

Scrutiny panel - responsibilities

| Key Entitlements – Where data collection for scrutiny should be focussed from Ministry of justice | RAG status | Comments |
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| Key Entitlement 1 – Be informed at key stages of the case. | | |
| Was the victim Provided with a written acknowledgement of the crime and basic details of the offence? | Green | <p>Using data from our monthly audits it is evident that the number of times this letter was produced by officers and staff in the last quarter increased from 21% to 42%. In order to ensure this compliance rate continues to increase, the process has been formalised and the results will continue to be monitored via audits and explored within ATHENA data fields</p> <p>The process has been formalised by creating a Victim Acknowledgement template (letter) containing reference to the crime reported and signposting to guidance and support services. This is now available on ATHENA. There are 2 templates, one for allocated crimes and one for unallocated crimes.</p> <p>Acknowledgments for unallocated closed crimes are produced by our Investigation Management Unit (IMU). As of Sept 20, IMU will utilise the new templates directly from ATHENA.</p> <p>Sending the template to victims of crimes which have been allocated for investigation will be the responsibility of the investigating officer. As of this month (October) guidance and instruction to produce these templates has been shared with staff and officers who deal with desktop investigations within the Crime Coordination Centre (CCC). Next month this guidance will be circulated more widely to CSIM and County Policing Commands via communication materials and training.</p> <p>Data regarding compliance will then be monitored to assess any improvement.</p> |
| Were they informed when the suspect was arrested/charged (including bail conditions) and the outcome of the case (case stopped, acquitted, guilty plea, guilty verdict, including an explanation of the sentence)? | Green | <p>For the last quarter audits show that officers are consistent with providing updates (data at the beginning of the quarter shows 80% compliance and at the end 86%). There are similar results for the provision of information on the outcome of the case (from 84% at the beginning of the quarter to 85% at the end).</p> |
| Were they informed about the Victims right to review scheme? | Yellow | <p>We only have records of cases where VRR is in progress. We will only know if a victim of an NFA case has been advised of the scheme if the officer has recorded the discussion within the contact or enquiry log and the case is audited. There is no way of requesting an automated check on ATHENA.</p> |

Scrutiny panel - responsibilities

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| | | Data on VRR submissions is monitored regularly by the JJS Command SLT |
| Key Entitlement 2 – Be referred to organisations supporting victims of crime | | |
| Did the police explain to the victims that they will automatically pass their details to the victim support services within two working days of reporting the crime? (Victims are entitled to ask police not to pass on details). <i>The police need to seek explicit consent from victims of a sexual offence or Domestic violence or bereaved relatives.</i> | | Audits indicate there has been an increase in referrals to NSVC. We began the quarter with 69% of victims being referred to NSVC and the current rate shows 88% compliance. Communications have concentrated on encouraging officers to not only refer victims to NSVC but to also provide them with NSVC details if they decline support at the time. Work continues to ensure a victim's details are not referred via ATHENA if the service is declined. NSVC have not been able to provide clear data to suggest how many cases are referred when support is not requested, however work continues with NSVC to improve referral processes at a local level. |
| Key Entitlement 3 – Be provided with regular updates on the progress of their case. | | |
| Was the victim Provided with a written acknowledgement of the crime and basic details of the offence? | | <i>As above, key Entitlement 1.</i> |
| Was the victim informed as to how often they will be updated on the status of the case? | | The contract tab within ATHENA has a field which displays the agreed frequency of contact the officer has selected and method of contact agreed, however, this does not necessarily mean this has been explained to the victim, only that the officer has entered the information. VCOP training for officers includes an explanation around what a regular service and what an enhanced service means to a victim. This includes the expected frequency of contact. Unless an officer records a discussion around frequency within the enquiry or contact log, it is virtually impossible to monitor compliance in this area. We therefore have to accept that whatever is in the frequency fields on ATHENA is what has been agreed with the victim. |
| Was the victim provided with an explanation, within 5 working days, of a decision not to investigate a crime? | | This letter is sent out by the IMU as a matter of course. (Outcome 18) |
| Was the victim advised when no person has been charged? | | Already part of the process |
| Was the victim advised of a CPS decision not to prosecute? | | Already part of the process |
| Key Entitlement 4 – Be given the opportunity to make a victim personal statement and be informed how it was used in court. | | |

Scrutiny panel - responsibilities

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| <p>Was the victim told that they are entitled to be offered the opportunity to make a VPS at the same time as giving the witness statement? When making the VPS, they are entitled to say whether or not they would like to have their VPS read aloud or played (where recorded), in court if a suspect is found guilty.</p> | | <p>This is not always done by officers at the time of taking a statement as it may not be the appropriate time for a VPS to be offered or taken.</p> <p>Awareness has been raised via training and comms for officers to consider offering VPS if appropriate and recording the offer within the victim TAB on ATHENA. There is a drop-down box which can highlight if one has been offered. It is important officers utilise the VPS field so others can see this offer both for compliance purposes but also Post charge for the WCU.</p> <p>If a case is post charge then most VPS offers are recorded by the WCU who can confirm a pack has been provided to the victim.</p> <p>The auditing process has been recently changed to establish if a VPS <i>has been considered where appropriate</i>. Results in relation to this will appear at the beginning of the next quarter review. An increase in compliance is anticipated.</p> <p>SBOS are currently examining options to interrogate the VPS fields on ATHENA to assist with compliance data – this is a work in progress.</p> |
| <p>Was the victim advised that they are entitled to say whether they would like to read their VPS themselves or for someone else to read their VPS aloud (a family member or CPS advocate)</p> | | <p>This information should be recorded by WCU but it is not information which is currently monitored. .</p> |
| <p>Key Entitlement 5 – Be informed when an offender is released under the victim contact scheme.</p> | | |
| <p>In cases where an offender has committed a serious violent or sexual offence, and been sentenced to 12 months or more in custody or detained under the Mental Health Act 1983. With or without restrictions, was the victim offered the opportunity to join the Victim Contact Scheme?</p> | | <p>One proposed approach could be to cross reference a list of actual release dates against VCMS and identify if the victim is on VCS. If they are it would then need to be established if they been informed of release. This would require a case by case file check.</p> <p>This is a core process which will be considered as part of the MOJ review of the code.</p> |
| <p>If the victim is part of the VCS were they given a victim liaison officer who will keep them up to date with what's happening with the offender's sentence, including release provisions and possible dates.</p> | | <p>Partnership responsibility for discussion</p> |