



**ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLES OF
NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK**

PAPER NO: NS16/1

**SUBMITTED TO: NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK COLLABORATION PANEL
9 NOVEMBER 2016**

**SUBJECT: COUNTY POLICING COMMAND (CPC) - COMPLIANCE WITH
VICTIMS' CODE AND DELIVERY OF VICTIMS' STRATEGY**

SUMMARY:

1. This paper provides an update on progress from the County Policing Commands (CPC) against how Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies are complying against the component parts of the Victims' Code and the action plan that was developed to support the delivery of the Victims' Strategy.
2. The paper will be presented in 4 parts, firstly giving the performance update, secondly the Suffolk CPC update then the Norfolk CPC update before providing the updates with regards to joint pieces of work underway across both organisations.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Collaboration Panel is asked to note the contents of this report.

DETAIL OF THE SUBMISSION

1. PART 1 - NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK PERFORMANCE

Performance

- 1.1 Confidence in Suffolk currently stands at 81.6% and places the force at a national ranking of 14. In Norfolk confidence currently stands at 80.5% and places the force at a national ranking of 17. The national average is 78.4%.
- 1.2 In terms of Victim Satisfaction, Suffolk currently stands at 83.2%. In Norfolk Victim Satisfaction currently stands at 88.1%. The national average is 83.6%
- 1.3 Work has been commissioned through the Joint Performance and Analysis Department (JPAD) to identify reasons for the decline in victim satisfaction and to consider ways to improve this in the future. It is also important to note that within this work, the impact of the new Suffolk Local Policing model on victim satisfaction is yet to be fully assessed.
- 1.4 The overarching key findings from both qualitative and quantitative analysis conducted are that the key issues that are driving our reduced satisfaction emanate from a lack of communication; both in terms of ensuring a victim understands what is happening and why and ensuring that they are updated regularly.
- 1.5 Therefore, while process improvements are important, in line with academic research, our findings would support the view that focusing on communications and quality of interactions, i.e. the 'bedside manner' is likely to have the longer term and most significant impact on developing a public service centred culture across the organisation. This has therefore informed the approach taken with the initiatives developed thus far.

2. PART 2 - SUFFOLK COUNTY POLICING COMMAND UPDATE

Compliance with Victims' Code

- 2.1 In December 2015, there was a multi-agency walk through event, led by the Criminal Justice Board which went through the Victims' Code and identified gaps in provision of the Victim's Code across a number of agencies. Work is still underway with the Victim and Witness Sub Group to address a range of areas that were identified and this is overseen by the Criminal Justice Board through a separate action plan.
- 2.2 Utilising the feedback from this event, a police action plan was developed, to support the delivery of the new Victims' Strategy. This action plan provides an oversight of the work underway to address areas requiring improvement. While this action plan has currently been owned by CPC, the intention is to review this and provide an improved governance structure across the wider organisation with a new Confidence and Satisfaction Board.
- 2.3 There is a need to work with JPAD to look at a range of performance measures that can better monitor progress against delivering the code. While the key requirements of the code have been mapped against our current delivery, we lack performance measures that can assess how well we are performing; in particular, there is a need to look at victim needs assessments, the management of 'standard' and 'priority' victims and how well contact is maintained. This all needs to feed a new performance framework given the national changes that are due to take place to

measuring victim satisfaction in 2017. This work will be a key part of the re-designed Confidence and Satisfaction Board.

- 2.4 All frontline officers will receive training in delivering the Victims' Code from October 2016 to January 2017. In addition to the training, all officers in the CPC have a Performance and Development Review (PDR) objective in relation to victim satisfaction and all front line Sergeants have been provided with a presentation to brief their teams around expectations.
- 2.5 Inspectors conduct monthly audits of crimes. This includes reviewing compliance with the Victims Code.
- 2.6 Positive feedback from victim call-backs is shared with officers through their local Superintendents. Feedback outlining the need for improvement is fed in through the Professional Standards Department (PSD) for assessment in relation to service recovery requirements and appropriate action. So there is a unified service recovery system in place, as well as a method to reward and recognise good performance and share learning.

Confidence and Satisfaction Board

- 2.7 The current Confidence and Satisfaction Board was suspended for a few months, while a piece of work was commissioned through JPAD and Corporate Development to explore how best to embed this work across the Constabulary moving forwards. These findings will be shared in October 2016, with a new approach and governance structure being agreed to drive the management of victims forward more widely across the organisation.

Victims' Strategy

- 2.8 The Victims' Strategy is currently in the process of being launched. It was released internally on 30th September 2016 and there are plans to do an external launch week commencing 3rd October 2016. Delivering the Victims Strategy will also ensure that the Constabulary meets the statutory responsibilities placed on it with regard to victim care effectively and efficiently. Corporate Communications have a timeframe in place to ensure the effective roll-out of the strategy which is captured in the action plan.
- 2.9 To help embed the key principles of the strategy, CPC have identified a range of Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) who are briefing teams on service standards when dealing with victims. This work is currently underway. As part of this, officers are also being reminded to explain to victims about crime investigation and managing their expectations.

3. PART 3 - NORFOLK COUNTY POLICING COMMAND UPDATE

Victims' Strategy

- 3.1 The Norfolk Victims' Strategy has been written in draft form and is in the process of being approved and launched.

Victim Personal Statement (VPS) Pilot

- 3.2 The current system for obtaining Victim Personnel Statements (VPS) involves the Officer in the Case (OIC) returning to the victim prior to a matter going to court to take a VPS. This is then included on the court file. This has a number of advantages; firstly it is efficient in that VPS are only taken for cases that are actually going to

court. Not only does this mean that officer time is not wasted taking VPS for matters that do not go to court, but it also avoids 'overpromising' victims, giving them an expectation that their VPS will be used in cases that do not result in a court appearance. More importantly, it also means that VPS are taken some time after the offence. This will allow victims to give a true impression of the effect being a victim has had on them and their families.

- 3.3 However, the process described above does not comply with the Victim Code which clearly states that the VPS should be offered at the time the original witness statement is taken. Another disadvantage is that in cases that proceed to a hearing very quickly, the opportunity to take a VPS is sometimes missed.
- 3.4 In an effort to comply with the Victim Code, provide an effective service to victims and make best use of officer time, the Chief Constable for Norfolk agreed to a pilot scheme at Great Yarmouth during the summer of 2016.
- 3.5 The pilot explored a number of concepts, one of which was the creation of a VPS information pack. These packs contained information on the Victim Code, support agencies and blank VPS forms. These were left with victims at the time a witness statement was taken with a full explanation of the VPS process. Victims were then invited to complete the statements when they had taken time to consider the impact the crime had on them and return them to a central point. Assistance was offered to vulnerable victims and others who required it.
- 3.6 The pilot is currently being formally evaluated, but it is clear that whilst it achieved high compliance rates for the offer of a VPS, return rates for the actual statements was extremely low. A comprehensive telephone survey has been carried out of victims to ascertain the reasons why they did not return a VPS and this will form part of the formal evaluation.
- 3.7 As Athena does not have the capability to record information around Victim Personal Statements, the compliance and return rates for the pilot had to be recorded and monitored manually. We utilised a member of staff on restricted duties to undertake this work but found that it took around 0.8 FTE of a working week. Clearly, this is not sustainable if the process was to be rolled out over the whole county. We also lacked any capability to produce performance information which meant holding individuals to account was difficult. Both of these issues could be solved by adding a VPS function to Athena. Whilst this would involve a cost and require agreement of the other Athena forces, it clearly needs to be an urgent consideration.
- 3.8 The evaluation of the Great Yarmouth VPS Pilot is being undertaken by the 2020 Team and should be available in early November 2016.

Victim Code Action Plan

- 3.9 An action plan has been produced, a summary of progress is as follows:
- 3.10 Areas around crime recording and support to victims post charge appear to be embedded and working well.
- 3.11 Areas around keeping victims informed prior to charge have been part of the OIC's role for a number of years through use of the Victim's Contract. However, there is anecdotal evidence that since the introduction of Athena, performance in this area has suffered.
- 3.12 Areas that still need to be resolved are how we measure compliance with the above, performance data in general and a formal service recovery process. Some localised

service recovery is undertaken using the feedback forms supplied by our satisfaction survey company (SMSR).

- 3.13 The Code has a very wide definition of vulnerability and victims defined as such are entitled to an enhanced level of service. It is vital that officers clearly understand the breadth of this definition and the requirements involved. The training package that will be delivered from January onwards covers this in considerable detail and therefore we will not achieve full compliance in this area until the training is complete.

4. PART 4 - JOINT UPDATE

Training on the Victims' Code

- 4.1 Victims' Code training is being developed ready for delivery from 5th October 2016 across Suffolk and from January 2017 onwards across Norfolk. This should meet a number of the areas for improvement outlined in the action plans, including knowledge of the code and how to comply, providing updates and advice and developing knowledge of Victim Personal Statements and Impact Statements for Business (ISB).

Athena and Technology

- 4.2. Various issues have been identified with Athena that is causing some confusion around victim updates and management. The Athena team has been made aware of the issues, relating to use of the Victim Contact Tab, the pre-set time parameters that officers can use for victim updates and the impact that the backlog of the Athena closure queue has on victim management and updates.
- 4.3 The issue of the automated sending of letters has also been discussed and is subject to a further meeting in October 2016 to try and ensure there is a unified process.
- 4.4 There is a desire to make better use of technology to keep victims updated. There is the facility to use text messaging for updates, but there is currently an issue with this system, whereby victims are replying to the message and these are not being answered. A solution to this is still to be developed.

Future Delivery Models

- 4.5 A visit to the Cambridgeshire Victim Hub has taken place and a report has been submitted via the Confidence and Satisfaction Board with a view to considering future options around the commissioning of victims services. This has previously been submitted to the PCC's office. This paper outlines that there is a need to review whether it would be more beneficial to conduct victim's services internally and to review the role and remit of partners in the future commissioning and structure of victim services.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None identified.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- 6.1 The Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) is a statutory document which places obligations on the police, and other criminal justice agencies, to provide services to victims of crime setting out the minimum standards they can expect.

ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)	PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	No
Has financial advice been sought on this submission?	No
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	No
Have human resource implications been considered?	No
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plans?	Yes
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	No
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	No
In relation to the above, have all relevant issues been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks' section of the submission?	Yes