



The MPS Response to “Duty of Care: Improving Support to Victims of Crime”

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Strategic importance

The MPS understands the need to improve the quality of service to victims of crime and is committed in striving to put victims at the heart of everything we do. The Commissioner has made this a key pillar of his Total Policing framework in the form of the Total Victim Care programme.

The Commissioner has made clear that Total Victim Care is not simply about improving a performance measure, but goes to the heart of MPS culture and practice. The MPS has set out four strategic outcomes in the Total Victim Care strategy, only one of which refers to the Home Office performance indicator. The final two outcomes relate to equality and diversity as the MPS intends to provide an equally satisfactory service across Boroughs and communities

1. Victim care is central to MPS activity and culture
2. The MPS achieves the highest level of victim satisfaction in UK policing
3. Satisfaction of victims is consistent across London
4. Satisfaction of victims is consistent across communities

Total Victim Care was built on the evidence base of the MPS User Satisfaction Survey as well as benchmarking and consultation with other forces in England and Wales.

Performance improvements

Since the launch of Total Victim Care in February 2012 there has been an increase in overall victim satisfaction, improving for three consecutive quarters and now standing at 76%, the highest point since April 2011. All Boroughs now record satisfaction levels above 70% and the white-BME gap has narrowed to 4.7%.

These improvements are a result of significant changes being introduced including:

- Operation Promote offering every victim of crime in London a visit from police. To date, an extra 11,000 victimsⁱ have been visited by police.



- The opportunity for victims to book an appointment with their local police at a time and place convenient for them.
- Establishing a central Customer Service Team to provide professional leadership and support to a local Senior Leadership Team lead for customer service.
- Introducing a corporate action plan to improve the quality of service to victims and bring more consistency across the 32 Boroughs.
- Rigorous performance management on each Borough and centrally through the Crime Fighters methodology. Victim survey findings, Victims Code of Practice compliance, complaints data, and Quality Call Back data are all used to drive local improvements.
- The introduction of Victim Care Cards for officers to give to victims when a crime is reported. The cards provide more transparency about the policing process and the next steps after the crime report is taken. They are available in ten languages and in a format suitable for those who are blind or partially sighted.
- A consistent Quality Call Back process that provides victim feedback direct to front line officers and supervisors. To date, more than 30,000 calls have been made to victims by local officers and police volunteers, with feedback being communicated to the initial investigating officer.
- New letters and emails that provide the rationale for closing a crime or passing it for further investigation as well as clearer information about support for victims, also provided in ten languages.
- Investing £250,000 to improve the Crime Reporting Information System (CRIS) to enable updates to be emailed and automatic prompts for officers and supervisors to update victims.
- An overhaul of the MPS' internet site for victims and witnesses of crime, simplifying the content and layout including pdf versions of crime prevention materials and specific advice leaflets regarding reporting crime and keeping safe for those victims with learning disabilities.
- Improved training for the Crime Recording and Investigation Bureau (CRIB), Witness Care Units and new recruits.
- Forging stronger links with Victim Support and working to improve the number of referrals and reduce problems with information sharing.

2013/14 will see the MPS building on these foundations to continue these improvements and the next steps will include:

- Guaranteeing 24 hour language support services to support the reporting of crime from non-English speaking communities.
- Further enhancing online services and support for victims and witnesses, including the introduction of crime reporting Apps.
- Introducing face to face training for all response and neighbourhood officers regarding victim care to include changing attitudes, the identification of vulnerabilities, the treatment of and communication with victims and managing expectations. This training will be designed with



key partners, in particular, Victim Support and delivered by professional training staff.

- Embedding victim care in promotion criteria and training courses for newly promoted officers and staff to ensure effective supervision.

Report Recommendations

The PCC made four recommendations for the MPS.

Recommendation 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.

The MPS recognises the need to provide training to front line officers to improve victim care. Since the launch of Total Victim Care, several key training courses have been re-designed to incorporate lessons on this subject. Specifically, the foundation course for new recruits, the promotion courses for new Sergeants and Inspectors, the Witness Care Officer course, and the Public Access Officer course have all been redesigned.

However, whilst these improvements will positively impact the quality of service to victims, they only affect those officers and staff in certain roles or pursuing certain career choices. Although the MPS is recruiting 5,000 new officers in the next three years, there is a clear need to provide training to the bulk of the workforce. Therefore, as a result of the PCC report, the MPS has begun to design a Total Victim Care training package for all Borough and Neighbourhood officers. This is currently being developed in consultation with Boroughs and the Leadership & Learning Directorate. The ambition is for the training to be delivered face to face by professional police training staff. It will comprise one day's mandatory training each year for every neighbourhood and Borough police officer. By 2015, this will comprise approximately 19,000 officers.

The training will comprise of certain scenarios that officers routinely encounter on a daily basis and based on the feedback from victims of crime. The scenarios will be designed to:

- improve officers' ability to recognise and draw out hidden vulnerabilities in victims,
- improve officers' communication of the policing process and next steps and their management of victims' expectations
- improve the quality of the initial investigation



- improve the follow up information and care provided by police

In designing this training package, the MPS is working with Victim Support to quality assure the methodology and training material. An initial meeting with the Deputy Locality Director for Victim Support was held in February 2013. The MPS has visited Greater Manchester Police and will attend one of their own victim care training courses that has been introduced with support from the College of Policing.

It is anticipated that the new training package will be introduced in the second half of the 2013-14 year.

Recommendation 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 model for front counter provision provides 73 front counters across London, of which 33 are open 24 hours. All of these can offer privacy and language support or will be brought up to this specification. To further enhance future victim care, all current front counter staff are undertaking additional training to become Public Access Officers. This classroom based training includes input on Total Victim Care and Customer Service prior to being deployed in their role.

Contact points will supplement the front counters. The contact points will primarily be in Safer Neighbourhood Bases, most (but not all) of which contain appropriate facilities such as private rooms with potential to provide language support services. Opening hours will be regular and pre-advertised.

Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) will further enhance the accessibility of police through the provision of 'surgeries' on each ward. These surgeries will be in high footfall community locations. SNTs will deal with crime related intelligence, reports of anti-social behaviour, undertake problem solving initiatives, provide crime prevention advice and conduct reassurance visits on their ward in addition to other local ward based advertised events.

Finally the MPS offers a visit for every victim of crime at their home or other convenient location.

Recommendation 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.



Satisfaction of victims with the “follow up” work done by police and communication with them is low, and a significant challenge for the MPS.

The launch of Total Victim Care saw the introduction of a Victim Care Card and newly worded letters for victims informing them whether their crime will be further investigated. The Victim Care Card allows officers to provide their contact details and appropriate future contact information as well as summarising what they discussed with the victim and what happens next. The letters (or emails) are sent to every victimⁱⁱ within 5 days of the initial investigation. The letters explain whether it is possible to investigate the crime further, why it is important to report crime, what action will be taken, and provide information about Safer Neighbourhood Teams and Victim Support for further assistance.

In July 2012, the MPS upgraded CRIS to provide officers and supervisors with timely reminders to make contact with the victims in their cases. The software upgrade also provided enhanced email capability to provide quicker updates to victims and also required officers to input the victim’s preferred method of contact. This reduces the time to update victims from days to seconds.

In April 2013, the MPS Joint Prosecution Service project will have completed its roll out. The MPS will operate five Witness Care Units, each covering an area of London, that are responsible for providing victim and witness care from the point of charging an offender to the trial at court. As part of this project, enhanced victim care and contact is being introduced. Specifically, the MPS now provides victims with the option of information via SMS as well as email, letter and telephone call. Victim Care is part of the 2013-14 performance framework for Witness Care Units who are also introducing Quality Call Back to further improve their service. The survey asks victims about the service provided by other agencies and police will be able to share this data.

In spring and summer 2012, the MPS investigated the option of online crime tracking for victims. This system is already in place in several forces and its benefits were clear. However, the decision was taken not to proceed on the basis that it was not an acceptable use of public money to introduce a system, only to have spend money again to continue the facility in the next generation of crime recording software. For this reason, regrettably it is not possible to provide online crime tracking within the six month time limit recommended by the PCC.

Recommendation 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.



In January 2013, the MPS increased the amount of victim contact information provided to Victim Support. Victim Support now receives the enhanced victim contact information on the crime report, including the email contact details and preferred method of contact. At the time of writing the PCC report, it was too early to evaluate the impact of these improvements.

Currently, the MPS provides a large transfer of crime data each day but there are occasional data entry errors. Each day's data transfer is unique to that day's crime. In other words, a crime report containing victim contact details are only sent once to Victim Support and are not re-sent if those details are updated the next day or anytime thereafter. In the majority of cases, this is not a problem as the information is complete and correct. However, for those cases where Victim Support cannot contact a victim, their recourse is to telephone the local Borough's Crime Management Unit.

This arrangement is not satisfactory for a number of reasons: firstly, Crime Management Units are busy and are responsible for allocating crimes to investigators; secondly, the Crime Management Units are also the first contact point for victims querying the initial investigation into their crime - so ironically calls from Victim Support may block calls from victims; and thirdly, the operating hours for Crime Management Units are not aligned to those of Victim Support.

Following consultation with Victim Support, a solution will be implemented in the next two months. The MPS will make use of its 16/7 central Crime Recording Bureau (CRIB) to create a hotline for Victim Support enquiries. The CRIB has access to all MPS crime reports and is responsible for telephone-based investigations as well as the decision to close a crime or to pass it for further investigation. The hotline will replace contact with the Borough Crime Management Units. This option has been implemented in other forces, such as Greater Manchester, and the MPS considers this to be a viable solution.

The benefits to this option are as follows:

- CRIB has access to all crime reports in the MPS
- CRIB staff are experienced in investigation, victim care, data entry standards and interrogating the CRIS system
- No data protection or security vetting considerations for new staff
- A single point of contact
- Reduced demand on local Crime Management Units
- Frees up local MPS phone lines for victims to contact police directly
- A relatively quick option to implement
- Minimal cost (answering calls will be absorbed by the existing workforce)

Whilst this is a relatively quick option to implement, some safeguards have to be built in, such as security measures to prevent anyone other than Victim Support using the service. There will be a small cost to this solution as a number is identified and call hunting programs put in place.



The hotline will be evaluated after six months and if further action is required to fulfil the PCC recommendation, then alternative solutions will be explored.

ⁱ Figures supplied by CCC and relate to PYTD to January 2013

ⁱⁱ NB: letters and emails are not sent to victims where, in the opinion of the officer, to do so would put the victim at risk, for example instances of Domestic Violence