaged in the criminal justice process, and where victims do withdraw, they unfortunately often withdraw from support too.

Having now completed this research, the findings are deeply concerning: 40% of all victims in the examined offences withdrew from the justice process prior to a charging decision. When combined with the 52% of cases in which the investigation is stopped for other reasons, and considering the Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates only 4 in 10 offences are even reported to the police, it throws into stark relief the extent to which we are failing to see justice be done.

There are significant disparities in the rate of victim withdrawal between different crime types, with as little as 19% and 18% of victims withdrawing pre-charge in cases of robbery and criminal damage respectively, and as many as 59% of domestic abuse cases, and 69% of adult rape cases. Adult rape offences with a domestic abuse flag saw the highest attrition rate, at 74%.

Victim withdrawal is also affected by a range of factors shown both through the data and conversations with victims, justice agencies, and support organisations. Withdrawal rates are highest when the offender is known to the victim, with a victim 2.1x more likely to withdraw if the offender is a current or ex-partner rather than a stranger, and 1.8x more likely when it is a friend or acquaintance.

Certain groups of victims are more likely to withdraw from the justice system, with Black and other ethnicities seeing higher levels of withdrawal overall. In violence with injury cases, withdrawal is more likely when the victim is Black, and less likely when the offender is Black. The research paints a stark picture of the disparity of victim withdrawal.

As this research was concluding, we became aware of an audit that the Metropolitan Police had conducted, covering a similar time period to our research, which looked at the application of ‘Outcome 16’ codes – defined as where ‘the victim does not support (or has withdrawn support) [for] police action’, in cases where a named suspect has been identified.

This audit looked at 334 records in the Met’s Crime Report Information System (CRIS) and found that this outcome code was only correctly applied in 97 cases, giving a compliance rate of just 29%. Lack of compliance had a number of reasons, but crucially the audit found that 197 of the 334 records had no auditable record of the victim withdrawing support. This means no withdrawal statement, no body worn video, no record of an email or phone call.

This audit ties with what we heard from victims, both as part of this research and throughout my time in this role. One victim, when requesting information from the police sometime after reporting, was surprised to find that their case had been closed, with the reason being given that the victim withdrew, unbeknownst to them. While there is a significant problem of victims withdrawing from the justice process, and this research explores the reasons for, and solutions to, keeping victims engaged, it is also clear that there is a lack of reliability in police data showing genuine victim withdrawal.

While this piece of research is largely confined to the Metropolitan Police, we know this is not just a London issue, and Home Office data shows significant issues in comparable forces. In fact, victim withdrawal in London was slightly lower than the average across England and Wales, and lower than two of the most comparable forces – Greater Manchester and West Midlands. In addition, while attrition in London was relatively consistent over several years, some other forces have seen increases; most notably West Midlands.

Although the majority of victims withdraw prior to a charging decision, the justice process is not confined to the police investigation, and we see victims continue to withdraw post charge and prior to the trial. CPS data has shown us that across all crime in London between 2021 and 2025, an average of 146 charged cases per month resulted in non-conviction due to a victim withdrawing. Over the years, the proportion of non-convictions due to victim attrition has ranged from 18% to 33%, representing around 5% of all finalised prosecutions. With rape cases averaging 461 days between charge and court, and many victims waiting far longer than this and experiencing adjournments along the way, it is little wonder why many victims feel they cannot keep their life on hold indefinitely and so withdraw.

3. The Early Stages



While victims can and do drop out at various points throughout the justice journey, for many crime types, withdrawal happens at the early stages. For non-sexual offence victims, withdrawal was most likely in the first few days or weeks after reporting their crime to the police.

Early Conversations

Our engagement with victims found that they often feel deterred by their initial interactions with the police, which set the tone for the entire justice journey. We heard numerous examples of police officers telling victims just how unlikely it was that their case would go anywhere, causing victims to lose all confidence in the process before it had even begun.

"I felt stupid, I felt embarrassed, I felt quite humiliated, I felt a lot of shame... like this was the wrong decision - because the shutdown was immediate"

– Victim of Domestic Abuse

Police officers are in a difficult position, having to balance a desire to keep victims engaged in the justice system with the reality of a long and difficult process that faces them. It doesn't take a lot to dissuade victims who may

lack trust and confidence; what victims need when reporting is reassurance and understanding. While there may be difficult conversations that are needed, it is crucial that police officers demonstrate a commitment to supporting victims through the difficult process and will investigate to the best of their abilities.

Unfortunately, many conversations lack this trauma informed approach. One victim we spoke to had been sexually assaulted by someone they lived with at university, and he recalls being told by the police officer “there have been cases of people being stabbed to death and we have their faces on CCTV but they still don't get a conviction, so this won't go anywhere”.

"I felt like I'd wasted my time... I felt like I'd done something wrong"

– Victim of Sexual Assault

The victim in this case was put off from progressing the case. Having been given no referrals to support or safety information, he returned to living with the offender and in the ensuing weeks was raped twice.

Recorded as ‘victim withdrawal’, cases like this are more akin to an ‘informal NFA’ (No Further Action) of sorts, where police officers may pre-judge the likelihood of a case progressing and effectively recommend, convince, or persuade a victim not to pursue it by placing doubt in their mind. While most officers are likely having these conversations with victims in an attempt to give them insight into the difficult process that awaits them, this has the unintended consequence of pushing victims out of the process and leaving them at risk. In the above case the consequences of such an approach were devastating.

“I'll be honest, if their response at that first point of contact with me had been one that where I was taken seriously and supported, I think the trajectory of my future then could have been very different. If they'd have made me, even just with words, made me feel like I was important and what I was telling them was serious, I think it really could have changed things.”

– Victim of Domestic Abuse

This approach to closing cases seems reflected in the Metropolitan Police’s Audit of Outcome 16 codes, which found 197 of 334 cases had no auditable record of the victim actually withdrawing. Other reports looked at in the audit found the investigating officer had not even spoken with the victim, let alone sought any evidence that the victim did not wish to pursue the case. There is legitimate concern that cases that could have proceeded with the victim’s involvement have been incorrectly closed. Even where the victim does withdraw, the CPS may try to progress cases in their absence, but can be limited by the information available to them in a withdrawal statement, if there is one at all.

The inspectorate of police forces, HMICFRS, has identified issues with the application of outcome codes through a number of inspections, including its most recent [PEEL inspection](#), which concluded that the Metropolitan Police “needs to make sure it assigns outcomes appropriately and complies with its own and national policies”, including through appropriate supervision of decision making. While there may be a process through which recommendations to close a case are checked by supervisors, in reality additional scrutiny is likely rarely applied.

Recommendation: HMICFRS should, as part of its PEEL inspections, publish performance data on police forces' compliance in the use of Outcome 14 and 16 codes, in particular whether cases include an auditable

record of victim withdrawal.

The College of Policing has produced a [comprehensive checklist](#) that officers should go through when a victim of domestic abuse wants to withdraw their support, designed to help prosecutions proceed without a victim if possible. This process of managing victim withdrawal allows for the capturing of why the victim withdrew, whether they felt pressured to do so, and other relevant information. With significant rates of victim attrition across all high-harm crime, such as in violence against women and girls, there is a demonstrated need for consistent recording of information to understand the nature of and reasons for victim withdrawal. This would allow for a clearer understanding of which victims were not seeking a justice outcome versus which victims feel pushed to disengage with the justice process.

Recommendation: The College of Policing and National Police Chiefs Council should develop a standardised approach to closing high harm cases where the victim withdraws, ensuring all forces record relevant information such as the reasons for withdrawal.

Ensuring Victim Safety

The importance of ensuring victim safety is perhaps most crucial in domestic abuse cases, which this research showed were among the cases where victims are most likely to withdraw shortly after reporting to police. Acting quickly in domestic abuse cases is not only important for a victim's safety but also for their likelihood of staying engaged in the justice process. This research found that victim withdrawal was 2.7x less likely when the offender was arrested and interviewed, showing that swift police action in ensuring victim safety and progressing a case can provide victims with confidence to stay in the process.

Speaking with victims and support services we heard clearly that, when victims report domestic abuse, the action they often want is removal from the abusive situation and the safety of a refuge, yet action from the police on this front was inconsistent and slow. Victims of domestic abuse told us that, if their safety is not prioritised when reporting, the process quickly feels too high risk and many view it as safer to withdraw and return to their abuser.

We welcome the current piloting of Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPNs), which are intended to give victims immediate protection following an incident. A DAPN is issued by the police and could, for example, require a perpetrator to leave the victim's home for up to 48 hours. Providing this immediate protection for victims may prove crucial in reducing early attrition, and we eagerly await further findings from these pilots.

Unfortunately in a number of domestic abuse cases shared with us as part of this research, responding officers were actively dismissive of victims. One victim we spoke to, who reported to police after engaging with a support service who encouraged her, was told by a police officer "give it a few days when it's gone quiet and you'll be back there" (referring to her abuser). When the victim said she wouldn't, the officer replied "we'll see".

"It made me feel like I was in that cycle even with the police... Like I wouldn't be believed"

– Victim of Domestic Abuse

Victim – Suspect Relationship

One of the most consistent predictors of early withdrawal is the victim's relationship with the suspect. Victims who know the perpetrator—especially those in intimate or familial relationships—are significantly more likely to disengage. The likelihood of victim withdrawal was more than twice as high when the suspect was a current or former partner, and in rape cases with a domestic abuse flag, the attrition rate was a shocking 74%.

Higher attrition rates are also borne out of location, with offences taking place 'behind closed doors' much more likely to lead to withdrawal. When adult sexual offences happened in a private residential setting, withdrawal was 2.3x more likely, and 2.2x more likely in a hotel. It is when offences take place in these venues that we see victim credibility called more into question, and it is clear that many victims feel disbelieved and see little point in pursuing justice.

This pattern is not exclusive to domestic abuse or sexual offence cases, but applies across all crime types, where 54% of victims withdrew when they knew the suspect. In Serious Youth Violence cases, victim withdrawal was 3.1x more likely when the suspect was a current or ex-partner, 1.7x more likely when they are a friend or acquaintance, and 1.7x more likely if the suspect is known on the Police National Computer (PNC). This data likely reflects the fear of repercussion from the offender, particularly among young people. Reporting crime and staying engaged in the process can be a difficult decision for many, and the concept of 'snitching' among young people can often prevent crimes from being reported or seen through to a justice outcome. Young victims may be living in fear of the person who has harmed or is exploiting them, and it is important for justice agencies to understand these dynamics and respond appropriately.

Victim Anonymity

Victims may be particularly concerned about their name becoming known as part of proceedings. Defendants are rightly entitled to a fair trial, and a part of this is knowing the identity of their accuser. While this is an essential part of our justice system, we know that learning this can cause victims to withdraw from the process in – for example – stranger attacks, where pursuing justice would mean the offender learning the victim's identity.

While victims of sexual offences are entitled to lifelong anonymity, and contempt of court laws prevent reporting and comments which might prejudice a case, victims' identities and accusations can often spread within communities, such as through schools, and social and religious settings, leaving victims without anonymity and little recourse.

There are legislative tools available to safeguard victims and witness in the process, but these can only be utilised when this is brought to authorities' attention. This highlights the importance again of police understanding the reasons for withdrawal so they can identify if it's due to pressure or coercion.

Language Barriers

This report is far from the first to recognise the role that language barriers play in the criminal justice system, with several influential reports including '[Language Barriers in the Criminal Justice System](#)' in 2022, and the Law Centres Network's 2024 report '[To Be Understood](#)'. There is a near total failure by police forces to record the language needs of victims, and the conversations had with victims as part of this research has shone further light on the impact this has on their willingness to engage in the justice system.

“Police officers act and feel inconvenienced by interpreter services... we can all see your eye rolls, your huffs and puffs”

– Support Worker

Victims and support services told us that it's often not that victims don't want to engage with the police, but that they feel like they can't because of the language barriers. Speaking with these services, we heard many examples of the poor quality of translation and interpreter services, often not recognising cultural or dialectical differences. For example, the difference in Portuguese spoken in Portugal versus Brazil, or Spanish in Spain versus in Latin America. To inspire confidence in victims and to make the justice system accessible, there need to be good quality interpreter services, and use of registered intermediaries where appropriate.

"I was trying with the amount of English that I know to tell them what was happening, and I was begging them "please, please, because of the language barrier, can you provide me with an interpreter?" and they kept telling me "no, no, your English is good, you can tell us". And they didn't provide me with an interpreter."

– Victim of Stalking, from the London Stalking Review 2024

Another interesting dynamic raised by support services was victims' need for an interpreter delaying their ability to give a statement, meaning officers will speak to the offender first if they speak English. The victims we spoke to believed that led to a bias, with police officers more likely to give weight to the account of events they hear first, and that which they hear directly in English.

The very first right within the Victims' Code is to be able to understand and be understood, and this is important from when a victim first reports and throughout their journey. This Right is often not delivered, and the link to withdrawal underscores yet again the importance of compliance with the Victims' Code. Justice agencies must be held to account for their failure to deliver these rights, which often result in a failure to see justice done.

Criminalising of Victims

A 2018 [Supercomplaint](#) from Liberty and Southall Black Sisters resulted in three independent inspectorate bodies concluding that "a clear and immediate change in practice for victims of domestic abuse is required", and support services and I have long been clear that police should not share the immigration information of victims of crime with the Home Office.

While the research from the Evidence and Insight team could not specifically look at the relationship between immigration status and victim withdrawal, a clear link was drawn in the victim engagement. Victims and support services were clear that fear of police disclosing immigration status to the Home Office was a critical driver of victims without secure immigration status withdrawing from the justice process.

All victims deserve a safe and secure way to report a crime and see it through to conclusion, without fear that their immigration status will be used against them. For a long time we have called on Government to introduce an information-sharing firewall between police forces and immigration enforcement, and it is crucial this is swiftly brought into legislation.

Offenders can also be quite adept at harnessing the criminal justice system against their victims, either through the weaponisation of immigration status, or by making counter allegations to discredit victims. Sometimes these allegations are even made before the victim themselves reports. One person we spoke to had suffered through an abusive relationship for more than a decade, but was reported to the police by her abuser after she retaliated and hit him back. As the initial report came in about her being the perpetrator, she felt disbelieved when she disclosed the abuse to them.

“The one who calls first is less guilty”

– Victim of Domestic Abuse

The use of counter allegations, and the police being unable to recognise perpetrators’ tactics, was an evident theme in the victim engagement done as part of this work. These tactics are not confined to the criminal justice system; offenders also exploit the civil and family courts to threaten and intimidate their victims.

A broader rollout of domestic abuse training to police officers could help to address the issue of poorly handled counter allegations from perpetrators. Training can equip officers with the skills to better understand the dynamics of coercive control and the common tactics used by perpetrators.

Family Courts

An issue that continues to cause deep concern is the Family Court system and its impact on victims of domestic abuse and those whose children have been subject to child sexual abuse. Despite being explicitly recognised in law as victims since the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, many children are disbelieved, with their protective parent often accused of ‘parental alienation’ when they disclose abuse or raise concerns about their children’s safety in these courts. These claims are too often used to deflect from credible allegations of harm, resulting in protective parents being forced to comply with unsafe contact arrangements or risk losing contact with their children. The impact is retraumatising and silencing, and inevitably some parents feel forced to withdraw from criminal proceedings entirely in an effort to shield themselves and their children.

The statutory presumption of parental involvement is rarely disapplied and compounds this problem. To address this, we recommend that the Government urgently repeals the presumption and brings in legal safeguards to prevent unsupervised contact whilst investigations are ongoing.

Recommendation: The Government must repeal the presumption of parental involvement without further delay to prevent protective parents, particularly victims of domestic and sexual abuse, from being forced into contact with their abusers and ultimately withdraw from criminal proceedings.

Mental Health, Disability, and Neurodiversity

Victims with a mental health condition or other vulnerability were 1.3x less likely to withdraw from the justice system, and those with physical disabilities and other disabilities 1.1x and 1.2x respectively.

Although we cannot draw a direct equivalence between withdrawal and victim satisfaction rates, this data is interesting in its contrast to that from the [User Satisfaction Survey](#) (USS), which consistently shows disabled victims as among the least satisfied with their experience of the police. Of every 100 respondents to the USS, 47 feel vulnerable, and 35 feel this was identified by the police. Of these, the 12 that felt this was not catered for by police had a shocking 20% satisfaction rate, while the 23 who felt the police did cater for their vulnerability had a satisfaction rate of 78%. This clearly shows that where victims’ needs are identified and catered for, these victims are among the most satisfied.

The discrepancy between victim satisfaction and attrition for those with disabilities and mental health conditions may be a result of identification of these needs. In the User Satisfaction Survey, this information is self-reported by the victim, while we know from police data that victims’ needs are rarely recorded. The lower attrition rates

may therefore be predicated upon the police's successful identification of a victim's needs, implying that where this is done they are also catered for, which reduces victim attrition.

Since the implementation of Connect, which is used by many police forces and replaced a number of the Metropolitan Police's previous systems, there is no dedicated space within which a victim needs assessment can be completed, making it near-impossible for victims' needs to be recorded and catered for. This is reflected in the Metropolitan Police recording near to no victims as requiring enhanced rights under the Victims' Code.

The Metropolitan Police is aware of the issue and has been seeking urgent changes to Connect. It is crucial that a 'fix' is urgently introduced to better allow the capturing of victims' needs, though there is a more systemic issue of the quality of needs assessments. In a [2023 inspection](#), HMICFRS made a recommendation for the College of Policing to work with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and chief constables to develop minimum standards for the completion of victim needs assessments. These organisations have produced [resources](#), but there still seems to be significant inconsistency across forces in the recording of victims' needs, if these are even recorded at all.

In preparing for the upcoming consultation on the Victims' Code, the Ministry of Justice has been looking to clarify when a victim will have their needs assessed throughout the criminal justice process and what these assessments will be used to inform. This work is urgently needed to provide consistency to police forces in their recording of victims' needs, and to enable better monitoring of code compliance.

Recommendation: The Ministry of Justice should work with the NPCC, Home Office, and College of Policing to improve the recording of victims' needs and vulnerabilities.

Unfortunately, even where needs are identified this does not always mean they are catered for, and we heard examples of inappropriate language and attitudes from officers which only served to damage victims' trust and confidence in the justice system. One victim we spoke to as part of this research described her autism being used against her in her attempts to seek justice, with a police officer reportedly saying to her "you're autistic so how are you going to express yourself in court". This victim ultimately withdrew from the justice process; no withdrawal statement was ever taken.

Within missing and child exploitation cases the Metropolitan Police has made some progress through the training of officers in identification of victim-blaming language, with an audit showing a significant reduction in its use. This training, and the learning from identifying cases which use victim blaming language, needs to be rolled out more widely across the organisation, particularly in areas where we know problematic attitudes damage victim confidence the most, such as in violence against women and girls.

The Importance of the Victims' Code

I first undertook a [review of the Victims' Code](#) in 2019, which found that victims' rights were consistently not being delivered by justice agencies. While progress has been made in some areas, and the Code itself has been strengthened over time, compliance remains low and – despite the passing of the Victims and Prisoners Act in 2024 – largely unmonitored.

Many of the issues we have identified as key factors driving victim attrition would simply not be present if justice agencies complied with the Victims' Code. The code is clear that "all service providers must have the victim's best interests as their primary consideration" and "take the victim's... needs and concerns fully into account".

Right 1 of the Victims' Code says the police must "consider any relevant personal characteristics which may affect your ability to understand and to be understood", and Right 4 requires a needs assessment to assess whether victims are entitled to enhanced rights, and the right to be referred to a victim support service. This research has shown an abject failure to deliver victims' rights, with needs assessments rarely recorded, and victims left to navigate the complex and traumatic justice process with little to no support.

Despite the Victims and Prisoners Act receiving Royal Assent in 2024, Section 8 of the Act, which outlines the role Police and Crime Commissioners must play in monitoring Code compliance, has not yet been commenced. There remains little oversight or accountability for police forces who fail to deliver victims' rights. Following the Act's Royal Assent, a consultation on revisions to the Victims' Code was also expected but is yet to be delivered. Government must expedite its work to commence Section 8 of the Victims and Prisoner Act and begin public consultation on a revised Victims' Code, ensuring a strengthened Code and greater oversight of compliance.

4. Lengthy Investigations



Sexual Offence Victims

The rate of victim attrition is particularly high for victims of sexual offences, with 51% of child sexual abuse and 50% of adult sexual offences involving the victim withdrawing. What is interesting is that victims of these offences withdraw later in the justice process than those of other offences, with withdrawal peaking three to twelve months after reporting. This is both reflective of the length of investigations for sexual offences, and the demands placed on them throughout this process.

"You feel you've given so much of yourself and your privacy and then... nothing"

– Victim of Sexual Assault

My [2021 London Rape Review](#) looked at requests for rape victims' personal information, many of which have been found to be disproportionate. The review drew a link between these requests and victims' willingness to stay engaged in the process, finding 65% of rape victims withdrew; an increase from 58% found in the 2019 Rape Review. This attrition research has highlighted yet another increase, with 69% of adult rape offences ending with victim withdrawal.

The inclusion of a specific data extraction clause in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act marked some progress for victims of rape in respect of better protecting their personal information, by ensuring that police cannot indiscriminately download the contents of a victim's entire phone or device. In addition, the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024's new Code of Practice will, once implemented, provide statutory guidance insisting requests are "necessary and proportionate" and only shared with victim awareness and consent. I have provided feedback on the new draft Code of Practice and urge the Government to strengthen the rights of victims with regards to requests for their personal information within the upcoming revised Victims' Code.

In response to the broader systemic issues identified through the Rape Reviews, Operation Soteria was introduced as a new national model for investigating rape, creating victim-centred and suspect-focused investigations. The Metropolitan Police and CPS have now begun implementing this approach, but cultural change on this scale cannot happen overnight and it will take time before its full impact is felt in improving procedural and justice outcomes for victims. While these agencies are making progress, it is imperative that the Judiciary are also part of this cultural change, otherwise we risk sending cases into a court process still grounded in outdated views of rape cases.

Children and Young People

Withdrawal among children was slightly lower than the overall average, with 36% withdrawing aged 1 – 17; withdrawal among 18 – 24-year-olds was slightly higher than average, at 43%. There was however a noticeably higher withdrawal rate for certain crime types, with 18–24-year-old victims of stalking and CSA having a higher withdrawal rate than all other age groups.

Through our engagement with victims we have heard clearly that many young people feel they cannot put their lives on hold while waiting for justice; it is an unrealistic expectation. Many teenagers who experience a serious crime such as rape or abuse will be adults by the time the case gets to court. By then, they're juggling new pressures such as exams, employment, housing, and financial independence. These added responsibilities can make it even harder to stay engaged in a justice process.

We need a swifter justice system to prevent victims' entire adolescence being impacted. The impact of crime for young people can often be more from the justice process than from the offence that was committed against them. Far too many victims have told me that "the fight to get justice was worse than the rape".

Charging Decisions

When a case is referred from the police to CPS for a charging decision, it takes an average of 37 days for a decision to prosecute, though sexual offences in London take an average 130 days, and in rape cases 267 days. During this time, cases often ‘ping pong’ between the police and CPS, with police sending through cases of insufficient quality, and CPS providing action plans for gaps to be addressed. Lengthy investigations followed by these delays to charging decisions inhibit victims’ ability to cope and recover. Many avoid seeking therapeutic support before trial for fear that notes from these sessions may be used against them at court, with a well-documented history of this happening.

Victims are also sometimes misled about the status of their case and the cause of delays in charging decisions. In a number of cases we are aware of, victims were informed by the police that the case had been submitted to the CPS for a charging decision, with it later coming to light that this was not true and the case remained with the police to be finalised, further eroding victims’ trust in justice agencies and leading some to conclude they cannot continue with the case.

Protecting Victims

A common reason victims withdraw from proceedings is fear of retaliation, repeated abuse, or harassment. Protective measures such as bail conditions, Stalking Protection Orders (SPO), and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPO) play a crucial role in helping victims feel safer after reporting a crime. By imposing restrictions on a suspect's behaviour, such as prohibiting contact or requiring them to stay away from the victim's home or workplace, interventions can significantly reduce the risk of further harm or intimidation. This in turn can give victims the confidence and space they need to remain engaged with the criminal justice process.

In addition, protective orders can help stabilise a victim’s day-to-day life during what is often a traumatic and uncertain time. This stability makes it easier for a victim to participate in legal proceedings such as giving evidence or attending court. When victims feel supported and protected, they are more likely to remain engaged, increasing the likelihood of achieving justice and breaking the cycle of abuse or harm for many victims of male violence against women.

However, stalking victims often face particular challenges in accessing timely protection. Stalking Protection Orders, which can often be effective once in place, take weeks or even months to secure through the courts, leaving victims vulnerable during the most dangerous early stages of reporting. This delay can contribute to a sense of helplessness and fear, which may in turn lead victims to withdraw from the process altogether. Swifter protection is needed for stalking victims to keep them safe and supported from the outset, similar to the approach taken through the new Domestic Abuse Protection Notices. An equivalent ‘Stalking Protection Notice’ could improve victims’ chances of remaining engaged with the criminal justice system and reduce the risk of further harm, and we urge the Government to use the Crime and Policing Bill currently passing through Parliament to introduce this measure.

The Importance of Support

Engagement with support services leads to a decreased likelihood that a victim will withdraw. There is little doubt as to why this is the case, with clear evidence of the benefit that support workers and advocates have for victims. According to the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, one in four victims who had access to a dedicated Stalking Advocate secured a conviction – far outperforming the national conviction rate of just one in 1,000. Evaluation of the London Survivors Gateway also found a significantly lower rate of victim withdrawal in cases with an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor, with the victim withdrawing in just two out of 62 cases.

"I had the most amazing ISVA. I came out of it stronger because of her"

– Victim of Sexual Violence

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are well positioned to commission support for victims in their area, and should be better utilised by Government to understand the needs of victims and commission appropriate support. Unfortunately, support services are under an existential threat. In December 2024 the Ministry of Justice cut the core victim funding given to PCCs by 4.2%, leading to the scaling back or decommissioning of vital services that support victims.

This decision came after the announced changes to National Insurance contributions, which had already sent shockwaves of concern through the sector. Victim Support estimated that it faces a 7% real terms funding cut once the National Insurance changes took effect, equating to £3.5 million, or around 85 employees.

This Government will not be able to hold up its manifesto commitments to halve serious violence and violence against women and girls if it continues to cut investment in support services. The manifesto was clear that “victims deserve better support”, and it is high time that budgets reflect this.

Recommendation: Government must provide sufficient and sustainable funding to ensure the sector can effectively provide support to all victims.

Lack of Communication

A consistent finding from all the reviews I have undertaken in this role is a lack of clear and consistent communication between the police and victims. The Victims’ Code is clear about the timelines within which victims should be informed about key moments in the case, but compliance with this right is extremely low. Though the Victims’ Code sets out the minimum level of service which a victim is entitled to, justice agencies are failing to comply even with this.

“I didn’t hear anything from the police, no updates from the investigation.”

– Victim

Significant changes in the investigation can be months or even years apart, and so there should be agreement between the police and victim how frequently, and through what means, they get in touch to provide an update. In order to benchmark this, the Metropolitan Police measures whether officers are updating victims at least every 28 days, which is considered to be a minimum level of contact, but compliance even with this internal metric is low.

Maintaining regular contact with victims of crime is a basic of victim care, and conversations with victims and the sector – alongside this research – has made clear that timely and effective communication is fundamental to a victim’s engagement with the justice system.

“We have a very narrow window of time to secure the confidence of a victim survivor... so the quicker we can get there, the better the response, the quicker that we can do some sort of offender intervention, either through an

arrest or otherwise, the more likely it is that we will secure a criminal justice outcome.”

– Metropolitan Police Officer

Service Recovery Pre-Charge

Justice agencies continue to fail to deliver even the minimum level of service set out in the Victims’ Code. Even when individual agencies have made progress on victim care and communication, the journey from a victim's perspective remains fragmented, lengthy and complex, and victims continue to withdraw as a result.

The justice system is in desperate need of a ‘troubleshooting’ or ‘service recovery’ mechanism to address issues as they occur and keep victims engaged. Too many victims encounter issues during the justice process, leading them to drop out. Not only is justice not done, but victims may rightly submit complaints, many of which take well over a year to process and leave victims with unsatisfactory outcomes. What is needed is intervention at an earlier stage, so that issues can be resolved and cases get back on track.

In 2023, the Mayor of London started providing an annual uplift of £3 million to the Metropolitan Police for their ‘Victim Focus Desks’, the intention of which is to be a point of contact for victims when they cannot speak to their investigating officer. Having now been operating with this uplift for some time, we would like to see the Desks better providing a service recovery and troubleshooting model, capturing issues that victims are facing in their case and tackling these before the victim withdraws. Currently, the feedback we have received from victims is that the Victim Focus Desks sometimes operate more as an ‘answerphone service’, taking messages for the investigating officer rather than addressing issues themselves.

Recommendation: The Metropolitan Police should ensure its Victim Focus Desks operate a service recovery model, identifying victim issues and addressing them before a victim considers withdrawing.

While it is important that the Metropolitan Police improve in this regard, the solution to tackling victim attrition needs to be system-wide, and since 2019 I have made a clear recommendation for a Victim Care Hub model to address the fundamental failings in our justice system; something that was echoed by the [Times Crime and Justice Commission](#) earlier this year. A Victim Care Hub, through providing a point of contact and taking responsibility for key updates on case progression, would keep victims engaged and supported in the justice system. The success of a Victim Care hub model is an ability to ‘hide the wiring’ of the justice system and present a seamless service to victims, and I have already outlined my vision for a Hub in London through this [Blueprint](#).

A Victim Care Hub would require investment, but significant resources already exist in victim care throughout the justice process, with Witness Care Units in the police, Victim Liaison Officers in the CPS, other Victim Liaison Officers in Probation, and more. With justice agencies often working in silo, this is not an efficient use of funding, and investment in a Victim Care Hub could lead to better procedural justice outcomes for victims, improved victim engagement and therefore, better outcomes in the justice system and more efficient use of resources.

Our office recently assisted a victim of stalking, who was targeted over more than 20 years, was very vulnerable, and struggling to cope with the justice process. At one point, he was ready to withdraw from the process post-charge and felt unable to wait for trial due to adjournments, the lack of information and support, and feeling like a ‘bystander’. We listened to his concerns and our office ensured each was addressed by referring him into support services, engaging with the Metropolitan Police for a Stalking Protection Order, assisting in setting up a

meeting with the CPS at the point he nearly withdrew, and ensuring he could access a Registered Intermediary in court. All these measures were identified by our office, which played the role of a Victim Care Hub, and helped to ease all his concerns so that he was able to stay engaged in the process. This ultimately resulted in the successful conviction of his long-term stalker. Without this type of help, the victim would have most certainly withdrawn from the process.

"Most people don't know what the next person does - it's like different languages, and I'm having to bridge the language gap"

– Victim of Child Sexual Abuse

Recommendation: The Government should review how justice agencies fund victim care – such as Witness Care Units and Victim Liaison Officers – to determine how funding could be better utilised to deliver a seamless end-to-end Victim Care Hub model.

5. The Wait for Trial



While withdrawal rates are at their highest early in the justice process, this does not paint a full picture of the push factors leading victims to conclude they cannot continue to pursue justice.

Data from the Crown Prosecution Service cannot be directly correlated to that from the Metropolitan Police – partly because we are unable to easily track cases between different agencies’ systems, and partly because the CPS records the number of dropped prosecutions as a result of victim withdrawal, rather than the number of victims actually withdrawing. This means that in a case with multiple victims, as long as the prosecution goes ahead the withdrawal of some or all of the victims is not recorded. Despite this, data from the CPS has helped us to establish a more complete picture of victim withdrawal.

Across all crime types from 2021 to 2025, an average of 146 charged cases per month resulted in non-conviction due to a victim withdrawing. Over the years, the proportion of non-convictions due to victim attrition has ranged from 18% to 33%, representing around 5% of all finalised prosecutions. Domestic abuse cases saw a significantly higher rate of post-charge attrition, with 35% - 59% of prosecutions being stopped due to victim withdrawal during that timeframe. While the figure fluctuates from year to year, at times the attrition rate was as high post-charge as it was pre-charge, reflecting a significant problem throughout the justice journey.

Timeliness

Long waits and delays have become a common feature of our justice system, with around 17,500 cases waiting to be heard in London Crown Courts, a figure that seems to continually increase. Alongside this, five Crown Courts in London are currently taking a significant number of cases from the South East circuit.

Waiting times are at a historic high, with the time from a case being received by the Crown or Magistrates Court through to completion taking an average of 255 days in London, considerably higher than the national average (223 days). For rape cases, this figure rises to 461 days average in London, and we know many victims wait significantly longer. The Metropolitan Police have identified more than 100 cases with a trial listed in 2029 and more than 600 in 2028, and in London South alone CPS have identified around 1,200 vulnerable victims awaiting trial, with court dates spread across the next five years.

“The length of time it took to take the case to trial, coupled with the change of court date, resulted in me questioning if I wanted to go forward with the trial”

– Victim of Rape, from London Rape Review

The state of the courts is quite simply a national emergency, and with each day that passes the backlog of cases continue to grow and victims move further away from justice. This Government has rightly responded quickly and robustly to the prison capacity crisis, bringing in a raft of measures to increase the available space. While we eagerly anticipate Government’s response later this year to [Sir Brian Leveson’s review of the criminal courts](#), implementation of these reforms will take time, and victims are being failed in the meantime.

In 2024, 31.6% of trials in London’s Crown Courts were ineffective, meaning the trial was not able to go ahead on the day it was scheduled. This means in almost a third of cases, victims who have been preparing for court will have their trial date moved, some even on the day it was due to take place. I hear from victims who have travelled great distances, who have taken time off work, only to be told that their trial is no longer going ahead and has been rescheduled for the following year.

There are a host of problems that require immediate attention, including courtrooms sat empty due to lack of sitting days, a failure of parties to be trial-ready meaning cases cannot be heard when scheduled, and cases with vulnerable victims languishing in the backlogs.

Recommendation: Government must urgently introduce plans to address the immediate crisis in the courts and work towards clearing the increasing backlog, through introducing a package of measures that address the lack of sitting days, the number of ineffective trials, and the prioritisation of cases with vulnerable victims.

The state of the court system and listing practices mean that we have seen many of these cases – which were already scheduled – delayed by a year or more. Beyond the legal need to prioritise Custody Time Limit cases, there is little consistency and efficiency in the way cases are listed, with little join-up between courts. A radical overhaul is needed to create a joined up, intelligent, data-driven approach to listing that better uses technology to reduce the administrative burden and list cases more efficiently, reducing victim wait times. With Part 2 of Sir Brian Leveson’s review of the criminal courts expected in the Autumn, now is the opportunity to propose transformative change to listing practices, and we urge the Judiciary and Government to support work in this space.

Communication

With victims waiting an average of 255 days between a charging decision and trial, communication throughout this period is crucial to a victim’s engagement, and for the majority of victims communication prior to trial comes from the Witness Care Unit within the Metropolitan Police.

In 2021, a victim of domestic abuse made us aware that they had repeatedly been provided with an incorrect trial date, which led to the victim turning up for court the day after her trial had actually been scheduled. The Judge rejected prosecution’s application to adjourn the trial, and all charges against the defendant were dropped. A case like this would be recorded as victim withdrawal, given the victim’s non-attendance, though clearly the fault lay with the justice agencies responsible for communicating with the victim.

In 2022, alongside MOPAC and the Met, we undertook a review of the Witness Care Units, following significant concerns about the quality of the letters being sent to victims, the lack of clear process, and culture within the unit. Significant progress was made through the review, with all template letters sent to victims reformulated, new feedback mechanisms established, a new communication process agreed in cases with SOITs and FLOs, and new staff recruited to ease workload.

Other organisations have also moved into this space recently, with CPS introducing its own Victim Liaison Officers in certain cases, and the Victims and Prisoners Act requiring the CPS to have a pre-trial meeting with victims of rape and sexual offences. While this additional support can be positive for victims, it leaves the justice process even more fragmented, bringing yet more roles into an already crowded space when victims want consistency. This siloed approach does not best serve victims, which the Victim Care Hub model would address.

Victims' Perceptions of Court

While victims wait, many think about what awaits them when the case does reach court. Giving evidence in court can be a brutal and de-humanising experience for victims, who are often left in the dark ahead of an experience which will likely be among the most difficult moments in their life.

For many victims, the courtroom can feel like a daunting environment. This perception can lead to some being deterred from pursuing their case. For those who do continue, the court experience can be distressing and can take a toll on their mental and emotional wellbeing. Victims also report feeling unprepared and unsure of what the cross-examination process entails, which can increase anxiety and possibly affect the clarity and accuracy of their evidence.

“[Court] is a no-go zone. Is it worth it for me?”

– Victim of Domestic Abuse

It is ultimately these issues in the latter stages of the justice system that lead police officers, many thinking they are doing what is best for the victim by being honest, to immediately put victims off from pursuing justice after reporting. While attrition rates are highest pre-charge, this does not necessarily reflect the push points for victims, as the knowledge of the long and arduous court process may lead victims to withdraw at an early stage.

High-quality support is key to helping victims stay engaged in the justice process- especially during long delays or repeated disruptions. There is a wealth of research that shows this support can make a critical difference in whether a victim continues or withdraws from the process.

As a result of this research we have undertaken a significant further piece of work to address the concerns of vulnerable victims giving evidence in court, and will be publishing this shortly, making further recommendations.

Vulnerable Victims

Evaluation of London’s [Lighthouse](#), which provides to children all the services needed to respond to sexual abuse under one roof, found a victim withdrawal rate of 31% for child sexual abuse, as compared to this research’s finding of 51%, clearly showing the value of a coordinated approach to supporting children in the justice system, including facilities to give evidence via remote link.

Providing evidence remotely, either via a live link or pre-recorded as Section 28 evidence can provide a calmer and less intimidating experience for victims and witnesses, and is a valuable measure in reducing victim anxiety.

There are concerns about evidence provided via video, with conflicting research on the impact it has on conviction rates. However, for some victims, being able to provide evidence remotely empowers them with the confidence to proceed and to give their best evidence, and if the alternative to remote evidence is the victim withdrawing and the case collapsing, the system must do what is in the best interests of justice.

In one example we are aware of, before trial, a rape victim with multiple vulnerabilities requested to give evidence via pre-recorded cross-examination, citing heightened anxiety. The court initially refused the application on a number of occasions, requesting further evidence. Further evidence, including a detailed VPS, was provided on a number of occasions but each time a different judge refused the application. As a result, the victim submitted a withdrawal statement and withdrew from the case. The CPS managed to argue for Section 28 to be offered on the day of the trial, however, the victim had already disengaged and felt unable to proceed with the case.

Oversight of the Courts

In 2003, The Courts Act introduced ‘HM Inspectorate of Court Administration’ (HMICA), which was established in 2005, but then abolished in 2012, with Government arguing that HMCTS audits and current inspections negated the need for a dedicated inspectorate. Whether or not this was true at the time, the issues that have plagued the courts system in the past decade – exacerbated by a global pandemic – require a rethink.

A [2022 Justice Committee report](#) called for the recreation of a courts inspectorate that would aim to increase accountability and transparency in the “creaking” justice system, and this was further supported by our [Court Policy Paper](#), and the national [Victims’ Commissioner’s recent report on the human toll of court delays](#). With current processes unable to prevent the high rate of ineffective trials and listing problems, and with significant reforms to the courts on the horizon, now is the time to end the courts’ immunity from scrutiny through re-establishing a dedicated inspectorate.

Recommendation: Government should establish an Inspectorate of Courts, providing oversight of a part of the justice system largely protected from scrutiny, and monitoring the success of its upcoming reforms.

6. The Insights and Limitations of Data

Local Insights

The research from Evidence and Insight provides a wealth of information which can help justice agencies to improve their performance and learn from both positive and negative findings.

Victim withdrawal data shows a complex picture across London, varying by crime type and victim characteristic, but also by Basic Command Unit (BCU). Across the sample of cases in this research, the research found an overall rate of victim withdrawal of 40%, but this figure varied from as low as 34% in Central East BCU to 44% in West Area BCU. There were significant variations by crime type across areas as well. For example, in domestic abuse cases North East BCU had just a 46% attrition rate, compared to 62% in multiple other BCUs.

Central East BCU performs consistently well across all crime types, suggesting potential good practice that could be replicated in other areas. The Met should use this data and its network of ‘Victim SPOCs’ (Single Points of Contact) to learn from good practice and drive improvement in areas with higher attrition rates, and we hope its upcoming Victims Strategy will reflect a desire to better understand and tackle victim attrition.

There is also a role for Police and Crime Commissioners, including MOPAC, to review this information as part of their obligation to monitor compliance with the Victims’ Code under the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024, as levels of victim withdrawal provide a strong indication of the experience of victims.

Recommendation: The Metropolitan Police should make the application of Outcome 16 codes a performance measure, ensuring these capture the reasons for victim withdrawal, and that this process and information is monitored across BCUs.

Tracking Victims in the Justice System

While there is a significant amount of learning to be taken from this Attrition Review, there are serious limitations preventing further analysis, and more importantly hamper justice agencies' efforts to meaningfully affect change.

Firstly, the inconsistency in data recording between the Met Police and CPS across different systems means that we cannot easily track a specific victim throughout their criminal justice journey. A [report published by the Criminal Justice Joint Inspectorate](#) in 2023 stated the police and CPS often failed to meet the minimum standard in keeping both victims and each other informed, due to the absence of "joined-up digital systems". We previously lobbied for a single identifying number for victims in the criminal justice system as part of the Victims and Prisoners Act. While this amendment did not make it into legislation, the need remains evident.

Recommendation: The Ministry of Justice should work to integrate the different systems used by justice agencies, implementing a unique identifier that will allow victims to be tracked across systems.

Data Collection

The collection of demographic data by justice agencies remains of significant concern. In this research, self-defined ethnicity of the victim was missing in 70% of cases and for the suspect in 78% of cases.

This is a significant problem which has been known for years. In 2022 MOPAC published a [Strategic Victim Needs Assessment](#) which made similar observations about the recording of demographic information. This analysis recorded a similar figure of 76% of victim ethnicity marked as unknown. While officer-identified ethnicity is recorded more often – this attrition research identified this as missing in 'only' 35% of cases, officers' observations lead to problematic categorisations such as 'oriental'. Categorisation used across organisations varies and differs to that in the census, making it near impossible to build any consistent picture of disproportionality in the justice system.

MOPAC's Strategic Needs Assessment was clear that data should be collected in a way which enables analysis by crime type and characteristics, as the current recording of data prevents any significant understanding of disproportionality in the justice system. This research from Evidence and Insight has clearly further highlighted the gaps in data, and the Metropolitan Police must work to address this.

"In order for us to understand more about our disproportionality [we need] better information recorded at the point where police start working with victims, where crime is reported. The gaps in ethnicity data are huge."

– Support Worker, from the MOPAC Victims Strategic Needs Assessment

7. Conclusion

Thanks to the data insights provided by the Metropolitan Police and Crown Prosecution Service, and the experiences of victims we engaged with, this research has provided an important focus on when and why victims are withdrawing from the justice process. With 40% of victims withdrawing, and significantly higher in many high-harm offences, this research should be of significant concern, not only for London but for police forces across England and Wales, for the wider justice system, and for Government.

For justice to be done, we need the trust and confidence of victims, but to gain this confidence the system needs to be effective, and so there is little wonder why so many victims decide they cannot leave their lives on hold any longer.

The research produced by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime provides learning for every part of the criminal justice system, and reinforces that everyone has a part to play in supporting victims through such a complex, lengthy, and traumatic process.

The justice system is interconnected, and change needs a whole system approach. If the police and CPS improve their response to victims and keep more engaged in seeking justice, they will be adding to the backlog of cases. In turn, it is the later parts of the justice system that can drive police officers to have the early off-putting conversations which stop a victim's journey before it has even begun.

Perhaps most urgently, Government must take swift action to clear the 77,000 (and rapidly rising) cases waiting to be heard in the Crown Courts. Without this being addressed, even the best intentions of the police and CPS will have little impact. But that is not to say the rest of the system has no work to do. This research found highly concerning conversations taking place with victims which resulted in their withdrawing and in serious further harm done.

With agencies continuing to work in silo, the justice system is not only inhumanely long, but is also fractured and confusing for victims who want and deserve clear information and consistent support.

Without victims' courage and truth, justice cannot prevail. Yet, as this research highlights, too often their needs are not met by the very system designed to protect them. Six years on from my review into compliance with the Victims' Code there are still failures to deliver even the most basic of rights that victims are entitled to. Everyone bears the responsibility to treat victims with dignity, compassion and respect, ensuring their voices are heard, their rights upheld, and their needs prioritised. Anything less and the justice system will continue to fail.

8. Recommendations

Recommendations

1. HMICFRS should, as part of its PEEL inspections, publish performance data on police forces' compliance in the use of Outcome 14 and 16 codes, in particular whether cases include an auditable record of victim withdrawal.
2. The College of Policing and National Police Chiefs Council should develop a standardised approach to closing high harm cases where the victim withdraws, ensuring all forces record relevant information such as the reasons for withdrawal.
3. The Government must repeal the presumption of parental involvement without further delay to prevent protective parents, particularly victims of domestic and sexual abuse, from being forced into contact with their abusers and ultimately withdraw from criminal proceedings.
4. The Ministry of Justice should work with the NPCC, Home Office, and College of Policing to improve the recording of victims' needs and vulnerabilities.

5. Government must provide sufficient and sustainable funding to ensure the sector can effectively provide support to all victims.
6. The Metropolitan Police should ensure its Victim Focus Desks operate a service recovery model, identifying victim issues and addressing them before a victim considers withdrawing.
7. The Government should review how justice agencies fund victim care – such as Witness Care Units and Victim Liaison Officers – to determine how funding could be better utilised to deliver a seamless end-to-end Victim Care Hub model.
8. Government must urgently introduce plans to address the immediate crisis in the courts and work towards clearing the increasing backlog, through introducing a package of measures that address the lack of sitting days, the number of ineffective trials, and the prioritisation of cases with vulnerable victims.
9. Government should establish an Inspectorate of Courts, providing oversight of a part of the justice system largely protected from scrutiny, and monitoring the success of its upcoming reforms.
10. The Metropolitan Police should make the application of Outcome 16 codes a performance measure, ensuring these capture the reasons for victim withdrawal, and that this process and information is monitored across BCUs.
11. The Ministry of Justice should work to integrate the different systems used by justice agencies, implementing a unique identifier that will allow victims to be tracked across systems.

9. Glossary

- **BCU:** Basic Command Unit
- **CPS:** Crown Prosecution Service
- **CRIS:** Crime Report Information System
- **CSA:** Child Sexual Abuse
- **DAPN:** Domestic Abuse Protection Notice
- **FLO:** Family Liaison Officer
- **HMICA:** His Majesty's Inspectorate of Court Administration
- **HMICFRS:** His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services
- **HMCTS:** His Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service
- **ISVA:** Independent Sexual Violence Advocate
- **MOPAC:** Mayor's Office for Police and Crime
- **NFA:** No Further Action
- **NPCC:** National Police Chiefs Council
- **PCC:** Police and Crime Commissioner
- **PEEL:** Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy
- **PNC:** Police National Computer
- **SOIT:** Sexual Offences Investigation Trained
- **SPO:** Stalking Protection Orders
- **USS:** User Satisfaction Survey
- **VPS:** Victim Personal Statement

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