

London Victims' Board February 2024

Monday 26th February 2023, 2-4pm (In Person meeting and via Teams link)

Attendees:

London Victim's Commissioner – Independent Chair
Bar Council
Crown Prosecution Service
Judiciary
Magistrates Association
Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime
Metropolitan Police Service
Ministry of Justice
Parole Board
Probation Service London
Victim Support

Agenda items:

Welcome, introductions, and apologies

The Chair welcomed all members to the meeting.

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

Minutes from the last meeting held in December 2023 were accepted and the actions updated.

2. MoJ Victim Code Campaign

The MoJ presented on their campaign to raise awareness of and promote the Victims Code and 'Code Awareness Duty' that will come into effect once the Victim and Prisoner's Bill receives Royal Assent. Promotional materials include posters and leaflets with a QR code, email signature banners, social media posts, promotional video and updated webpages.

3. Victim Research: Attrition, Stalking & Child Sex Abuse (MOPAC E&I)

MOPAC's Evidence and Insight Team presented on their research into victims and their experience of the CJS.

- Victim attrition: Drivers of withdrawal are similar to reasons people do not report in the first place, suggesting a threshold of risk or motivation has changed leading them to report. There is scope for the police/wider CJS to focus on these aspects to keep victims engaged. However, there is a need to keep focus on what success looks like for the victim – which maybe more about support than a criminal justice outcome. There are gaps in the research which E&I are working to address that may help further inform this.
- Stalking problem profile: The number of stalking offences, stalking suspects proceeded against, and victims have increased substantially. Women are disproportionately affected by stalking and may be more disproportionately affected by stalking in London compared to England and Wales overall.
- Child sexual abuse: Of total coded cases available for analysis (416), research found that 9% (36) resulted in a CPS charge. Research shows a lower proportion achieving a CPS charge where there is a victim/survivor identified, 5% compared to the 9% overall in our sample.

4. Legislation Update

The chair provided an update on their work lobbying on the Victim and Prisoners Bill which is due to complete committee stage shortly. Lobbying focussed on a number of areas including; strengthening victims' rights and entitlements, driving compliance with the victims' code, providing open justice, Jade's Law, family courts, and reforming parole board, among other areas.

5. MPS End to End Victim Care Programme Update

The MPS provided an update of their ongoing work to improve engagement with victims.

- My Met Service: This will be expanding to Witness Care next month. Aiming to improve completion rate from current 8% to 10-15%.
- Victim Information Leaflet: Provides information on the Victims Code and exists in 54 different languages. Exploring the addition of crime prevention advice to this leaflet.
- Victim Focus Desks: These are handling up to 30,000 calls per month. They are being expanded to cover existing as well as new victims. Trauma informed training for call handlers is also being commissioned.
- Victim Voice Forum: There has been a positive response so far with direct influence on MPS policy. VVFs will be expanded to focus on black communities, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities, women and girls, and parents/ guardians of young people.

6. CPS Victim Care Transformation

The CPS presented on their victim care transformation work, including a pilot with MPS in Westminster. They are committed to undertaking a test and learn approach with MOPAC and MPS. Victim Liaison Unit manages victim communications with CPS, with a dedicated unit to support RASSO victims and ISVA/IDVAs.

7. Portfolio update from London's Victim Commissioner and partners

MPS: Connect will shortly be implemented. Will provide an update at the next Board.

Probation: Job evaluation process has led to Victim Liaison staff being moved to a higher band which should help with recruitment and retention of staff. Victim Liaison staff have also been prioritised for trauma informed practice support.

MOPAC: Recommissioning of victims services is currently underway. Successful bidders for a new Victim Service and Domestic Abuse service will be announced shortly. Winning bids for the Children and Young People and Restorative Justice services will be announced in summer. All service will go live in October.

7. Any Other Business (AOB)

The Pre-Election Period commences on 19th March for MOPAC and Claire Waxman.

Close of meeting