

Date: Tuesday 12 September 2017
Location: Committee Room 5, City Hall
Hearing: JUSTICE MATTERS – Victims Matter

Start time: 9:30 am
Finish time: 11:20 am

Members:

Sophie Linden, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime
Claire Waxman, Victims Commissioner
Natasha Plummer, MOPAC
Dr Paul Dawson, MOPAC

Guests:

Kilvinder Vigurs, National Probation Service
Catherine Hinwood, Ministry of Justice
AC Martin Hewitt, Metropolitan Police Service
Cmdr Neil Jerome, Metropolitan Police Service
Judith Baker, Citizens Advice
Claire Lindley, Crown Prosecution Service
Patricia Cadden, National Health Service England
Martin White, National Health Service England
Jo Fiddian, Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service
Paul Griffiths, Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service
Bernadette Keane, Victim Support
Kevin Griffiths, Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Thank you for coming. Welcome to today's Justice Matters, the first on victims. I just want to let you know that today is a public meeting, it is being webcast. I'm Claire Waxman, Victims Commissioner for London, and I'll be co-chairing this morning with Sophie Linden, Deputy Mayor. Can I just ask that we go round quickly and introduce ourselves?

Natasha Plummer (MOPAC): I'm Natasha Plummer, I'm the Head of Engagement. I have the lead for Victims Commissioning at MOPAC.

Judith Baker (Citizens Advice Witness Service): Good morning, my name's Judith Baker, I'm the Regional Manager for the Citizens Advice Witness Service.

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): Catherine Hinwood, I'm a Deputy Director of Family and Criminal Justice Policy at the Ministry of Justice, and lead on victim and witness policy.

Cdr Neil Jerome (Metropolitan Police Service): Morning. I'm Neil Jerome from the Metropolitan Police and I have the lead for Victims.

AC Martin Hewitt (Metropolitan Police Service): Morning, I'm Martin Hewitt, Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service responsible for Territorial Policing, which is the thirty-two boroughs.

Bernadette Keane (Victim Support): I'm Bernadette Keane, I'm the Services Director for London for Victim Support.

Kevin Griffiths (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service): Morning, I'm Kevin Griffiths. I'm here on behalf of Michelle Filby, the Head of Crime for London

Jo Fiddian (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service): I'm Jo Fiddian, I'm Deputy Director for Crime at HMCTS, Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service.

Kilvinder Vigurs (National Probation Service): Kilvinder Vigurs, I'm the Operation Director for the National Probation Service.

Claire Lindley (CPS): Hello, I'm Claire Lindley, I'm the Chief Prosecutor for London South

Martin White (NHS England): Martin White, Senior Commission NHS London Region Health and Justice Team.

Patricia Cadden (NHS England): I'm Patricia Cadden, I'm the Head of the Health and Justice Team in London.

Paul Dawson (MOPAC): Paul Dawson, I'm the Head of Research at MOPAC.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor) (Co-Chair): I'm Sophie Linden, I'm Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Thank you. I just want to start off by really thanking everyone for attending this morning. That shows me that your organisations and yourselves are all committed to the victims and wanting to make significant changes to improve that journey for victims of crime. Today's session is very short, it is only an hour and a half, so we do have a lot to cover, and I really wanted us to put a spot light on what we are all doing collectively at the moment to understand victims' needs and address their needs and develop an effective and a timely service.

There is a real commitment with this Mayoralty which is firmly stated in the Police and Crime plan to really put victims at the heart of the criminal justice system, and that really is very much evidenced in the creation of this role, Victims Commissioner for London, which is the first, and also appointing me. I've been a long standing campaigner for victim's rights. Really this role is to have a strategic overview of victims in London and to really understand their needs and address their needs, and improve victim satisfaction.

Coming on to victim satisfaction, we are going to here that victim satisfaction with police is actually the lowest since 2013 and 2014. There is also been several reports over recent years highlighting that the criminal justice system is really over stretched. It is under resourced and it is at breaking point. So that's why this morning it is so important to have these discussions. As I said, there is much to be done, and this Justice Matters morning is really the first of many more conversations and ongoing pieces of work with you. We have a victim summit day on 21 November where we'll be taking forward a lot of the issues raised this morning. There is also the forthcoming refresh of the MOPAC's VAWG strategy which we have kicked off this week, and we are starting with survivor consultations. There is really a comprehensive plan of work to ensure that we are putting victims at the heart of the criminal justice system.

As you all know, an effective criminal justice system is really the foundations of our society, and we are faced with economic austerity and cuts and cuts in resources, and this is threatening our ability to deliver timely and effective justice and support that is to help victims really cope, recover and survive. That's why more than ever we need to come together and work collaboratively on how we can transform the justice system and how we can make significant and sustainable changes that will really impact victims' journey and improve that satisfaction.

So today is structured into two parts. I'll be leading the discussion around the application of the Victims Code of Practice, which I'm going to call VCOP because that's a lot easier. We are going to be looking at how all you agencies in London are complying or not complying with the code. I will be leading a review of the compliance of the code in London, and really be looking for all your support in that review as well. Then we'll be coming on to Sophie Linden's section on victim satisfaction and what we need to be doing in order to drive victim satisfaction, and how we enable that as well.

I'm going to hand over to Natasha Plummer now, who will set the scene of victimisation within London.

Natasha Plummer (Head of Engagement MOPAC): To kick us off I'm really going to make a few key points about some of the context in which we are working and then I'm going to hand over to Paul Dawson whose going to talk a bit more about the victim profile data.

London accounts for about a fifth of all crime in England and Wales, and obviously there are victims attached to those crimes. So our work in supporting victims is really, really important and we have a significant programme of work that supports that aim. We were given devolved responsibility for the commissioning of victims services. Some of them, not all of them, in October 2014, and we have had a number of ongoing programmes since that time. As Claire mentioned the Policing Crime Plan (PCP) puts victims at the heart of everything we do, and as part of that we have appointed the first Victims Commissioner, Claire, who we are pleased to have with us, and the Mayor has made a significant commitment in terms of our commissioned services budget. We now have a three year budget of £47 million which includes some funds that we had given to us through grant by the Ministry of Justice, but has been augmented also from our own budgets, which indicates the kind of significance of this work for the Mayor and for Sophie and Claire.

Now, through that funding, as well as providing a range of universal services, we'll also commission a range of support services and we will be moving towards delivering more of those specialist services, particularly around things like sexual violence and supporting children and young people who have been victimised where we know that there are significant challenges and vulnerabilities that we would like to address. That's a key thing that runs through our work and our policing crime lab. Our multiyear commitment to commissioning victim services over that three year programme really indicates the significance of this work and will enable us to facilitate greater integration across this system, which is one of the key things we'd like to do in terms of how victims are supported through their criminal justice journey, and to bring our provision together with that provided by the Metropolitan Police Service and other parts of the system.

Paul?

Paul Dawson (MOPAC): In the first section I just want to touch base on some of the basics around the numbers of victims and some wider issues that we know will impact them. I can see from the first line, firstly, there are currently more victims of crime in London than at any point over the last three years. You can see the kind of strong, fairly upward trend in terms of victimisation. In the last year there are approximately three quarters of a million victims of crime. The number of recorded victims in London has increased by more than 12% over the last three years, which is a strong upward trend. If you just look at the most recent month of March, it is 7,000 victims of crime. That's the highest number that we have seen in a given month over the last five years. So in just the basic numbers you can see the strong increase over time.

Really I want to cover a little bit more than just the basic numbers. So we know that, according to Metropolitan Police Service data in just July, the month's snapshot of nearly 9,000 victims who have experienced at least one other event in the preceding year, so it works out about one in eight victims of crime being repeat victims. That level of repeat victimisation varies quite considerably between boroughs, we know that. On the slide it ranges from 1,600(?) victims in Westminster to 1,700 in Sutton. We know that repeat victims are more likely to have been victims multiple times if they've previously had violence against the person. So that's where there is most likely to be repeat victimisation.

We know from wider data, so for example our user satisfaction survey, that around 15% of victims have reported that they were repeats in the last year. Other repeat victims were far less

satisfied in terms of their experience with the police. There is the whole amount of wider research that talks about how repeat victims are much more likely to have worse mental health in terms of length, intensity and the number of mental health issues.

Finally in this section from me, just outside of the number and outside of repeat victimisation, the issue of vulnerability is one we wanted to highlight. So approximately one in ten victims, according to the Metropolitan Police Service data, are recorded as vulnerable. So as it has on the slide, about 75,000 victims in the last year were recorded as vulnerable by the Metropolitan Police Service. Moving within that vulnerability, nearly half of all victims were recorded as being vulnerable because they were feeling intimidated by the offender. A quarter of vulnerable victims were described as having mental health issues, and nearly half of all the vulnerable victims were recorded as BAME. So that really brings issues around inequalities, especially around some of the more vulnerable cases which is really important for MOPAC.

We also know from the MOPAC user satisfaction survey that when victims tell us that their vulnerability is addressed by police they are more satisfied. And when that vulnerability is not catered for, they are far less satisfied. So we really see it as a key issue that we identify and respond to effectively.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Thank you Paul, and thank you Natasha. So as we have heard, there are more victims of crime in London that at any point in the last three years, and some 10% of victims have an identified vulnerability and I think that's a really important point to consider as we go through this morning's discussions.

VCOP, as you know, is a statutory code. It sets out the minimum level of service victims should be receiving from criminal justice agencies, and we are going to spend some time this morning considering how that code is actually working, and what areas are being complied with and what areas aren't. As I said, obviously this is a first discussion which will lead into the VCOP review that I'll be leading on.

We are going to hear shortly from Dr Paul Dawson again, looking more specifically at the data, what we do know and obviously what we don't know, and the problem with extracting as well from that data, and also to really help show where the gaps are. We are also going to be listening to a victim case study, which I think is really important because it is so important to listen to the victim's voice, hear the victim on the ground to really understand what is or isn't working, and the human cost to the failings when the code is not complied with. So I'm going to hand you back to Dr Paul Dawson.

Paul Dawson (MOPAC): As Claire outlined, in this section I'm just going through some issues around victim compliance. So starting at the top, as we saw, the number of victims in London is increasing so this obviously is placing a greater demand on the Metropolitan Police Service themselves. It is interesting that although the numbers of victims are increasing, the proportion that are VCOP applicable has stayed the same. So it really just shows that kind of increasing demand. As I have on the slide, I'll mention a number of different aspects that we monitor in terms of if VCOP compliance is being hit effectively, so to speak.

This snapshot on the slide is from July 2017 and across some of the key issues around the victim being given up-to-date information on regular updates, suspect arrest, suspect release, suspect

charge and suspect non-court disposal, you see that across the board between 60% to 75% of those are being delivered on time. Compare the performance now to back to 2014, all of these areas of key VCOP compliance have seen reductions, so victims receive regular updates has decreased by 12% since July 2014. Information that suspects have been arrested has decreased by 12%. Information that suspects have been given non-court disposal has decreased by 10%. So we see decrease in some of these core VCOP measures.

At the bottom we have VSS referrals were only at 42%. We think that's probably due to the stipulation that victims have to give consent in terms of their information to be passed on to be made appropriate to referral. So that one is lower probably for that reason.

Really, just looking at the issue of VCOP compliance, really using some other data that we have. We have new questions in our user satisfaction survey where we ask around aspects of VCOP compliance. So as you can see, nearly 60% of respondents to the survey agree that they were offered victim support referral. Nearly half agree that the opportunity for a Victim Personal Statement was offered. Around 20% agree that they were offered information on restorative justice. That's based on one quarter of information from our user satisfaction survey, but that's 3,000 victims and those questions are now continuous in our survey that we can monitor over time.

What is interesting on this slide, I would say, is that we did some early preliminary modelling and when information on restorative justice and opportunity to complete the Victim Personal Statement is offered to the victim, we see a positive association with satisfaction with the police actions. So the other areas are important, but if the victim has all these aspects, it is having an impact on them. A positive impact.

Finally in this section, I just want to explore a little bit more detail on compliance by offence type, because that is a really interesting nuance to try and go into. On the USS, we tried to look at the crime that the USS asked questions on around the kind of high and low impact of crime. So we made a high harm category, which included violent crime and hate crime from the user satisfaction survey and compared some aspects of VCOP compliance. You can see that the results differ slightly across different crime groups, with violent crime and hate crime victims reporting higher levels of compliance across all of the questions, except victim support referral where burglary is highest. So there is some evidence that high harm victims have better compliance for VCOP, but what I would say looking at the table you can see that none of areas are at 90%, a 100% so there is still issues there. Even some of the potentially lower impact crime around vehicle crime, that is where compliance is at the lowest, as measured by the user satisfaction survey.

Natasha Plummer (MOPAC): I'm just going to walk you through the case study. What we have on this side here, basically this is a case study of a person who was a victim of stalking for six years. The timeline at the bottom, which is a bit difficult to see from here actually, sets out the journey which started with a disagreement at the victim's workplace. That seems like a very unremarkable thing, but that actually led to a series of death threats, defamatory comments on social media, and then a sort of stalking pattern of behaviour ensued for several years. A restraining order was successfully granted in 2011, but that did not actually stop the offending behaviour and the victim continued to suffer over a number of years. Within that time the stalker attempted to use the civil courts against the victim, which we see can be a feature in

cases like this, and that was thrown out, but there was obviously impact on the victim in having to go through those processes.

The stalker has even been imprisoned on a number of occasions for breaches to the restraining order, but there have still continued over a period of time to be significant issues for the victim. There had been a civil case ongoing, that has now switched over into criminal, and the victim is now attending court for the stalker's further breaches of the restraining order.

This particular case highlights some key areas where actually there were significant issues for the victim throughout the process, particularly in respect of poor communication, which Paul has highlighted in terms of VCOP compliance that that is quite an important element for victims. The case was handled by multiple officers in the police service and it wasn't necessarily explained to them about the court processes. The victim complained of not having been kept informed of the progress of the case, and these are all things that we know should happen under VCOP and yet they didn't happen in this case which has been happening over a prolonged period of time.

There was also an issue for the victim in terms of securing advocacy support and actually, that was really crucial for them in terms of getting some of those VCOP rights delivered, in that once he was able to get that support, actually that meant that he was then able to get things like the communication improved, having things about the court process explained, and it was actually that advocacy that enabled that to happen. The advocacy shouldn't be necessary for those requirements to be delivered to victims, so that's a really important point to think about.

The other thing to say is the question about the use of the civil courts in situations like this and how that interplays with offending behaviour that is actually criminal, and that being quite a difficult space for victims to navigate and understand. The offer of special measures was seen as really important for the victim, so that is really key in terms of them feeling supported and able to participate effectively in that criminal justice process.

Those highlight some of the VCOP failures, but the important thing about that is the impact on the victim. So in terms of their wellbeing, that it would increase their levels of stress, they did not understand the process, and actually they felt that they had to navigate it and do lots of things for themselves in terms of pulling together evidence. In fact, at one point information was lost and they had to then regather all of that evidence to give it back to the police, having written to people and not had replies.

All of those communication things that actually the victim had taken on themselves, had a significant impact on their health and wellbeing in a situation that was already very stressful and upsetting. It had further impacts in terms of their relationships and their family situation, which we know is also really important for coping and recovery. So actually the whole process was having a significant impact, not just on them, but on their wider family too. There were impacts on their employment, which again we know is really important for victims in terms of maintaining their normal life, coping and recovering from the impacts of a crime. Actually, all of these things that happened within this case actually conspired against maintaining some of those key elements of his life and situation, and actually increased the difficulty for him in this context.

That kind of really brings to life, I think, some of the impacts of VCOP. VCOP feels like quite a dry thing and you can tick the box and say, "Yes, we have referred, yes we did this," but actually when you don't do that there is significant impact for a person or people who are at the centre of that process. So it is really important to just keep remembering the people in this. So we just wanted to highlight that through that particular case study.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Thank you, Paul and thank you, Natasha, and that's exactly right. Again, as I say, and I often say, listening to that victim's voice, as Natasha said, we see VCOP and it is quite large and there is a lot of information in it, but how does it directly affect a victim when it is delivered and when it is not delivered? So I think that really reflects very well the issues around co-failings and that impact on that victim's life and their ability to actually cope in their life as well.

We are going to start off the discussion, so Martin and Neil I'm going to start with you just to ask you, much of the application of the code obviously hinges on the criminal justice system, its initial contact through the police at time of reporting and investigation. Considering, obviously, the information that we have just heard this morning, how can the police improve delivery of the code, and indeed the systems that measure compliance with the code?

Cdr Neil Jerome (Metropolitan Police Service): I think certainly what's highlighted in the victim's case study is looking at some of the systems and the way in which we investigate crime, as well as the training that we put in place for our officers.

I'll turn you first to how we investigate crime. At present if you're a victim of crime, a responding officer will arrive, will deal with the initial investigation for that, then it is passed over to another investigating officer. What we are looking at at the moment is making sure that when you are a victim of crime, you will be dealing with the same officer from the beginning to the end of that case, rather than them handing that back through. It is an approach which a number of police forces have adopted in the past as well.

So we are looking at how do we improve that investigation process for the future, to make sure that you deal with one officer, so you don't have that experience of dealing with a number of officers through the process of a case. So we think that that will improve the victims' fears, and we think that that will also lead to high levels of compliance with VCOP and also satisfaction.

So that is some of the structural changes that we are looking to make in terms of the investigation process. The other is in terms of our training and our awareness for our officers, that we recognise that certainly in the position that we are in, that there is still room for improvement, that we are not where we want to be in terms of our compliance with VCOP. So we are looking at in three months' time there will be a training package that will be delivered for all of our front line officers that is using some innovative work that has already been trialled in terms of how we can improve victim satisfaction, and bringing home to officers, who are incredibly busy, who are working from a patrol basis and doing their level best to deliver services, but just making sure that they are aware that whilst it might be their tenth call today, it is actually the first time that that person has been a victim. So just making sure that we are able to get that training across, both in terms of the actual compliance of VCOP, but just making sure that that encounter with us is a high quality encounter that takes account of their needs, that recognises their vulnerabilities.

That training will start in the new year and following that, there will then also be a campaign of awareness raising to make sure that our officers have this at the forefront of their minds when they are dealing with victims.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): So just to clarify with that training, that's going to be to all officers?

Cdr Neil Jerome (Metropolitan Police Service): All of our front line officers.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Obviously it is going to include around the Victims Code, enhanced entitlements and defining vulnerability and looking at vulnerability?

Cdr Neil Jerome (Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, it will. We are already doing a huge amount of work when it comes to vulnerability and assessing that and taking into account a victim's unique needs as part of that experience. That work is already taking place, but we will be reinforcing that with training that starts in the new year.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): And the training also looking at, really it needs a cultural shift, the way in which the police respond to victims and having that empathy and understanding and that compassion. As you have rightly said, often they're very busy. It could be their tenth call, but it is that first point of contact for that victim who is in a stage of trauma, often. So just ensuring that they recognise that and respond to it appropriately.

Cdr Neil Jerome (Metropolitan Police Service): We joined the job to make a difference. We joined the job because we care and because we want to help people. That is first and foremost in officers' minds, but of course it is incredibly busy, so some of the work that we are also doing is looking to reduce the demands on officers so they are able to spend more time. Certainly we are looking at how do we manage our demand more effectively, so that officers do have that time where they can deliver that quality of compliance to victims.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Finally, the single point of contact, the officer to stay with the victim. That's already coming in?

Cdr Neil Jerome (Metropolitan Police Service): We are looking at that in some parts of London at the moment. We are looking to see how effective that is. If it does then prove to be effective then clearly we will then look to roll that out across the whole of London.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Are there timings around that?

Cdr Neil Jerome (Metropolitan Police Service): That is currently going through the evaluation stage at the moment. I would anticipate that that would probably be next year if it is deemed to be successful.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Thank you.

AC Martin Hewitt (Metropolitan Police Service):

Can I just make a few kind of more general comments, really, because I think a starting point is that performance is not as good as it needs to be and should be and I think we would accept that entirely. Neil has obviously outlined the work, and I know he has had a conversation with you and we have had a conversation about that at work. I do think, though, that this is a really important group and the work that will carry on to try and get us to a better place. We have got to start from a position of realism around where we are, and I think that is a really important point to make.

The level of demand that is in the system in policing, and you are absolutely right, the front end for almost all of this is going to be our interaction with a victim. It was sort of highlighted in Paul's work, but I would suggest that in much more serious criminality we probably do the processes much better, you are much more likely to have single points of contact, it is much more likely to be a lot of wrap around the victim. I think the real challenge area here is what you would describe as the volume in crime and those large numbers. We just need to understand that it is not a London thing, it is a national phenomenon in terms of the level of demand that is into policing.

I honestly do not believe that there are very many at all officers who do not care about victims, who turn up and are not concerned about the issues that the victims are facing. There is a very, very significant pressure on our people to deliver a service which has increased in its breadth of what we deal with. Of course, we are talking here about victims of crime, and crime is a minority percentage of the activity that we are undertaking. So it is not an excuse, but I think we need to understand that and some of those other competing demands on our people.

There is a really important point around vulnerability, and for a whole range of different reasons we are doing loads of work to try and better spot and identify vulnerability in an individual, not just in crime but in all the people that we deal with. There comes a real challenge then about the degree to which those other services and support infrastructure is there to actually help manage those vulnerabilities, because there are certain things we need to do, and there are certain things we can do and there are certain things we have to do right. So it is inexcusable that we are not communicating with people, we are not keeping them up to speed on what is going on in an investigation, but we are not able to deal with many of the vulnerability factors. I think collectively we have got to work out how collectively we better provide those services that allow someone to come out of what is effectively a criminal justice process and into a process that is about dealing with the broader issues that may be contributing to the issue that is going on.

So for me, a really important part is I can promise that we will be doing everything we can do to get ourselves into a better place around doing those basic things properly. I think the point made around as soon as we are... We are making it clear to someone that we recognise vulnerability's really important, and the two points that we have been speaking around is particularly around restorative justice. I think there are real opportunities around that to not only have a better outcome for victims, but also to take pressure out of the criminal justice system further down the line as well. And then the whole issue around victim impact statements as well, which again we need to be much cleverer how we use that, because I think that is all part of making that person feel that we are understanding their situation, and taking their

situation seriously. I do think the debate has got to go on, and all the work has got to go on with a very realistic assessment of the kind of pressures that are in the system.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): That's something we were going to touch upon anyway. We are fully aware that as --

AC Martin Hewitt (Metropolitan Police Service):

I know you are, but it is just important to say, I think.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): -- working against difficult circumstances and high volume and where can we make the best changes?

AC Martin Hewitt (Metropolitan Police Service):

Precisely.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): I think your point around vulnerability and also high harm and volume, in that case that victim stalking is high harm, but was not picked up as high harm, therefore did not get what you normally do for high harm victims. So again, there is learning and issues around that for stalking, coercive control and those sorts of emerging legislations and crimes.

AC Martin Hewitt (Metropolitan Police Service):

I understand that.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Judith, if I can come to you. I'm aware that Citizens Advice Bureau survey victims and one of the questions is their knowledge around VCOP and what they were actually informed. I think I saw a report last year that seven out of ten were not aware about VCOP. In your experience, has this lack of awareness of their entitlements for victims really impacted the victims? What areas of VCOP, if it is not being delivered, is the greatest impact on victim engagement in that court process?

Judith Baker (Citizens Advice Witness Service):

First of all, just an explanation about what the Witness Service do. The Witness Service are there to provide support and information to any victim who actually is required to go to court to give evidence. I think the first important point is that that is a very small number of victims. What we do, is that any victim that is referred to the Witness Service, we ask them whether or not they're aware of the Victims Code of Practice. You are absolutely right, it sits between 20% and 30% who are aware of the Victims Code of Practice and their entitlements.

What we see in the Witness Service is that when a referral is made and that victim comes to court, perhaps for a pre-trial visit, very often they are not aware that they could have made a Victim Personal Statement, which as you said is really important, particularly if on the day when they turn up to give their evidence the offender pleads guilty. The victim can then feel sometimes let down because they are not able to have talked about the impact that the crime has had on them. So for me, I think that is probably the most significant one in relation to Victim Personal Statements.

We also have a witness experience survey, which is about gauging some satisfaction around the criminal justice system. One of the things that comes out of that is that actually, the more that victim has been kept informed by the various agencies and been offered pre-trial support, the more likely they are to be both satisfied with the process, and also increase their confidence in giving the evidence in the future.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): It would be useful to see that survey and that data as well, going forward leading to the compliance review.

Judith Baker (Citizens Advice Witness Service): Yes.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor) (Co-Chair): So if Martin talks about the policing front end. Claire and the CPS and the victim's journey, maybe it is the middle bit. In terms of your responsibilities to the victim, there is the victim's personal statement, but also there is the Victim's Right to Review when you have made a charging decision. So how do you make sure that there is correct compliance, not just compliance on paper, but actually it is compliance with meaning, especially around Victim's Right to Review?

Claire Lindley (CPS): In relation to the Victim Personal Statement, mention I think has already been made that only forty-odd percent is taken, and sixty-odd per cent in the high harm cases. Of course, therefore we are only getting about half of the Victim Personal Statements that we should get into the system. Now, we do have a system of requesting them continually from the police, but I think we probably fail a little bit in terms of chasing that with the police and that interaction with the police. Unfortunately we cannot actually measure that, so we have no way of measuring how many have come into the system and how many are relied on and used and read out in court.

So the only way we can measure that is by doing an actual dip sample of cases to see what has happened. So when the Victim's Commission is considering a review, I think we should actually do some case analysis end to end to see exactly what has happened under each part of VCOP to see where the compliance falls down.

When we come to Victim's Right to Review (VRR), which is the second part of your question, that is something we can measure, because when a victim activates VRR, it comes into the system and is measured, so we know how many people are asking for their case to be looked at again, and we know how many of those cases are successful in terms of what the victim would like.

Just for example, last year nationally there were, I have just made a note of the figures, 103,000 cases that could have been VRR'd, and we had 2,000 victims who asked for cases to be VRR's and 137 were upheld. So there is quite a big attrition there. It is, I think, 0.13% of cases are overturned. So I do not know whether that is because victims do not know about the system, it may well be that so I am not patting myself on the back particularly for those figures. It might be that the lack of information, like Judith was saying, about their entitlements. Of the cases that come in, we have an independent appeals unit that look at all those cases, so I am satisfied that they're dealt with properly and independently and that they are measured.

I think the VRR part of VCOP is properly measured and properly handled. The Victim Personal Statements (VPS) part is a little bit more difficult to measure, and I think the success is mixed there because it is very beholden to police, the witness care unit and the CPS and the court. Of course, once we have got lots of different agencies embroiled in getting the VPS to court, it can fall down a number of stalls, so that is where I think some end to end analysis would be of use.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Can I just ask, just on the VRR, who is really responsible for making sure victims have an entitlement and a right to access the VRR?

Claire Lindley (CPS): It is the police Witness Care Unit that are those that have the interface with the victim of crime, and the only time that the victim would have an interface with the CPS is when the case comes into court. If they are dissatisfied with a decision, then a letter is sent to them explaining a decision that we have made that they might be dissatisfied with, and that letter explains their entitlements. So I am satisfied that when a case is, say, discontinued or we have changed the charge so that it is not a serious charge any more, it is a less serious charge, anything like that, a letter is sent to the victim. It has standard sections on it to show what their entitlement is. So it does have that, but it is only if we make a decision that we think they might be dissatisfied with, which is a bit of a second guess.

Other than that it is down to the Witness Care Unit to have that kind of ongoing relationship with the victim.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): That might be where the issue is, because obviously in listening to that case study it was the advocate that advised them that they had a right to have their case reviewed. They did not know that through any other agency telling them.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor) (Co-Chair): I just think in terms of coming out of this today, there are two things there, aren't there, about actually looking about how you measure the Victim Personal Statement and how we actually get a handle of that. Then the second thing about the victim right to review, Claire could perhaps have a look at that system about --

Claire Lindley (CPS): By all means.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor) (Co-Chair): -- where you are saying about second guessing the victims on whether they will be satisfied or dissatisfied and how that actually works, because we all know that being told you have a right is not necessarily the same as being given the ability to really trigger that right. That would be really helpful.

Kilvinder, in terms of the National Probation Service, you've also got responsibilities around VCOP, especially around post-conviction and around parole boards and victim statements around parole boards, but also around notification of release for victims. How do you make sure that that is happening and how do you measure that that is happening?

Kilvinder Vigurs (National Probation Service): Starting on the journey for the National Probation Service, we have a couple of what I would perhaps call binary targets, which I do not think actually look at satisfaction. So that is where the referrals have been made timely from

the police, and we have a very good relationship with the police. We usually hit around the mid-80s to 90s, because the quicker we can pick it up, the more satisfaction the victim will have because we can get to them post sentence as quickly as possible to explain. Often having had a victim, who their offender has got a long sentence, it may be years before actually there is something impactful to tell them around the parole process.

So for us, satisfaction is quite a difficult thing to grasp because every victim is different, we know. So when somebody has been sentenced for 12 months or more for a violent or sexual crime, somebody has been given a 12 month sentence we can pick them up quite quickly. If somebody has been given a life sentence we have an ongoing relationship for years, if not decades. So for us, we do not have a sophisticated data set yet around how we pick up at the right process time, and it is something we want to develop and are developing.

So the things we do do, is look at the referral rates and look at a questionnaire of satisfaction, about once we have made contact have we explained the sentence, do you know when we'll be in touch with you, have we shown you respect in the way we have spoken to you? We range around satisfaction from 70 to mid-90s depending on what people are being asked. So in terms of when parole reports are requested, or when ROTL's are requested, Released on Temporary License, or home detention curfews, we need to do some more work there. There is a fine balance. We have been given some additional resources, between wanting to promote the face-to-face contact and balancing the data set that we need to be populated as well.

We also want to look at things like when we are referring to restorative justice, when our offenders are recalled on something that the victims have said. So it is quite a long journey and we need to start working on a much more robust data set, and it is something we are doing.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor) (Co-Chair): I completely understand that it is a long journey. When you talk about a robust data set, does that mean you are not able to track where the victims are and that when there is a longer sentence that they are not giving Victim Personal Statements and they are not able to be notified?

Kilvinder Vigurs (National Probation Service): No. So two separate conversations. On every case by case, yes, absolutely. So any case you mention to me I could check where they are at on that journey. In terms of providing you all with a data set in terms of, for every parole report requested in London, how many victims were contacted in a timely manner. So absolutely every case has a case worker. Some of them are, I use this word loosely, dormant because they have been asked not to be contacted for three or four years. Some want more contact. So we have got that for every case. It is just as a bigger data set to provide you with assurances, that is what we are working on. Sorry for the misunderstanding.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor) (Co-Chair): I just wanted to clarify that. Thank you. Jo, in terms of the court service, obviously an incredibly important part of this victim's journey, there is really significant reform underway. How is that going to improve the experience of victims and support to live with the code?

Jo Fiddian (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service): Significantly, we hope. You all, I am sure will be aware that we have around £1 billion worth of investment going into the Courts and Tribunal Service in England and Wales. What we are seeking to deliver is a just,

proportionate and accessible service, and one that is fit with modern world, so one that is underpinned by digital technology. We have had a couple of references already today about the importance of having information that is shared, that is accessible by agencies, and actually, as well, from an evidence perspective increasingly, being able to respond to the amount of digital evidence that is being used in criminal cases.

So the way in which we are doing that I think is important. So we are taking forward a design process that is putting users of the system front and centre in there. I am responsible with my team for designing the future service for criminal court and what we are seeking to do is incorporate those views of victims and witnesses right at the beginning of that, and doing that, as well, in collaboration with our criminal justice partners.

So we are starting that at the moment. It is a six year programme, we are about eighteen months in. A lot of the work that we have been doing so far has been for low level offences and trying to actually remove them from the service so that we can have a real proportionate and better response to more serious crimes. So we are just at the outset of designing how we will operate in the future, and we have set up a number of ways in which we do that. For example, we have got a victims and witnesses engagement group that we take design ideas to. So we say, how would this work? How would people that you represent and you support, how would they feel about these kind of options?

For example, we have already had discussions about how victims and witnesses respond to increasingly being able to give evidence remotely and by video and understanding that it is not as straightforward as assuming that everybody would want to do that; some people will not. Being able to have a responsive service to that is really critical. So that is some of the conversation we have already started.

We have also set up a good structure with our criminal justice partners so that we are co-designing because clearly we cannot just forge ahead and set up a system that does not work for other people. Underpinning all of that is what we call a common platform, a single digital platform for managing cases. I think the benefit of that is both for individual cases going through the system, being able to have shared information flowing so we are not having to repeat, people having to repeat questions, information getting lost between individuals. I think as well, something that we are talking about today is ability to be able to draw from that much better data across the system about what we are doing and the service we are providing. I think there is a huge opportunity there. At the moment we are operating across a whole plethora of different systems, and that, just as a foundation, I think is really critical.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor) (Co-Chair): In terms of the Victims Code of Practice, Claire's going to be doing a lot of work around this. I know everyone has signed up to this, but there is a lot of actions that will flow from today, and it is getting that commitment from everybody around not just reviewing the compliance, but how to actually make the improvements.

Jo Fiddian (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service): In terms of designing this service, it is going to take a long time. There is a huge amount of investment and work that we need to do, but we are really keen to look at what we can do pragmatically now as well. We have done a survey, for example, of all our victims and witnesses across the country, which we

have just completed so I do not have the outcome of that to share with you today, but just basic things around the facilities we provide. Are they suitable? Are they appropriate? Where we can make some tangible changes, we are looking to do that. So very happy to talk about some things we can do practically while we are designing for the future as well.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor) (Co-Chair): Just to move on a little bit --

AC Martin Hewitt (Metropolitan Police Service): What's the timeline for all of that work you've described, Jo? The reform programme.

Jo Fiddian (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service): It is a six year programme. So we are about eighteen months, so it is got about four or so more years. Yes.

AC Martin Hewitt (Metropolitan Police Service): I chair the London Criminal Justice Board and we have a victims and witnesses group which MOPAC chair for us as a sub-group and Claire is part of that group and others. We are having to do different things with different courts all over London, at the Magistrate and at the Crown level, which just makes it harder to get a seamless process, because we are one group and we are having to do slightly different processes and the different facilities, different access, and so on, which is one of the challenges I think we will continue to face for a while until we get to a much more standardised experience.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor) (Co-Chair): Absolutely, and there is also the issue about, and I know it is difficult in terms of making a statement about it, but there is the closure of the courts that we are certainly very worried about in terms of victims' experience and how just in journey times, ability to be there, and whether that is putting victims and witnesses off, and to have any decision being made, the victims and the victims experience being absolutely at the centre of decision making is incredibly important. So there is the digitisation, which is important, but there is also actually the closure programme and how that is going to impact on victims and witnesses. We need to see more of a focus on victim journeys and victim satisfaction on that as well.

Jo Fiddian (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service): I think it is a big challenge. We do need to invest in our estate. It does not operate well enough and we do not provide a consistent enough service. So all of that is part of the programme, absolutely.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): I was going to discuss it later, but it actually fits probably better here, but one of the key issues that we do hear about is obviously the late transfer of cases and Dr Paul Dawson is going to cover a bit about some data, looking on a two week period. Cases are being transferred with a day or no notice at all and the impact, obviously, on the Witness Care Units to then get the witnesses informed, the victims informed, and then the impact on the witnesses and the victims who have already done a familiarisation court at another court, and then on the morning they are moved somewhere else, or the day before they are moved somewhere else. So is that within the court reform programme to really address? Because obviously that is a critical issue.

Jo Fiddian (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service): Yes, absolutely. I think similarly to colleagues in probation is where we can look at individual cases and we can look at whether we did all of the things that we should have done and notified people appropriately and if, for

whatever reason, a change needs to happen, ultimately wanting to limit those occasions as far as we can. I think what we are lacking is the ability to look at what is happening at national level in terms of trends. So how often is that happening? Being able to monitor that is quite challenging, but I think, as I mentioned before, we are looking to develop and we have not finished the design of this, a completely new performance framework for the criminal courts.

Traditionally we look at waiting times, how long does something take to come to trial? Those are still important things, that is not to throw all that away, but actually, how we can incorporate things like victim satisfaction in a much more significant way into how we monitor our own performance. I think that kind of thing would, I am sure, play a part of that. We are just designing that now, so in a way a good opportunity for us to think about --

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Is that something you could join up with the Witness Care Unit? It is quite timely and costly for them to do a sort of two week trial looking at late transfer cases. Is that something you can work together on so we can monitor how often this is actually happening and look at why it is happening and what we can do to resolve it?

Jo Fiddian (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service): Yes, I am happy to look at that. Happy to get in touch with that.

Judith Baker (Citizens Advice Witness Service): From the Witness Service point of view, we would be very keen to be involved in that because we could actually, through our witness experience survey, be able to see what impact that late transfer has had on some of the satisfaction.

Claire Lindley (CPS): Sorry to interrupt, but we would also be interested in that piece of work, I think. It is not just a change of venue, it is also changes of date. So we have still got warned lists and floating trials for high harm cases. So as well as the transfer, it is also the shift of date. So we could perhaps wrap that up as well.

Jo Fiddian (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service): I'm really keen to look at that. I think case preparation is a big part of our future design so that, actually, the better we can prepare cases, the less likely, you have got to assume the less likely things would have to change and be shifted around at the last moment, which I absolutely understand is not --

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Something that we can take forward from this, because obviously looking at London, high volume of cases and we are looking at quite a number of cases being transferred and you have talked about the warned list in court of two to three weeks, which is impossible for a victim to actually live like that with that on hold for that amount of time. So is that something we can look at performance-wise and moving forward working together?

Jo Fiddian (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service): Absolutely, yes. We can have a look at that, particular London issues we can...

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor) (Co-Chair): Just to slightly shift in terms of looking at actual support around victims because the case study really did talk about the stress and the

impact on relationships and mental health, I am sure, as well. Bernadette, in your experience working with victims and their health needs and the different types of needs they have, what is your experience of the victims accessing support and care through their journey? We talked about the austerity and Martin also picked up on vulnerability and the ability of services to provide that care and support. From Victim Support's point of view, what does that look like?

Bernadette Keane (Victim Support): From our point of view, we would do an assessment when we get the referral from the police. If a mental health issue is picked up as part of that assessment, or it comes apparent at any point when we are supporting a victim, we would most commonly use IAPT to make referrals. Staff can do that on our client's behalf, so that is an online form and that is quite simple and it works quite well. In terms of accessing support for counselling services, it really depends on the borough. So some boroughs have specialist services that we can make quite quick referrals in to, so for example, Islington, Enfield and Haringey have an intercultural therapy centre which allows us to make referrals on clients' behalf. The waiting list is about six months.

We also can commission services as part of our funding from MOPAC and Multi Crime Service. We can commission up to six counselling sessions for victims, and of course, that can be done quite immediately. For more in depth or serious mental health concerns, it has to be done via the GP. So a service user would have to go to their GP. We can advocate on behalf of the person to their GP, but we are seeing waiting lists more and more of an issue, particularly in the recent terrorist attacks. It has been really, really difficult to get people access to services to try and prevent post-traumatic stress disorder. We have had lots of meetings about this, and I know that the NHS are in the process, and it is nearly done, of setting up the outreach and screen service. Given that Westminster was seven months ago and London Bridge four months ago, I think we are seeing that as a really problematic area. Obviously there is increased demand on services and there is also increased need. So it is a key concern.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor) (Co-Chair): Thank you very much. I mean, waiting lists of six months to be referred to support is a long time. If that is grown in other areas that's really concerning. What is the role of NHS England, then, in ensuring that victims care and support, the referral for the GP's, that's as quick as it can be and to make sure that there are those services available? I don't know whether it is Patricia or Martin that wants to take that up.

Patricia Cadden (NHS England): I can specifically talk about referrals from GP's and the maybe Martin can say a little bit more about the work that was done with Westminster and London Bridge and the impact that may have had.

With regards to GP's, the GP can make the referral, but as Bernadette was saying the referrals into the accessing psychological therapies teams across each of the boroughs are very long. Those waiting lists are very long simply because of the demand on those individuals who do not have severe and enduring mental illnesses, but who have generally common disorders. So the six crisis sessions that Victim Support offer obviously are a great holding position for people to be able to access, but does not really maybe give the victim the longer term support that they would need.

Services within the IAPT services are generally only up to about twenty sessions as a maximum, so again there might need to be some follow up work done. And the referral from IAPT would

need to go into other services. So yes, most certainly I think the NHS understands that there are gaps in the access and quick access to services available to victims. Certainly the mental health transformation team within the Healthy London Partnership are looking at what services can be offered in order to help quicken that access.

Martin White (NHS England): You want me to talk about the London Bridge response? I know the focus to that response has been about ensuring victims, wherever possible, access services in the normal way, but with a kind of tracking and monitoring holding response as well from the NHS. So where normal service pathways are not delivering for victims of these major events, that they are picked up and fast tracked into services. I know the Healthy London Partnership have been involved in developing a plan so if an event like that ever happens again, the Mental Health Trust in London will roll out this response as standard in future.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): I'm quite keen to pick up on what you said, Patricia, obviously about the more severe mental conditions. Obviously at the start with a victim of crime there is shock and trauma and the start of PTSD, but obviously early intervention is key at that point. If we wait as long as we are waiting then those conditions develop and get far worse and then they will have more strain on the services because that person's needing treatment for far longer than we --

Patricia Cadden (NHS England): That is right. Following a traumatic event it is advisable to wait for a period of time until the victim addresses their particular trauma needs in order for them to be able to assimilate what has been happening. So the recommendation is you would hope that you would make that referral following a traumatic event maybe four to six weeks afterwards. The IAPT service that has been referred to is the increasing access to psychological therapy service. Certainly, the target for NHS England and those services commissioned by local clinical commissioning groups is for 75% of individuals to be seen within six weeks, and for 95% of individuals to be seen within 18 weeks. Those targets are a challenge, given the challenge of the numbers of individuals coming through. So undoubtedly it is very much about the Healthy London Partnership trying to work with local clinical commissioning groups to improve their performance around service.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): So there is a kind of scope to join up more with Victim Services and NHS, referral pathways?

Patricia Cadden (NHS England): Yes. I think strategically when we talk about the pathway for the victim, it has been interesting for us to listen to some of those pathways and where some of the key attrition rates are. It would be very interesting to see where the NHS might be able to become involved at an earlier stage, potentially, or to fully understand what the pathways are back into community services for the individual in order for them to be alerted that there will be hopefully somebody coming into their service, and be able to access it. So I think the earlier the intervention for the NHS to be aware of that individual is better, certainly with regards to accessing actual community services going some way for the clinical commissioning groups to go around commissioning the amount of service to meet demand.

Bernadette Keane (Victim Support): A quick point around Grenfell. We have seen some really good developments there with the NHS working really closely with us for a screen and treat programme. It has not kicked off the ground yet, but I think the learning we are having

from the traumatic incidents, which unfortunately we have had a lot of in London, is leading to improvement in identifying victim pathways into therapy.

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): Actually my team has been leading on that on a national level, so perhaps I can just share some of the work that we have been doing there. Particularly, as you say Bernadette, after Grenfell and after London Bridge, Manchester, Westminster. My team has been working with NHS England to try to set out referral pathways on a national basis. So that looks at the timeframes in which someone accesses support through somewhere like Victim Support, through the support services that are funded either locally or on national level. Then when they get referred into the NHS and how they get referred, how long they stay in the NHS, and then when they might come out and access support services, those same support services again.

We, I think, are about to sign a protocol that sets all of these timeframes and pathways out for victims of terrorism and major incidents. We are talking with NHS England colleagues as to how that can be then rolled out for other victims. We are prioritising vulnerable victims in terms of potential roll out, but it is certainly something that we have been trying to grade at national level for some time. So I hope that is helpful. I can keep you updated on that.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): I was going to come on to ask you how you're working with health and how you are helping victims cope and recover, so it sounds like you are joining up on that protocol together?

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): Yes, absolutely. It is a joint government NHS England protocol. Actually, well, tri-part, I guess, because I know Victim Support have been incredibly involved in the terrorism and Grenfell support side of that as well.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): So that protocol is going to be signed --

- **Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice):** Imminently.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Imminently.

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): Yes. I am just back from leave, I am still catching up.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): But that is something you'll keep us updated on?

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): Absolutely.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor) (Co-Chair): What extra resources are going to go behind the protocol? Because a protocol is always welcome because you can then measure what is happening, and that is very important as a good signal, but if there aren't the resources, the protocol is great but it is not going to provide the actual support to the services that are needed.

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): We do not think from the support services side we need to extra resources to come in on that. I think probably the pinch point in the waiting times for NHS England services.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor) (Co-Chair): But waiting times are to do with the resources and the support, the actual --

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): Yes, the resources on NHS England. I am referring your question to my colleague.

Patricia Cadden (NHS England): Yes, that is right. As you said, with regards to, as we touched on in previous matters confidence around mental health, the mental health transformation programme led by the Healthy London Partnership within NHS England is looking at all of the waiting times in all of the boroughs, looking to see where those extra pieces of investment need to be targeted in order to best meet the demand within each of the local boroughs.

The community services are commissioned by the clinical commissioning groups, and NHS England plays a role in trying to co-ordinate and encourage clinical commissioning groups to meet the demand within the local area, and that is most certainly something that I would be more than happy to feedback on at future conferences around victims, as to where the transformation programme is now at.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): I assume that with this protocol that you'll be looking at resources as well because obviously there is an overstretch at the moment with what has happened with Grenfell and the terrorist attacks as well putting a lot of strain on services. So looking at how we cope with that, really, moving forward.

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): Absolutely. We have been working really closely with Bernadette and her team at Victim Support to make sure that resources are in place to be able to cope with the extra demand at the moment. We have been working with colleagues in Manchester as well to make sure that they have been able to cope with the demand post-Manchester attacks. What we are also doing is fundamentally reviewing our funding model at the moment for support services, particularly in light of the incidents that we have seen this year to see whether or not it has the kind of flex built into it that we need to be able to respond to these kind of incidents.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Is there a timeframe on that?

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): Yes. So the team is doing some scoping work at the moment, and I would hope to be able to, in November, give some more information about the direction of travel there. We are working up some options for ministers to consider at the moment.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor) (Co-Chair): You are discussing that with MOPAC aren't you? I hope you are discussing that with MOPAC as we are the commissioner of victim's services within London.

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): I have certainly discussed it with Sam (Cunningham) and Claire (Waxman).

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): I think it is clear obviously from the discussions that we have had that there is definitely further clarity needed around VCOP and the way it is been applied, so this review will really help focus our attentions on what we need to work on. Just very quickly, based on the issues that we have discussed, can anyone throw out what, from your organisation's perspective, would you say are real opportunities right now to really drive compliance and increase compliance? I know we have court reforms, and that is something we can look at, and identifying vulnerability, but is there anything else that can really help with this from your organisations?

Bernadette Keane (Victim Support): I think that Victim Support could have a more formal role in adhering to the Victims Code of Practice. So there are things that we could talk to the police about. We have had informal conversations about our staff having a role with the Victim Personal Statements, for example. Taking some pressure off the police, it might sit better with an organisation like ourselves.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Will you need extra resources for that? Because obviously that's more time there on the VPS --

Bernadette Keane (Victim Support): I would not have thought so, because if you have got a case worker and you are working closely with somebody, I think you will know how they are feeling and you will be meeting them regularly. So we would need to look at it, but it is something that I think we should look at.

Cdr Neil Jerome (Metropolitan Police Service): We know that under VCOP that taking a Victim Personal Statement is not a once and once only opportunity. We know that there is a continuing right there to provide that, but it may well be that if we do have somebody who is supporting the victim, they might actually be the best person to take that additionality of a Victim Personal Statement. With the right training and the right processes in place, clearly, but it may well be that that is another option that we can provide to victims.

Bernadette Keane (Victim Support): Obviously we do not get referred all victims, so obviously just the ones that we are working with.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Where you are obviously helping a lot of them as well with seeking compensation forms as well, falling into your area.

Bernadette Keane (Victim Support): Yes. That is one of our main roles.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): I wonder if that is something that could be looked at. You are potentially looking at the guidance on the scheme, whether they can do that a bit more with victims, because victims do struggle to fill out all those forms. So when going through the process --

Bernadette Keane (Victim Support): Obviously it is easier for us because we do them all the time, so we can take --

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): I am just thinking of those victims that do not come to you --

Bernadette Keane (Victim Support): That do not come to us, of course. Yes.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): You will pick them up and help them do that.

Bernadette Keane (Victim Support): Yes, that is certainly something that I can take away.

Judith Baker (Citizens Advice Witness Service): I do know that in some other parts of the country where there is an established restorative justice service, that the staff or volunteers working within that service quite often, where a victim does not necessarily want to take part in restorative justice, they have been trained for example in West Mercia to take the Victim Personal Statement for the police because they have heard the impact of the crime on the victim, and just because that victim does not necessarily want to meet face to face, they are actually in a really good position to take that.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Thank you for that.

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): I don't know if this is right, I just wanted to put this into a slightly national context if you don't mind.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): We're really short on time today.

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): Sure. Could I just say one thing? So obviously there is some really good practice in London at the moment and the statistics that you have around compliance with the code and knowledge of the code are actually way better than the national average, which is saying something about how poor the national average is. A piece of work that we are undertaking with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners at the moment is to try and gather information about compliance in each PCC area. So what we want to do with that information is to try and share some best practice with areas that perhaps are not doing so well in certain parts of compliance.

So I can feed that back to the group, and also just wanted to give a commitment to work very closely with you, Claire, and MOPAC on this piece of work, because I think it is really important.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Thank you.

Natasha Plummer (MOPAC): There are a couple of things that came out of that conversation. We talked, and particularly Claire you suggested this, but I think it is a very helpful suggestion that we do some end to end case analysis so that we can actually see where all of the key points are in terms of VCOP failings and compliance so that we can understand that. Martin, you alluded to, in that conversation, thinking about where might be some of the

key areas where we want to focus our efforts in that respect, and you kind of backed that up, Judith, in terms of thinking about the areas that make the greatest impact in terms of the victim experience and the journey. So we will look at that through the review.

There was also particular focus here on thinking about how you deal with the Victim Personal Statement, and looking also about other people other than just the police being able to take those, so we will take forward that work, and thinking also about Victim's Right to Review and whether or not we are informing victims enough of how they can do that and their entitlement to that, and kind of making that a reality in terms of the code.

There was also a commitment to look at the points around late notifications in respect of listings with cases, so that there is some analysis on that so that we can understand where that's going wrong and what is happening in respect of that and the impact on those victims in terms of changing to dates and locations for cases. So we can address that. That was a piece of work that we'll take forward between ourselves with the Metropolitan Police Service, Court Based Witness Service and also the Crown Prosecution Service so we can look at that across the piece.

Finally there was a commitment there looking at working with us on the code, particularly feeding into the national work that you are doing, Catherine. I think that was everything.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Going into the police satisfaction.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor) (Co-Chair): Yes, we will just have to quickly squeeze this part. So just quickly Paul is going to take us through satisfaction with the police and overall criminal justice service. The compliance is one, but actually it is the outcomes that we are looking for, really.

Paul Dawson (MOPAC): I will try to do this as quickly as I can. So a few occasions already in the meeting mentioned the user satisfaction survey, and that is a wonderful tool that we have that interviews 13,000 victims a year in some key crime types. We can use that for a whole host of purposes. We can use that, for example, to monitor victim satisfaction and also do much richer analysis into the drivers of that satisfaction, so we can try and impact change and performance.

On the slide here you can just see that, really, over the last 15 months overall satisfaction has been on a slow decline. It kind of peaked a little bit around March and then dropped again. Actually, we have got that trend going back for ten years, so we can look at it from that. We have seen increase in the past when the Metropolitan Police Service rolled our post-victim care. It went up and it had a level of stability, and it is really started to come down in the last year.

One of the main strengths in the survey is analytics that we can delve into. So we can look at borough variations, top versus bottom borough. We can look at the main drivers of satisfaction. We can look at some of the inequality. So for example, we know that individuals with mental health, victims with mental health are less satisfied, regardless of crime type. We know that there are inequalities around BAME sections for police satisfaction, so we see a wide BAME gap. So we can really use it in that level of depth and detail to really drive insights and really hand that so the Metropolitan Police Service can drive improvement.

The aspect of that for the next slide is that we have such rich information on the police satisfaction and the victim, we don't necessarily have the same kind of in-depth, robust information for the whole journey. So there is a national kind of Crown Prosecution Service victim and witness survey. It is really good, but it is a national survey, and we look at the London sample, it is fairly small. What we are really keen to do at MOPAC, with our partners really develop a new survey that compliments that that's kind of, rather than a one off snapshot every few years, have the USS as a continuous survey. It will give us information at that local level and really enable the kind of insights we have on the USS, but throughout the entire journey.

Then very briefly, just as Claire mentioned earlier, we did a really quick piece of analysis looking at the two most recent weeks of data from witness care units arounds Crown Court listings. Really, just within the last two weeks we have had twelve cases that were moved with literally very, very little notice. It was zero day, one or two days' notice. I had three of those twelve moved on the same day. In total there are 53 witnesses that were impacted upon those late changes. One included a child victim. So it really just shows the kind of impact that that has on victims.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor) (Co-Chair): Thanks a lot Paul. I know you have picked up on training and in terms of victim satisfaction. That will take time to actually have an outcome. Get a formal end to victim satisfaction for the police. How are you intending to try and move that in the short term? And also there is the disparities between the boroughs, isn't there?

Cdr Neil Jerome (Metropolitan Police Service): Three quarters of victims are either satisfied or very satisfied with the service that they've received. We want to get better than that, clearly we do. The national context is that nationally the rate that things have moved forward in terms of satisfaction, the rest of the country is declining faster than us. Clearly we are not happy with that. We want to get better, and we want more than three quarters of victims to be satisfied with the service that they receive from us.

So we have talked about training, but in addition we know that through the research that restorative justice and the offering of restorative justice to victims has a significant improvement in terms of their victim experience. So last month we launched restorative justice across all of the boroughs across London. Previously that was being trialled in a small number of boroughs, so we believe that will iron out some of those inconsistencies across the 32 boroughs, because it is rolling out pan-London. That will all be complete in terms of the training for that by the end of this calendar year.

With the work that we have also already discussed in terms of Victim Personal Statements, we know that that will also have a significant impact in terms of the victim satisfaction as well. So the two measures of restorative justice and improving Victim Personal Statements compliance will have a significant, proportionate impact in terms of that overall victim satisfaction.

AC Martin Hewitt (Metropolitan Police Service): I think what I would say in context as well, I mean those figures sit and are driven by a whole range of different factors. I think it is interesting when you look at the list of the boroughs the demographic breakdown when you go left to right. As you know very well, Sophie, we have got real issues in particularly East London

in terms of managing a demand where the demand is dramatically higher than it is in other parts. So there is a lot there that I think plays into broader issues around the way that we are able to deliver our service against the demand. The other thing that is not necessarily there is the disproportionality element with different communities, both in terms of confidence and satisfaction that we are all aware of, and obviously we do lots to try and deal with. I think it is just all got to be seen in that, and try and get behind those figures to understand all the things. Because it is not just about user satisfaction in Newham, it is about a whole range of other challenges. And I only pick that one because it is on the right-hand side and I'm going there straight after here.

In Newham, there is just such a complex range of challenges in terms of the borough generally, but policing that borough, and we have to understand that in that context. I think the things that Neil's talked about, just raising those, and where you look at the different lines, I'm really pleased that we are still in high eighties around treatment, around accessibility, and what we are failing at are the things that we talked about VCOP, quite frankly, is keeping people aware, keeping people updated in what is happening in cases. We have just got to keep driving in process terms and the kind of cultural stuff as much as we can around that. There are some other things going on there that we need to see this in that context.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): I think obviously you've picked up in the last section around that single point of contact, but there is also, what I'm picking up is that relationship or interaction for the police and the Crown Prosecution Service and how that follows through as well, especially around VPS, Victims' Rights to Review. Special measures as well, provision of special measures, because those drive victim satisfaction. Often it is down to you to identify that and then refer them on to witness care and then to Crown Prosecution Service, and then you being able to pick that up. You picked up in the last section that you are not always very good, the Crown Prosecution Service, at following up, keeping on with the police to give you that. So how can we kind of follow that through so it is a lot more seamless? Because obviously that would help victim satisfaction, that communication between your agencies.

Claire Lindley (CPS): I think it is the same issue as the description in relation to the Victim Personal Statement, it is about us having a better interface with the police and asking for issues such as special measures and the like. So it is just about that relationship between the police and the Crown Prosecution Service, I think. I don't know what Jo was saying, really, about the kind of national picture in terms of a common platform and the like. It may well be, I know it is kind of tomorrow and longer term, that once there is one digital platform we will be able to just go in and get that information, rather than this sort of linear things that we have got at the moment of asking each agency, which is where we perhaps fall down a little bit. So that might assist.

Jo Fiddian (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service): Also looking at how we can use that platform to notify agencies and notify individuals of updates, if they want to be notified in that way. That is the kind of functionality that we will be able to build, which is fantastic.

Claire Lindley (CPS): Issues such as special measures, not only, obviously, assist victim satisfaction, clearly they do, but they also strengthen our case. We are more likely to get a

conviction if there is special measures that a victim is comfortable with. So we are shooting ourselves in the foot as well as the victim.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Could you make a commitment around that on really focusing on those areas of working more collaboratively together to improve that?

I want to really come to Bernadette because we are actually really short on time. So Bernadette if you can just, from your own experience in Victims Services, draw out some key areas of victim cases that will really highlight to us the satisfaction?

Bernadette Keane (Victim Support): For us there is three key areas; effective communication, the culture of victim care, and quality and consistency of the service. A lot of this has already been mentioned by all of you today.

So effective communication, it is just being kept up-to-date from the police. So obviously you could be pursuing your investigations, but if you don't keep the victims informed they are not sure what's going. That's just an obvious one, but victims tell us they perceive it as a lack of care if they don't get the updates from yourselves, and it can sometimes make victims disengage from the criminal justice process.

I did have some quotes, because I think they are really important. Aurelia's father was killed, she was supported by us, the Metropolitan Police Service, and the Crown Prosecution Service and she said, "It is the lack of communication that is the problem. Eight months later, I still don't know if the case will go to trial. The police keep on saying it is down to the CPS. I just want them to let us know what is happening and be honest, just to hear that they actually care about us and actually tell us what is or isn't happening." Just to put that in contact, I am sure we would all agree.

The second one is the culture of victims care. So VCOP says that victims should be treated in a respectful, sensitive and tailored manner. What victims tell us, it is not the way the police deal with the case, it is sometimes the tone and manner of the police. I know you have got a lot to do, it is the softer skills that victims say is really important for him. They also say that they do not always feel that they are believed and that that is a real key concern, and we know that it stops victims reporting again in the future. Also under the culture of victim care, we know that not all victims are referred to support processes. Some people tell us when they come through other ways, so for example through the web or through our live chat, that the support service was not mentioned to them. So that is just a thing that comes up.

VCOP is a complete key drive, and we have covered that of victim care. We know that the more entitlements that victims receive, the more satisfied they are. So I really think that is the key driver for all of us, how we meet VCOP.

The third thing that victims tell us is really important is the quality and consistency of the service, and obviously that is really hard because there is all of us in the room with all of our different agencies and like lots of you said, how we all work together, and how we all work in a more joined up way, which at the moment I do not think we do. So that is a key thing. Obviously if a victim is dissatisfied with one part of the service, it impacts on all of our service.

So just the little points under quality and consistency that victims tell us, the investigation itself. That if the investigation is stopped or the victim feels that the investigation is not being pursued properly is quite a key concern for victims. Waiting times to get to court, that is a key issue as you can imagine. Special measures, people who get special measures really speak positively about it, but we know it is patchy and not everyone is offered special measures. Independent support, having advocacy through the system, whether it is through Victim Support or Citizens Advice, Witness Service, we know that that is really important to victims.

And compensation is the final one. So there are two different types. The criminal injuries compensation scheme and court orders, and we get lots of concerns raised about the time it takes. It comes in stages and it stops the victim from moving on, the way that process is handled.

So I am just going to say this little bit at the end because I think this is quite a powerful sentence. So the goodwill and cooperation of victims and witnesses of crimes is crucial to the smooth running of the criminal justice system. The process is dependent on them to report crime, provide statements, give evidence in court, and without their assistance it would not function and it would be incapable of carrying out its primary duties of protecting the public and bringing offenders to justice. So the greater support we give to our victims, the better outcomes we are going to have for all of us.

I did have another case study but I think we have not got time, so I will leave it.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): I think the same sort of themes are coming out, and obviously the key thing that you're highlighting, that we have been highlighting is that communication and that point of contact and how we integrate services so we can provide that single point of contact. So I think that is really something we need to take as hopefully a commitment from all of you moving forward of how we really drive that, so that victims are not pushed from pillar to post and have so many different people within agencies to deal with, which is overwhelming. They get conflicting information as well, so I think we can take something from that.

I just wanted to pick up very quickly on the court ordered compensation. Again, is that something that you will be looking at? That is something I've heard for years from victims, that they get court awarded compensation, sometimes in lieu of a prison sentence that is given, and yet they never receive payments or payments are patchy. So that is their justice and that is something that needs to be enforced.

Jo Fiddian (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service): I think outcomes delivering on those and working with our partners to make sure that is done. That is something that we can -

Bernadette Keane (Victim Support): What we would like to see at Victim Support is that that money is paid upfront, because what happens now is the money has to be got off the offender, and that is why it can be £5 a month over two years. So yes, we would like to see the change and that courts give the compensation and they claim it back.

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): That policy sits within my team. Yes, so we can have a conversation around that.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): We have got people even after fourteen years still waiting for compensation to be paid out. Because means testing's back they can no longer pay it. So there is work we need to carry forward on that.

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): I am happy to do that.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Brilliant, thank you. Judith, if I can come to you very quickly. In addition we have looked at VCOP compliance and taken into account Bernadette's view and the Victim Support view. What do you think can be done to improve victim satisfaction? In your view, might there be some benefit for victims if we move to a regionally commissioned model as opposed to a national model?

Judith Baker (Citizens Advice Witness Service): I think in relation to measuring victim satisfaction, the first thing we have got to do is it sounds like we are all measuring different bits of it in different ways and surveying victims and witnesses at different points. So I think probably the first thing would be to agree what we measure, how we measure it and collaborate. In relation to national versus regional, for me it is about making sure we have commitment of the right amount of resource, not necessarily whether it is national or regional. Certainly from the Witness Service perspective, I can provide performance information and data that is around London and the courts. If we can all do that, then we can have that focus on London and service improvements.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): I think what you have said the survey is a really important thing. It is something that only a couple of months into the role, I am listening to all the different surveys that you're doing and nobody is really sharing that information, or sharing it regularly enough. So is that something that we could maybe look at that we work on from the same page, obviously taking into account what you need from your organisation's perspective, but also looking at how many times victims are surveyed as well. I do not know, Paul, if that is something we can work on together.

MOPAC's obviously going to be conducting a needs assessment as well, so we will be trying to identify in detail what the gaps are within the criminal justice system, and as Paul said with his criminal justice survey as well, which will pick up a lot more areas than we currently know.

Patricia, Martin, can I come to you on how can we make better use of the knowledge of the impact of trauma on a victim? Especially at times when they are giving evidence to the police or in the court room, so that they are getting the right victim care provided at that time to support them and help them through those processes?

Obviously you will know the impact of trauma on their memory and how it affects them at the time they are giving evidence to the police, which is not always picked up by the police. Or in the court room, how they come across when they are still in a state of trauma when they are not getting the right support. So what can be done to make sure that information that you know, the impact of trauma, is filtered through to other agencies? Especially in the court, so judiciary and the police to really recognise that?

Patricia Cadden (NHS England): I think with regard to accessing services, undoubtedly at the right time, not too early, and certainly trying to look at the ambition for the National Health Service and trying to get improved access to services. Alongside that access, I think just covering some of the key points that have been raised already around how agencies collaborate with each other, and they try to have more integrated pathways, and maybe some of the work that you are planning to do and more of these discussions that happen over time, will think about along the victim pathway where we can get that integration in a much more effective way in order to manage the individual and best support the individual through the process. Because in order to get a better result at the end of it, you have to have someone who feels fully supported by each of the agencies, but most importantly that their emotional wellbeing is cared for at the right time, and for the time up until that particular criminal justice trial, or whatever it might be.

We might not get that from the National Health Service, but certainly for the time that they are involved with the National Health Service that they are able to identify their outcomes in what they want and that service is then delivered to them. The outcomes of that with the individual is about them having greater self-esteem, being able to feel much more in control of the process. I think that that is not just, as we said earlier, the ambition of one agency, but of a collection of agencies working with that individual.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Victims will often go to their GP and so we talked about the referral pathways from the victim support services to health. What is it like the other way? They are coming into their GP, are GP's aware of what's available for victims in their areas and what support services they can refer them to?

Patricia Cadden (NHS England):

That is right, and I think with regard to the mental health delivery plan that is being managed by Healthy London Partnership, the mental health delivery panel looks at what services need to be available to GP's in order to support GP's and walk-in centres and GP front end services, in accident and emergency departments as to what is available within a local community. Now, I think we have to look at what is available at a GP practice first, because a lot of victims might not want to enter into mental health services. So what can we deliver at a primary care service and what should be there? Then when somebody needs longer term care, that the referral is then there for them in order for them to get that care that they need.

So I think the ambition of the mental health delivery plan looks at each of the levels of care and a step care approach as to whether to escalate, whether someone is becoming more and more unwell, and when to de-escalate from services when that person feels more in control and is going through their recovery.

So I think what we maybe need to do at future meetings is to talk through some of that pathway.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): I think it would be really useful, because I am going to come over to Martin and Neil on that, because obviously victims will come to the GP and it is up to the GP to pick that up and identify the needs of that victim and if and where they can refer them to, but there is a reticence with the victim to obviously,

maybe, accessing mental health support, because victims are very concerned that if they seek help for the trauma or mental health symptoms that they have got a result of the crime, it is being used against them by the police, or in the courts, discrediting them, which we have often seen in a court room using their mental health against them. So there is a real reticence for victims, a lack of confidence, really, to access the right support or mental health treatments in case it is used. So how can we better safeguard that information and safeguard them in those processes?

AC Martin Hewitt (Metropolitan Police Service): That is not particularly a phenomenon I was familiar with, the one you have described about it being used --

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): It is a really key issue that we have got from victims. I have seen cases of rape victims who have had a mental health history before and then the police and the Crown Prosecution Service saying they have to disclose their past mental health history in a court room, even though it is not applicable. It should not be relevant in that trial, but they are having to. And I have seen lots of cases like that, and then there is obviously other cases where they are suffering from PTSD or whatever in response to the crime, but very fearful for getting treatment, because very aware that that can also be used by defence when in the court room.

So that is there and out there on the ground, on the front like really, with victims. So that is something I am hoping we can try and work on, and how we can give the victims the confidence that that information is safeguarded.

I mean, it is true, isn't it, you have to disclose because there is the fear that the defence will use it?

Claire Lindley (CPS): Yes. In law, we would have to disclose any material that undermines the prosecution case, or potentially assists the defence case. So it is on a case by case --

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Why would a past mental health --

Claire Lindley (CPS): I was just about to say, it is on a case by case basis. We certainly would not want to discourage anybody from having any form of counselling or assistance, but we cannot promise that it will not be disclosed, because it does depend on the facts of the case, but the fact that someone is receiving counselling, to my mind, and I know it depends on the case, but to my mind it would not automatically be disclosed. You would have to apply the disclosure tests to a particular case. If there has been a pre-existing mental health issue before the crime took place, again, case by case basis, but that is more likely to be served under the law. But we have to --

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): I have seen it on a number of surveys that do the advocacy service around a lot of victims having to disclose past mental health history.

Claire Lindley (CPS): They would certainly have to reveal it to the police, and the police would be under a duty to reveal it to us. Whether it is actually disclosed to the defence or not is

a different legal test. Then whether it is actually used in open court is another legal test. So there is lots of different stages with different bits of the law applied to it.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Is that where we do a lot more learning around mental health and victims, so that, from your perspective in a case that is being prosecuted, there could be some protection of the victim in that environment so it is not used to discredit them or say, "They have had coaching because they have accessed counselling," or whatever? Also from the police side as well.

Natasha Plummer (MOPAC): I was going to ask, who explains all that to the victim? Because I do not think victims understand that, what the test is or --

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): They get a real shock sometimes that it is brought up and it is used against them. I think these are really important issues, especially around victim satisfaction, because if they go through that process and then that is used against them, you can see that even if you have done great jobs, your different organisations, that happens to them in the court room then we are looking at --

AC Martin Hewitt (Metropolitan Police Service): I think certainly in sexual offending, there is another hour and a half session of all the issues that disadvantage the victims in sexual offending, and that clearly is what you have described as part of it. As Claire said, if the defence statement is pulling a particular, then we are going to be under an obligation around disclosure, but there are a whole range of inequalities for victims, in particularly sexual offence cases that we do work very closely and very hard with. The one around coaching, if you have accessed some sort of therapeutic services, that is another issue. So all of those things are being taken forward, but I just think there are some much broader issues about the way that those crimes are heard, really.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Is it something that we could look at? Do some deep dive into some cases and really pull out and extract the issues that victims are facing if they are wanting to access --

Claire Lindley (CPS): More than happy to do that, but we certainly do not want to discourage people having the assistance that they need, because to me that is paramount. Legally we cannot promise that it will not be served on the defence. It depends on the issues that the defence raise.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Again, I think it is a case of that is where the organisations working together with National Health Service England and really looking at this issue of trauma on victims and understanding how to safeguard them and protect them when defence want to use it. Because it is an issue. It is something that is an issue I think we should look to take forward and maybe do some deep dives into some cases.

Patricia Cadden (NHS England): That would be very interesting for us to do with regard to the ISVA work that ISVA's that we have within our sexual violence services, undoubtedly, just to see what impact it is had on the victim, and also what the ISVA needs to do in order to help maintain someone's position as they go through the criminal justice service.

Jo Fiddian (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service):

It is just reminding me, as well, of the importance of rolling out the provisions for pre-recorded cross examination, which links in with motivation. Catherine leads for that in Ministry of Justice and we are leading on the implementation of that with partners across the country, how that can really help with setting some parameters around that cross-examination and being able to do that in a timely way, that enables that to be lobbed down and used whenever it is necessary and enable that person to move on and access treatments where some of the coaching issues are relevant.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): I think we have all acknowledged that there is still a lot of work to do around victim satisfaction, and also we cannot all be experts in victim care in our organisations. Is that something that we can all just work together to make sure that we are getting the right information to victims so they can access the right type of support to help them through the journey and work together on that?

Just very quickly on the court reform, I know you have mentioned it. Around flexible courts and court closures, you are engaging with victims, you said, you are hearing from victims views around those issues?

Jo Fiddian (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service):

Yes, absolutely. We are looking to test some different opening hours, for example, those sort of flexibilities and what benefits that could bring, and evaluating that very healthily. And that is exactly the kind of design of that we will be going through our victim and witness engagement group, and discussing that with them.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): Thank you.

Natasha Plummer (MOPAC): Just to recap, so key actions out of that section of the conversation. Obviously there is a real kind of relationship between the VCOP compliance and victim satisfaction conversation we have had, so there is lots of parallel issues arising from both of those. Specifically we have agreed to do a deep dive on cases where mental health disclosure may be an issue, so we can have a look at some of those issues in that process and doing that with both the Metropolitan Police Service, Crown Prosecution Service and National Health Service England, to think about ISVA's particularly in that case. Also looking at processes around court compensation and how that works in terms of getting victim compensated through the system, particularly a piece of work that's happening through the Ministry of Justice and linking that up with us in MOPAC.

We have also got the commitment to look at the survey processes, so already we have been taking boards of work across the system, looking at developing a cross-Criminal Justice System survey, but continuing in that work and looking at what surveys are happening already, and what data that provide to feed into our needs assessment work in our compliance review. Also looking at the pathways into and out of health and thinking about how you join you up with some of the work the London Healthy partnership is already conducting in that space and taking that forward.

Claire Waxman (Victims Commissioner for London) (Co-Chair): We have managed to make it back on track, so that is great. Just before I close, is there anything anyone else wants

to add in around what we have talked about today? All right. Thank you so much for your valuable contributions. As I said, this really is a very short meeting and it has raised a lot of issues, and this really is the first of many meetings I hope we will have together, and further discussions. There is a lot of good work that we will be looking at, and I think what Catherine mentioned as well, looking at things nationally, seeing what we can take from good practice and what we can adopt here in London. We have obviously got a much harder job here with high volumes and very complex needs of victims that we need to be addressing.

I really want to thank the victims, there is a number of victims that obviously have given us the material for the discussions for today, and obviously for the cases that we have heard through Bernadette and obviously the case that we have had here. That is really important, it is the victim's voice. It is all very well, we think processes work, we set things up, protocols, but what is actually happening on the ground is the most important thing, and making sure that we really listen to that victim's voice and it is brought to the fore, and we are responding to it as well.

There is a renewed focus, obviously, on victims through the Mayor, through the Deputy Mayor and through my role, and taking forward a lot of work, the VCOP compliance review. So again, working with all of you and I am pleased to have all your commitment on that as well. The needs assessment, and to understand the needs of victims, not just with regards to the police, but through the entire journey, and understanding the picture there as well, and looking at how we can integrate services to create the single point of contact and really help that communication that victims desperately need.

We will be working closely with the London Crime Reduction board and the London Criminal Justice board as well, as I said, to collectively bring that victim's voice to the fore and ensure that any fundamental changes we propose and we make is really taking victims voice, and listening to the victim's voice, and it is reflected in those changes. I think the most important thing we can all agree on is that we want victims to come forward, and we want them to be able to engage in a far more effective and seamless process. Not one that re-traumatises them and re-victimises them, but one that really supports them and meets their needs and helps them through that process so they can cope and recover and survive, because that's what ultimately I think we all agree we want for victims.

So thank you. Thank you so much for your contributions.