

Victims & Witnesses Commissioning

Partner and Stakeholder Update

September 2014

Issue: 1

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Summary

The PCC is formally taking over the Commissioning function for Victims and Witnesses from the Ministry of Justice from April 2015. His office has been tasked with preparing a plan around this, to be implemented in time for the April 2015 handover deadline.

Victim and Witness Commissioning has involved a range of local stakeholders, who have been engaged in the planning process, and specific consultation has taken place with victims, stakeholders and a representative local population sample to test model concepts around the commissioning in this area.

A Project Board has been formed to oversee and authorise each stage of the commissioning plan. In August 2014, the Board agreed to initiate the project to directly commission a fully integrated victim service. In addition, cope and recover services for domestic violence and sexual violence will be commissioned in partnership with the City, County and Rutland Councils.

This report aims to update the Strategic Partnership stakeholders on the plans and governance arrangements on this agenda.

Context

In July 2012 the Ministry of Justice published 'Getting it right for victims and witnesses' and set out proposals for improving support to victims and witnesses. This has led to the introduction of an outcomes based commissioning framework. The main outcomes are supporting victims to cope with the immediate impacts of crime and to recover from the harm experienced. It was also proposed that general victims' support services would be commissioned locally, i.e. by Police and Crime Commissioners. National services would continue for a number of specialist services. (see* at end of briefing).

The existing national service is provided by a charity, Victim Support, contracted by the Ministry of Justice. Victim Support has been given notice by the Ministry of Justice of termination of contract. The timing of this termination of contract depends on the choice of PCCs to take over commissioning responsibility in either October

2014 or April 2015. Leicestershire have opted to take over this responsibility from April 2015.

Any Victims' services commissioned must comply with two regulatory requirements:

- The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime – October 2013;
- The EU Directive on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime which was formally adopted by the UK on 4 October 2012, with implementation required by 16 November 2015.

Police and Crime Plan strategic priorities around victims

The PCC has committed to the following strategic priorities around Supporting Victims and Witnesses.

Strategic Priority	How this will be measured
To increase the reporting of domestic abuse and ensure a positive outcome for victims and witnesses of domestic abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A victim focussed crime outcome •An increased awareness and use of domestic abuse services available across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland •Continuous improvement in the service provided to victims of domestic abuse offences
To increase reporting of serious sexual offences and ensure a positive outcome for victims and witnesses of serious sexual offences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A victim focussed crime outcome •An increased awareness and use of sexual violence services available across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland •Continuous improvement in the services provided to victims of sexual offences
To increase reporting of hate crimes and ensure a positive outcome for victims and witnesses of hate crime offences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A victim focussed crime outcome •An increased awareness and use of hate crime services available across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland •Continuous improvement in the service provided to victims of hate crime offences
To prevent ASB and to continuously improve the quality of service and response to victims of ASB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Continuous improvement in the service provided to victims of Anti-social behaviour
To continually improve the quality of service and response to victims of crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Continuous improvement in the service provided to 'all crime*' victims

(Agreed by Police and Crime Panel July 14th 2014)

The above strategic priorities are underpinned by a number of interventions and approaches, one of which relates to the commissioning of the Victim and Witness Grant to be handed over to the PCC from April 2015.

The specific commissioning plans of the PCC are therefore directed (alongside the statutory requirements laid out by the Victims Code and the EU directive) by the PCC's commitment to Victims and Witnesses as laid out within the Police and Crime Plan.

PCC Planning

At the heart of the PCC's planning has been the actual **victim's experience** from the initial crime/incident of victimisation right through the criminal justice system to the point of outcome, whether the case is not progressed, closed or a court outcome reached and/or the offender completes their sentence .

Work commenced in the summer of 2013, to analyse the victim's journey and associated contacts with agencies, with a view to understanding this journey and identifying issues and opportunities. The work concluded that under current arrangements, a victim can have multiple contacts with multiple organisations throughout their journey, with no single organisation responsible for their aggregate and changing needs at different points along the journey. In addition, under current arrangements, Victim Support are not contracted to provide information that pertains to the offender and the progress of the case through the criminal justice system, and they do not deal with victims of more serious crimes or ASB. The service provided by Victim Support is widely considered as valuable and has been reviewed in some detail. Key review findings were:

- The current Victim Support contract value is £435,000 per year.
- There are about 86,500 crime referrals every year in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and 24,000 "non crime" incidents which includes ASB.
- Victim Support currently receive details of approximately 26,000 crimes (with an identified victim) and are contracted to attempt to contact the victim and offer emotional or practical support which includes signposting to other support services.
- The service does not include supporting victims of more serious crime
- The current system of downloading information from the crime system does not provide a consistent level of information for Victim Support to assess vulnerability risk and there are ongoing victim data quality issues on the crime system.
- Victim Support does accept self-referrals, between 1.4%- 5% of the total contact details received.
- Victim Support are not contracted to have any interoperability with other organisations, although they do have access to the current police crime system CIS.

The project team has worked with the various stakeholders to understand current systems; referral routes, data sharing, formal and informal relationships between agencies and communication channels, and they identified and analysed both issues and opportunities. The project team also “horizon scanned” to check for any imminent organisational changes which may have an impact, favourable or otherwise on the Victim. This also included examining other PCCs approaches and regional and national plans.

Further to the above, the project team has worked on a concept model for a service and this has been independently consulted on with victims of crime, high risk groups (vulnerability), representative Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland population samples and providers of victim-facing cope and recovers services. In addition, a briefing was sent to the Victim and Witness Partnership Assurance Group for specific comment by members.

The Project Board met in August 2014 to receive and then check and challenge the details of the proposals. The detail below outlines the service model now agreed, and the commissioning plans around this.

PCC Commissioning Plans

There are three distinct commissioning plans – shown in the highlighted boxes

1) The PCC will commission an Integrated Victim Service (*Victim First*) which will be able to track victims of recorded and self-reported crime throughout the criminal justice system and beyond. This service will be entirely victim-focused and will provide information, advice, practical support and access to “cope and recover” services specialised by crime type and victim vulnerability and proportionate to victim need.

Elements of the Commissioned Integrated Victim Service will include:

Confidential information, advice, emotional and psychological and practical assistance – specialised by crime type and vulnerability need (for example, hate crime/sexual violence/domestic violence, non-domestic violence, young victims, ASB, domestic burglary, vehicle crime)

Services available and accessible as close to the time of the crime as possible

Needs-based service provision – levels of provision proportionate to the degree of harm experienced by the victim

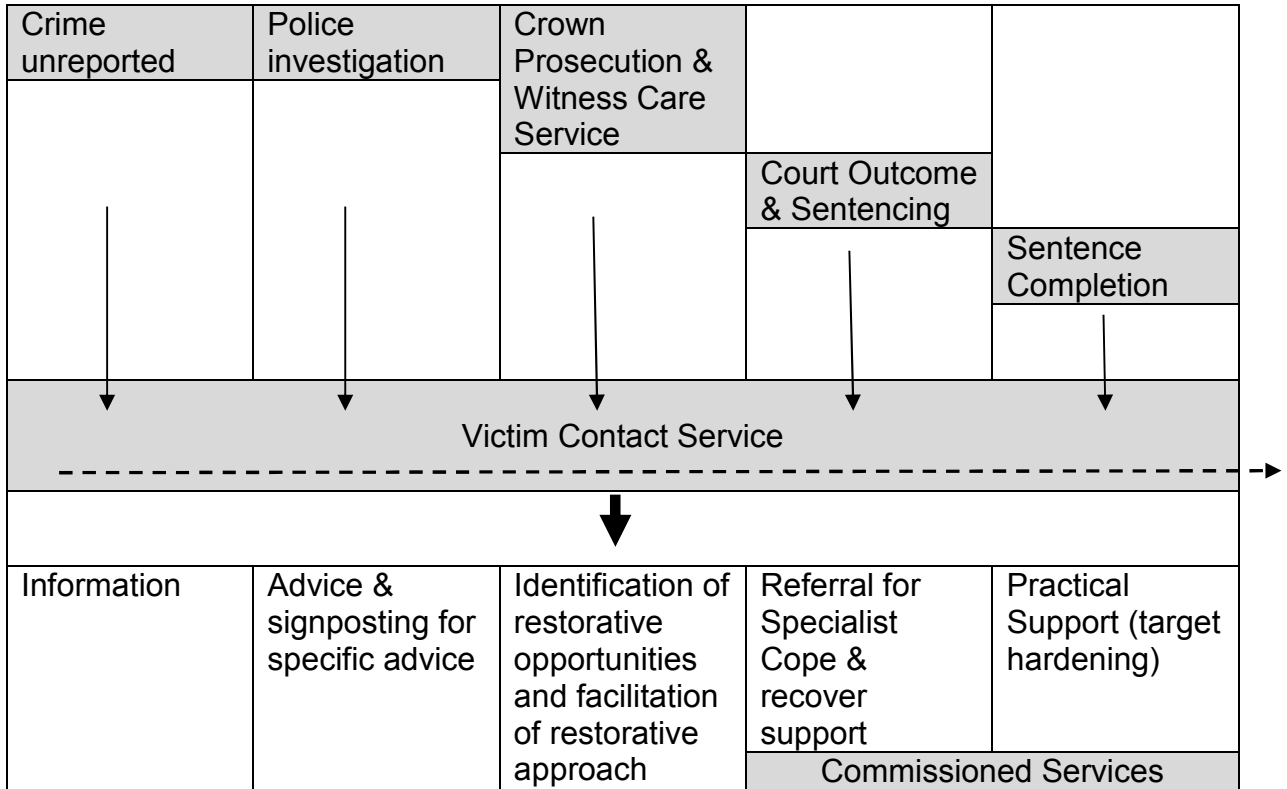
Cross-organisational victim tracking system throughout the criminal justice proceedings

Access to a range of restorative approaches and restorative justice facilitation

Value £749,080

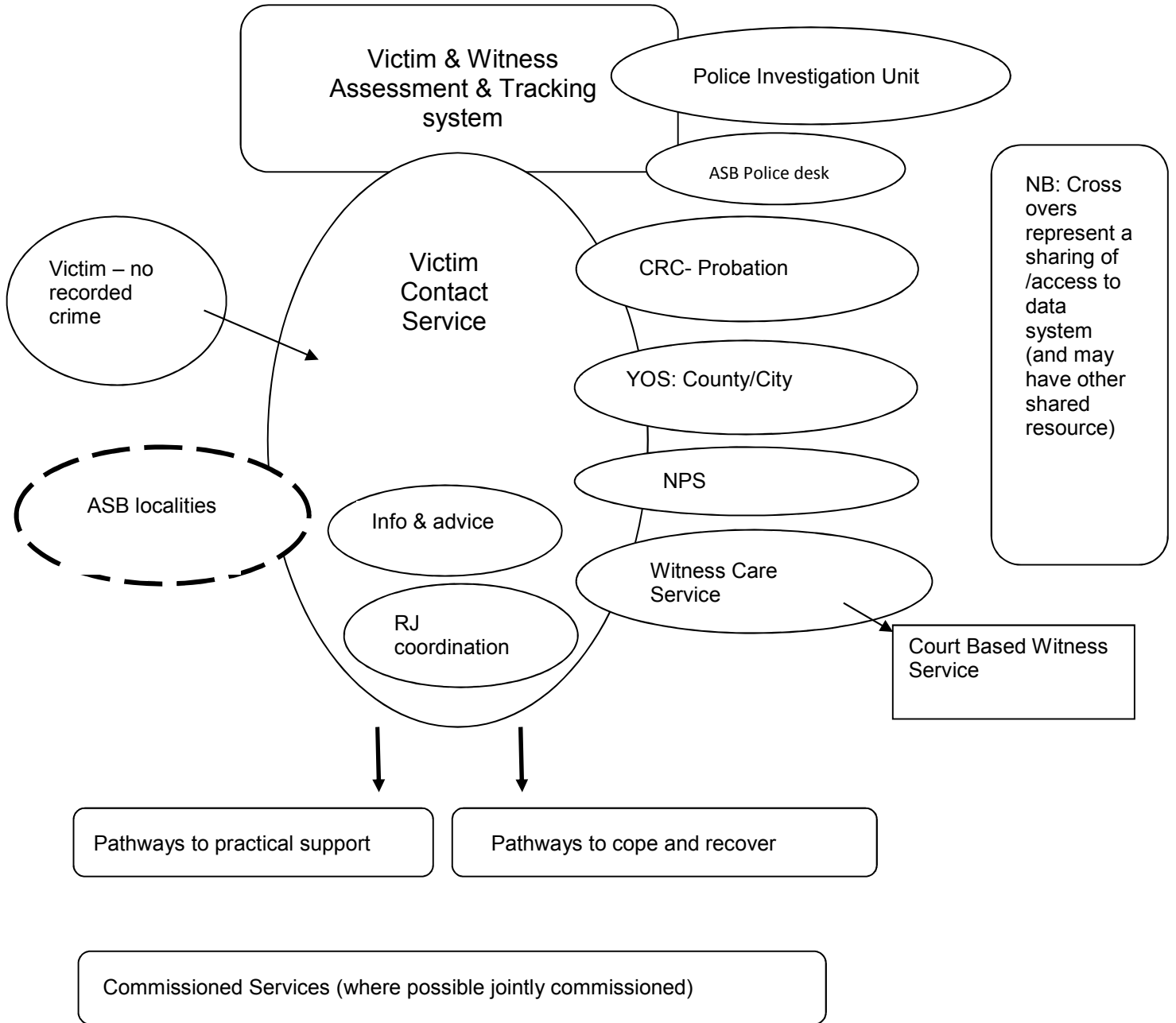
In order to achieve the above, maintaining a route of communication with the victim regardless of their stage within the criminal justice system or other proceedings, or the length of the proceedings, is crucial. The overview model is illustrated in figure 1 below.

Figure 1



Further to discussions with a wide range of partners (which have included on-site visits and examination of other client management systems and referral systems, as well as costs and potential opportunities for efficiencies) integrated elements of the model have been identified and are illustrated below in Figure 2.

Figure 2



2) The PCC will provide funds to protect and provide the provision of a minimum standard of support, regardless of place of residence within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland for

- Victims of sexual violence - around the Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) role (adult and child) & LLR wide telephone helpline;
- Victims of domestic violence – around high risk/repeat victim safety and outreach support, LLR wide telephone helpline.

The PCC will seek to commission the above in partnership with Leicestershire County, Leicester City and Rutland Councils, aligning and where appropriate, combining budgets and procurement processes to improve service quality and provision, maximise the use of resources and the achievement of efficiencies.

Ensuring equity of resourcing and provision is a key concern of the PCC, and the above commissioning arrangements must reflect this.

Value: £260,000

3) The PCC will commission a practical support/target hardening service for those assessed as vulnerable and/or at high risk of repeat victimisation

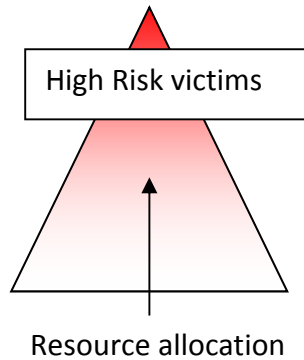
Value: £45,000

Finance & Commissioning

The PCC has a finite budget of £1.1m per annum for Victim and Witness Commissioning which is not new money, but represents a transfer of multiple commissioning “pots” from the Ministry of Justice. For 2014-2015 the PCC has additional funds allocated under grant conditions to help the transition which gives the PCC a window of opportunity to develop a robust and needs-based service which will otherwise not be repeated, as funds are not to be “rolled over”. In addition, the PCC has worked with partners to secure a further £398k for 2014-2015 for two separate projects around sexual violence and domestic violence which must be completed by the end of March 2015. These two projects have been structured to support existing commissioning processes and to test force-wide strategic planning opportunities.

The challenge of meeting extensive needs with finite resources has been particularly complex given the different funding arrangements and plans across localities. Stakeholders have communicated their concern around equity of resourcing and this is an area that has been carefully considered as budgets have been examined. In order to adopt an equitable approach, commissioning plans will reflect, as far as is possible, a minimum standard of victim service that should be provided for all victims

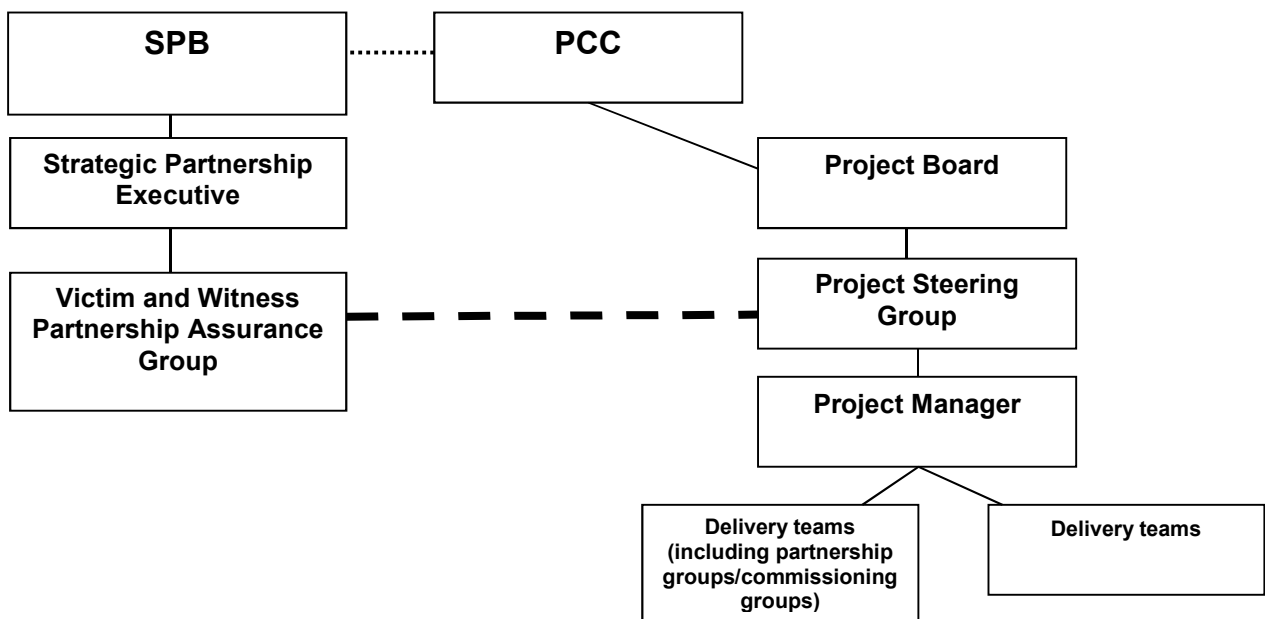
which can be enhanced as resources and local planning permits. This approach will therefore be risk based, proportionate to need.



There are a number of services commissioned, notably around domestic violence and sexual violence, which will cease to be funded through existing arrangements from April 2015. The commissioning plans for these services is to be picked up in the commissioning plans (1) and (2) above and will be taken forward through collective partnership commissioning plans.

Governance & Risk

The PCC has established a governance model which is in the process of being implemented and tested.



The Victim and Witness Partnership Assurance Group is proposed as the vehicle through which key stakeholders can check and challenge the “build” of the new service. A number of meetings have been scheduled between now and March 2015.

Risk Considerations

The development of an integrated victim service is a complex task, as there are multiple interfaces and data capture and action points; the integrity of the system in terms of confidentiality, in particular, is essential. The table below outlines the high level risks identified, and mitigation plans proposed. However, the collective impact of the risks described amount to a single significant risk within the given time frame of service start for April 2015. This risk relates to the likelihood that the information and resource interfaces will take some time to test and refine before they are fit for purpose. With this likely event in mind, the security of victim information and therefore confidence of the victim in any new service must be protected during the time of transition and change through established information agreements and established IT firewalls.

The Project Board has therefore agreed that the integrated victim service should be built as an “arms-length service” of the OPCC, hosted for two years by the OPCC in preparation for full EU procurement and contract award from April 2017. Full procurement would start during 2015.

High level risks

As noted above, the following have been identified as high level risks and mitigation proposed in addition to the overarching hosting mitigation plan being put in place.

Risk	Mitigation
a)The quantity and complexity of data systems and statutory requirements may mean that an additional client management system to look after victims would become unmanageable and decrease efficiency, especially in the likely event that changes occur in the progress of a crime through the criminal justice process e.g. if a case is not progressed.	a) Select a single client management system with minimum data transfer/ data disruption from crime recording systems in place locally which can be updated automatically to show crime progress through criminal justice system
b) Managing victim data across a number of organisation platforms increases data protection risks	b) Select co-location of systems as opposed to integration of systems with protocols and policies under contract, and audited.
c)Data protection risks may reduce victim’s trust and use of the service	c) Select a client management system with robust access right functionality to restrict non victim contact service access to victim information
d)Organisation’s systems may change over time	d) As (b)
e)Victims may not trust a Victim Contact Service if it is perceived to be led by the Police	e) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and promote an “integrated” brand for the Victim Service

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an integrated management team for the victim contact service made up of key organisations shown in figure 2. • Where possible “sub contract” under a clear specification, discrete victim contact teams (covering specific crime/victim type areas) with standardised protocols/policies/system usage. • Location choice to be independent of operational police premises, although de-commissioned PCC owned premises may be considered
f) Statutory and/or contractual agreements may require multiple organisations making separate requests around victim satisfaction	f) Development of a single independent comprehensive method for measuring victim satisfaction that satisfies as many of the key stakeholder’s statutory and contractual requirements as possible. Coordinate and schedule any residual questions/survey types to avoid negative victim impact.
g) Victim and Witness services and projects currently funded through the PCC (Partnership Locality Fund (PLF)/ grant) may cease in April 2015.	g) See section on Finance and procurement
h) The model proposed is not what victims of crime want or would use.	h) Completion of a “concept test” with victims ahead of model agreement. This work has been completed.
i)The proposed model may not be implementable by April 2015	i) The transition plan would be managed in stages, with provision for either an extension of the current contract or phased transition model. The minimum service to be protected during transition would be continuation of service as delivered currently through Victim Support and an agreed minimum for cope and recover services.

*Nationally commissioned services for victims of *Human trafficking*

Homicide (bereaved families)

Rape

Cloaked crime (those crimes involving police officers)

Forced marriage and honour based violence

Fatal road collisions and victims with serious injuries (bereaved/affected families)

Court based witness service

Some national helplines

Victim & Witness Commissioning Project team contacts

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