

London Victims' Board January 2023

Record of Meeting

Attendees

London Victims Commissioner - Independent Chair
Crown Prosecution Service - CPS
Victim Support - VS
Metropolitan Police Service - MPS
Probation Service - London - PSL
Ministry of Justice - MoJ
National Health Service (England) - NHSE
Bar Council - BC
London Councils - LC
Magistrates Association - MA
Victims Reference Group - VRG
Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime - MOPAC

Agenda Items

1. Welcome, introductions, and apologies

The Chair welcomed all board members.

2. Review of minutes and update on actions arising from the last meeting

Minutes from the last meeting held in October 2022 were accepted and the actions updated.

3. Victim Satisfaction – Data Update

MOPAC presented the latest quarterly data from the three surveys that MOPAC use to hear from victims of crime in London. The main two are the User Satisfaction Survey (USS) where victims are dealt with face-to-face by the police and the TDIU survey for victims who report online or via the telephone. The USS and TDIU surveys focus on victims of large volume crimes such as burglary, assault, robbery, hate crime and vehicle crime. Both surveys focus on experience of the MPS; initial contact with police, response time, actions and investigation, treatment and overall experience. The third survey is the Victim Voice Survey (VSS) which launched in June 2022 (formerly known as the High Harm Survey). The VSS captures the experiences of victims of

high-harm crime and is hosted online. The VSS survey link is disseminated to victims of high-harm crime via CRIS letters and social media.

The MPS and Victim Care Team have produced an E-leaflet which can be sent to a victim via an email address and also given as a hard copy. The MPS commissioner stated in his 'Turnaround Plan' that he is keen for the MPS to use QR codes to help distribute the victims e-leaflet, after the successful use of it within the NHS. The QR code will also enable the MPS to monitor performance of police officers distributing the leaflet effectively.

4. Evidence & Insight: Current research and group discussion

MOPAC presented a progress update of four of their current research programmes which focus on; Attrition in Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) & exploitation cases, Stalking Perpetrators & Victims, Victim Withdrawal and the London Victim Witness Service (LVWS) Evaluation. The E&I team are working collaboratively with the CPS research team to discuss victim withdrawal and have put in data requests. The CSA, Stalking and Victim Withdrawal research timelines are similar with; data requests (Spring), coding from May to July with analysis including write up of interviews and the product should be delivered by early autumn (September).

5. Victims' Bill Update, Government Response to Pre-Legislative Scrutiny, MoJ

There is no specific date for introducing the bill, but all indications show that it will be as soon as parliamentary time allows. The MoJ will publish the government response to the Justice select committees and pre legislative scrutiny report which went out last week.

The MoJ have committed to making a few key changes to the bill as follows; (1) amending the definition of a victim to mirror the definition in the Code. It will explicitly recognise bereaved families and those born as a result of rape as victim of crime. (2) The MoJ are working to develop the framework that will put an obligation on Criminal Justice Agencies to make victims aware of the Code including having Code oversight duty. (3) Strengthen the role of the Victims Commissioner to retain national oversight alongside the new PC convened local compliance framework for the code.

6. Victim Personal Statements (VPS)

The Sentencing Academy is a relatively new charitable organisation which is devoted to increasing public awareness of sentencing; promoting more evidence-based sentencing, making sentencing more effective with a key strand of activity to make

sentencing more effective in terms of victim input. The Victim Personal Statement Joint Agency guidance is published and held on the government website.

7. LVWS – Tour of New Website

There was a presentation to board members of the revamped LVWS website. The Chair encouraged all CJS partners to visit the website, navigate the content and feedback to LVWS as there will be regular quarterly reviews of the functionality of the website.

8. Portfolio update from London's Victims Commissioner and partners

London Victims Commissioner - Chairs Update

The London Victims Summit was held on March 10th alongside speakers which include Mayor Sadiq Khan, The Rt Hon Edward Argar MP, Minister for Victims and Sentencing, Sir Nick Rowley, the MPS Commissioner and Max Hill, Director of Public Prosecutions for England and Wales, Julian Roberts Executive Director, Sentencing Academy. The summit looked at the entire journey of the victims through the justice journey; issues around the barriers to reporting to the police, going to court, looking at court journey and the experience of the court, specialist courts, domestic abuse courts and good practice from overseas.

CPS Update

MOPAC is working with the Court Recovery Board and agencies on the large number of court backlog, to see if by working together what work can be done with the courts, allocating more judges to various crime courts in London, and ascertain moving cases outside of our courts. There are real challenges in relation to Council Resolution due to the strike by the Criminal Bar Association (CBA) in 2022.

Parole Board Update

The government has announced reforms to the parole board approval system and a number of those for legislation. There are two important changes in the victim space. One is there is no right to ask for a public hearing. It is being piloted in the Southwest of the country. PB are now seeing lots of victims elsewhere in the country requesting a public hearing and want to ensure that processes are in place with the resources. The first public parole hearing took place in December 2022, following reforms to increase transparency and improve victims' experience of the parole system. For the first time, victims, the public and media will get to attend a hearing and better understand how decisions over whether to release prisoners are made. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/first-public-parole-hearing-following-government-reforms>

MPS Update

The Commissioner has published his 2023-25 Turnaround plan, along with a survey inviting public and partners to respond with their views to reading the plan which can be found here

<https://www.met.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/met/about-us/turnaround-plan.pdf>

In order to rebuild trust and confidence, there are nine key categories. Visit survey link

<https://www.met.police.uk/notices/met/the-turnaround-plan-more-trust-less-crime-and-high-standards/>

Any other business (AOB)

None recorded

Close of meeting.