

Thematic Briefing

Putting Victims First

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1.0 Background / Context

- 1.1 Putting Victims First is the Force strategy, ensuring scrutiny and improvements to our response to supporting victims, with the commitment being to ensure victims are at the heart of everything we do and that we help victims of crime and anti-social behaviour to cope and recover.
- 1.2 Recognising that each victim of crime and anti-social behaviour has individual needs, there are many support services that exist across the county, within Lincolnshire Police, Victim Lincs, and with specialist partner agencies. It is recognised that there are many complexities within the Criminal Justice System and supporting victims of crime and anti-social behaviour throughout their journey needs to account for the diverse needs of any victim and the nature of the incident that they have been subjected to.
- 1.3 Lincolnshire Police is constantly seeking to ensure the needs of victims are met and that the service provided is the best possible.

2.0 Developments over last 6-12 months

- 2.1 The victim performance framework has continued to evolve to allow improved scrutiny of how we are supporting victims. Challenges exist in the interpretation of data within the force systems, however developments in this area are continuing with identified technical solutions and clearer identification of the measurements to be made. In supporting this work we are engaged with our regional and national working groups to understand the performance reporting requirements and how these can be incorporated to improve our overall interaction and support for victims. Force performance meetings are tracking victim satisfaction utilising both quantitative and qualitative information and feedback. More emphasis has been placed on the feedback received from victim surveys to share good practice and address areas of concern with individual officers, feeding into wider organisational learning and development.
- 2.2 The implementation of QLIK, as a business intelligence tool, for the force has produced a dashboard for all staff, demonstrating compliance with their updates to victims. This information is now being used for individual and management oversight.
- 2.3 A unique opportunity that has previously been reported on was where a victim experience has been captured through "Sarah's Story". This is a personal account provided by a survivor

of serious sexual assault, captured into a video. This has continued to be shared across the whole force to aid understanding of the needs of victims and the learning from this case. New recruits have this incorporated into their training alongside their Putting Victims First training to ensure we are influencing the behaviours of our staff, with this being identified as a particular opportunity due to the current uplift of police officers and the number of new recruits joining Lincolnshire Police.

- 2.4 Focussed training on Putting Victims First and the Victims Code of Practice have been presented to all front-line supervisors and tutors across the force to ensure understanding of their role and responsibility in this area. This is a continuation of messaging and inputs to all staff throughout this period.
- 2.5 Developments within restorative justice have been made to communicate the benefits to all staff, whilst seeking opportunities to proactively identify suitable cases for this victim intervention. Restorative justice provides vital opportunity for victims to have closure from any ordeal they have suffered and developments between the witness care unit and the Integrated Offender Management team have seen increased cases being identified and referred for restorative justice conferences to be held.
- 2.6 Vulnerable victims are being better supported using Video Recorded Interviews. This follows renewed national guidance, and has been positively adopted within the Protecting Vulnerable Persons Unit for victims of Serious Sexual Offences, meaning victims do not have to routinely relive their experience. This is currently being evaluated at a national level to see if it can be introduced for other crime types (such as Domestic Abuse), although there is concern that this has the potential to create additional demand pressures due to the time taken to complete these and the additional work involved and we do not want to inadvertently diminish the service we strive to provide.
- 2.7 Following the COVID pandemic there has been a significant backlog within the Courts. Work has been taken with our partners to overcome this and move cases through quicker, however there have been further challenges following a recent barristers strike. The impact of this is that there are continuing delays in courts during this time, meaning victims are not seeing justice in a timely manner. This is being monitored through oversight at the Criminal Justice Board, with the witness care unit working extremely hard to manage victims and their

personal needs and expectations. To support this issue further funding has been secured to introduce an additional staff member within the witness care unit, meaning at this time they are still able to meet this change in demand.

2.8 Enhancing the opportunity to support victims through the Crime Justice System, a special measures advocate, has been introduced into the witness care unit. This role has been developed to highlight cases where special measures could add value in a case for victims and witnesses to use at court, providing improved support for people where possible.

2.9 Ensuring that we can evaluate our service to victims we continuing to survey a sample of victims regarding their satisfaction. This is completed by a third-party provider on behalf of Lincolnshire Police and provides valuable insights into the service provided. Although providing a constant measure it is identified that the sample size and return rate for these surveys is limited. Meetings have been held with the provider to understand some of the limitations that they have and how we can work together to improve the response rate, whilst also enabling an internal review of how victim insights are obtained in a way that can add significant value and inform how we can truly make improvements to our victim engagement. The current process remains in place whilst new developments are worked through to ensure a continued measure, recognising any change will likely take considerable time to achieve.

2.10 A new Victims Bill has been released in a draft format from central Government. This details 12 rights of entitlement (listed at 6.2) for all victims of crime and how they can expect to be treated and what information they can have access to. Developments have been made to ensure that there is compliance with these rights for Lincolnshire Police, whilst ensuring that we improve our victim service as well as demonstrating compliance.

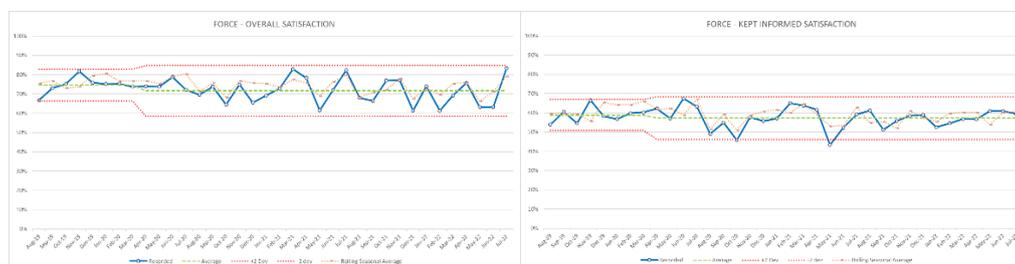
3.0 Current Position / Performance (where applicable)

3.1 Whilst performance metrics are being developed to ensure we can monitor compliance with all the requirements under the Victims Bill, the main measures have continued to be those of user satisfaction through the surveying of victims. The below are demonstrating the force satisfaction and how this splits between the East and West of the county. With the low level of respondents over recent months this has led to more fluctuation than normal, however there remains a consistent rate within our variances of satisfaction when compared to the rolling previous 12 months. The area of focus from this data is to ensure that victims are being

kept informed according to their requirements and expectations, which remains lower than we would like to see.

User Satisfaction									
Local Policing Team Area	Last 3 months			Last Year	Comparison			Statistical	
	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Jul-21	This Year Avg	Last Year Avg	% Change	Trend	Within Variance
Overall Force Satisfaction	63.20%	63.20%	83.30%	82.30%	70.01%	72.28%	-2.28%	↓	✓
East Overall	69.60%	69.60%	80.00%	80.60%	72.44%	69.28%	3.17%	↓	✓
West Overall	63.00%	63.00%	76.50%	84.20%	68.87%	76.08%	-7.21%	↓	✓
Kept Informed Force Satisfaction	60.90%	60.90%	59.50%	59.20%	57.28%	55.43%	1.86%	↓	✓
East Kept Informed	56.50%	56.50%	73.30%	62.10%	57.13%	54.85%	2.28%	↓	✓
West Kept Informed	69.20%	69.20%	47.10%	52.60%	58.66%	56.28%	2.37%	↓	✓

NB June survey data is not available, May survey data has been used as a proxy



3.2 Future developments of performance monitoring include complaints data relating to victims of crime, victim care contracts (contact agreement) complied with for both creation and adherence to them, referral to support services, victim right to review requests made and whether these are deemed to be upheld. Whilst this data exists in different formats, it is not readily identifiable which is why further work is ongoing to support automation and allow easy interpretation and tracking.

4.0 Forward look 6-12 months

4.1 We will continue with our current surveying arrangements, given there is renewed emphasis placed on the requirement to continue surveying victims in relation to Domestic Abuse, Stalking, and non-Domestic Abuse Stalking and harassment from central Government. Our third-party provider has the capability currently to manage these surveys with appropriate risk factors in place and safeguarding considerations. Scoping is to be carried out to see how we can enhance the User insights feedback and understanding to support developments through introducing an enhanced inhouse scrutiny. This is to be considered through our Force Priority Based Budgeting process to see whether there is opportunity to develop a

coordination post, although this will need consideration against other priorities and needs across Lincolnshire Police.

- 4.2 Technical solutions are being scoped through our force IT systems (Pronto and NICHE) to support how victim support information is shared to victims, automating processes and ensuring victims receive access to support services from the outset. Further scoping is being carried out to establish whether text messaging can be used to seek user feedback at the point of contact with Lincolnshire Police. This is identified as being used effectively in other force areas, however it needs to be established how useful the information has been and how this can be managed to ensure any risk against victims is mitigated, whilst considering the costs and feasibility. The final part in scope is whether a separate survey can be pushed out to victims at the point investigations are closed. This is to be considered with the same safeguards, but to ensure our surveying can be enhanced and drive improvements.
- 4.3 Following the introduction of the Victims Bill and the enforcement of Victim's Rights, performance metrics are being established to aid the tracking of individual, team, department, and force compliance. Some of these are being designed as part of the technical solutions, with other parts to be monitored through an enhanced performance framework being established for the Putting Victims First Delivery Group.
- 4.4 National liaison and engagement is to continue to help inform and implement the Ministry of Justice performance framework.
- 4.5 Restorative justice is to continue to be developed to proactively look at cases being managed within Neighbourhood Policing Teams and cases that have been dealt with through out of court disposals (such as cautions).
- 5.0 Issues of Exception – Opportunities / Risks**
- 5.1 Opportunities exist for improvements of how feedback from victims and service users can be captured in a more timely and informed manner that will add value and enhance opportunities to be more fleet of foot to tackle issues.
- 5.2 The introduction of the Victims Bill and the detailing of victim's rights creates a risk if we do not adhere to these and the negative impact this will have on Lincolnshire Police, however

these rights support the previous Victim Codes of Practice expectations, so the ability to reinforce the importance of compliance with our workforce and to track individual compliance is an opportunity.

5.3 Challenges within the Criminal Justice System that directly affect victims and their overall experience are a significant risk. National, regional, and local reporting of inadequacies in this area are continuing and impact on victim confidence in reporting and seeking the support they need to help them cope and recover. Our witness care unit continue to support these victims and positive news stories are being shared in order to try and maintain confidence and that we remain victim focused throughout.

5.4 If a mandate is to be made that more victims must be video interviewed for court this will create pressures for specialist teams and support services in trying to meet this demand. It is a more involved process than we have operated as a service to date and could lead to further delays and a virtual bottle neck for victims. Further assessments will be made as more information becomes available.

5.5 An ongoing risk for Lincolnshire is that the funding from central Government for county victim services is still lower than needed. This is constantly under review within the OPCC to explore opportunities and make enhancements through other funding opportunities wherever possible.

6.0 Key Public Messages

6.1 Supporting victim's needs is important and remains a force priority. Lincolnshire Police are committed to providing the best service possible to help victims cope and recover, with victims being at the heart of everything that we do.

6.2 There is a Victims Bill being introduced that entitles victims to the following:

- Right 1 - To be able to understand and to be understood
- Right 2 - To have the details of the crime recorded without unjustified delay
- Right 3 - To be provided with information when reporting the crime
- Right 4 - To be referred to services that support victims and have services and support tailored to your needs
- Right 5 - To be provided with information about compensation

- Right 6 - To be provided with information about the investigation and prosecution
- Right 7 - To make a Victim Personal Statement
- Right 8 – To be given information about the trial, trial process and your role as a witness
- Right 9 – To be given information about the outcome of the case and any appeals
- Right 10 – To be paid expenses and have property returned
- Right 11 – To be given information about the offender following a conviction
- Right 12 - To make a complaint about your Rights not being met

6.3 If anyone needs support as a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour, or are trying to support somebody else who has been, that they can access all the necessary information through the Victim Lincs website [Victim Services and Information \(lincolnshire-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.lincolnshire-pcc.gov.uk/victim-services-and-information)

6.4 Constant improvements are being made to our victim services to ensure Lincolnshire Police, with our partners, have the right scrutiny in place to test our practices and processes and to make the necessary adjustments.

6.5 We recognise there are challenges within the Criminal Justice System but this should not stop people from reporting crime and anti-social behaviour and that we will ensure they are given the best service possible and we are committed to continuing to support victims.