

For Information	
Public	
Report to:	Strategic Resources and Performance Meeting
Date of Meeting:	7th March 2019
Report of:	Thematic Scrutiny – Compliance with Victims Code
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Agenda Item:	4

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Performance and Compliance with Victims Code

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Police and Crime Commissioner in relation to performance and compliance with the Victims Code (Victim Code of Practice (VCOP)) over the past 12 months.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the contents of this report are noted.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The above recommendation is made to ensure that the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Strategic Resources and Performance meeting are brought up to date with Force compliance and performance relating to VCOP.

4. Summary of Key Points

4.1 Niche – System and Process

- 4.1.1 Niche has fully integrated VCOP into the system and the use of webforms now makes it simpler for officers to understand, record and use Niche to ensure compliance with the requirements of VCOP. This has enabled officers to complete VCOP requirements and referrals utilising electronic mobile devices more efficiently and transparently in the presence of victims/witnesses.
- 4.1.2 Where VCOP is applicable, the webform is mandatory for officers to complete and seek the appropriate consent and signposting of support services available to victims and witnesses.
- 4.1.3 In 2017/18 changes were made which ensured that all Victim Care referrals are now recorded within niche. Another significant development in 2018 was made to working practices, to ensure victims/witnesses of hate incidents are mandated the offer of Victim Care services via webforms within Niche. This

exceeds the requirements of the Victim Code; Victims are therefore benefitting from an enhanced service from Nottinghamshire Police.

4.1.4 Niche webforms have been amended as a result of the Victim Code compliance audit completed in June 2018. This forms a better capture data in relation to the offer and acceptance of Victim Information Packs (VIPs) and allows for reasons to be noted if the offer is not accepted. This will provide more accurate compliance data in relation to the Victim Code requirements to offer Victim Information Packs.

4.2. Training

4.2.1 All new officers joining Nottinghamshire Police continue to receive mandatory training on the Victim Code provided by the East Midlands Collaborative Human Resources Service Learning and Development (EMCHRS L&D).

4.2.2 During 2017, all frontline staff, including detectives and officers within the Contact Resolution Team (CRT) also received training. The aim of the training was to raise awareness amongst our staff and to encourage officers to see VCOP as a fundamental requirement of their on-going management of victims and witnesses, thus benefitting relationships with victims/witnesses.

4.2.3 The developments of recording the Victim Code as detailed in 4.1 have been communicated to all staff by intranet bulletins, updates and published reference guides.

4.2.4 During 2018 new training has been initiated and this is detailed within 4.8.4.

4.2.5 Analytical work around compliance with Victim Code/VCOP is articulated at section 4.5 of this report.

4.3 Victims Information Package

4.3.1 The Victim Information Package (VIP) is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it is up to date with Victim CARE details and wider agencies providing support.

4.3.2 The VIPs are accessible to the public via the Nottinghamshire Police Internet and internally are available on the Nottinghamshire Police Intranet 'Victim Code of Practice' site. Access on the internet can be found at www.nottinghamshire.police and search Victim Information Pack.

4.3.3 Hard copies can be accessed from Police Stations across the force area and are regularly reviewed to ensure availability.

4.3.4 Work is currently on-going to translate the VIP into the six languages (other than English) which are most prevalent in Nottinghamshire.

4.4 Victim Right to Review

- 4.4.1 The Victim Right to Review is instigated when the police make a decision not to prosecute a suspect in an investigation. This scheme offers victims of crime a system of review without recourse to court proceedings. The scheme ensures a level of consistency which ensures the process is clear, accessible and fair for all victims.
- 4.4.2 The administration of the Victim Right to Review process is managed entirely within Niche, with automated workflows incorporating timeframes for officers to adhere to.
- 4.4.3 To support this, guidance has been developed, published, communicated via intranet bulletins and stored on the Nottinghamshire Police Intranet.
- 4.4.4 The administration of the Victim Right to Review is centralised and embedded within Contact Management and all previous records have been back record converted onto Niche to provide accuracy of data and recording. This has provided a centralised process and an improved consistent approach

4.5 Compliance and Audits

- 4.5.1 During 2018, an Audit was completed on Victim Code compliance, which was reported within the previous SR&P report in 2018. As a result of the audit the following recommendations were made and the following actions have been undertaken:
 - 1) Niche webform to include in drop down list, further options in relation to Victim Information Pack being offered/supplied or not;
 - As per update within 4.1.4 this has now been amended and communicated to front line officers via intranet bulletins.
 - 2) Market Research team to include a further question to put to victims for all crimes i.e. whether the officer provided a Victim Information Pack
 - This has been agreed with Market Research and will be effective as of surveys sampled commencing in the 2019/20 reporting period to allow changes to be embedded.
 - 3) Contact Management to seek advice from the Force Data Protection Officer on whether the current format in relation to Victim Services consent is acceptable reference GDPR.
 - Meeting held and confirmed the current format is acceptable for requirements.
 - 4) Recommendation to align the victim survey question more closely with Niche data.

- This has been agreed with Market Research and will be effective as of surveys sampled commencing in the 2019/20 reporting period to allow changes to be embedded in relation to victim updates.
- 5) Guidance/Procedures to be developed specifically for officers on how to apply the victim code.
- A refreshed Victims Code communications and updated Intranet site was launched in February 2019. This includes a 'one stop' location accessible from the Intranet on the 'Our Force' Home Page. Within the site are officer resources, guides and updated requirements.

From February 2019 all victims/witnesses, where the Victim Code is applicable will be offered an update every 21 days, unless otherwise agreed with the victim/witness or where officers provide significant updates as per Victim Code requirements. Niche webforms will be amended to reflect the above process change in order to assist officer compliance.

The audit highlighted that not all victims were clear they had received a final victim update, when cross referenced with Satisfaction Surveys which showed that the investigation/case had been completed. As a result new officer guidance has been provided to ensure clarity of message and remove any ambiguities. This includes victims/witnesses will be informed of:

- a) Final update and case closed
- b) Provided investigation update
- c) Check/Clarify any victim/witness questions
- d) Offer Victim Care services and
- e) Reconfirm the case is closed and thank reportee.

Niche OELs (working sheet to record updates) will be amended to reflect to ensure officer compliance upon completion.

4.5.2 Daily Performance Management

Within Nottinghamshire Police, supervisors, officers and staff have access to Nottinghamshire Police Intranet Performance Dashboard, Daily Performance Review (DPR) which provides:

- i) VCOP non-compliance data; and
- ii) Victim Updates outstanding over 21 days.

VCOP allows for a victim/witness to specify how frequently they would like to be updated. This can be recorded on Niche and tasks are automatically generated to remind officers of updates required.

The Performance Dashboard has been refreshed as per section 4.4.2 of this report to with red/amber reporting to aid supervisors on compliance.

4.5.3 Management Information Monthly/Annual Victim Code Compliance Data

Further to the Daily Performance Report, monthly and annual data is now produced and accessible from Management Information for officers and staff, upon request which includes:

- a) Numbers of VCOPs completed
- b) VCOP Completed on the right victim/witness
- c) VCOP Quality compliance percentage
- d) Number of victims who consented for Information to be shared
- e) Identification of Priority offences/victim/witnesses
- f) Frequency the victim/witness would like to be updated

The below table summarises crimes (occurrences) requiring VCOP and completion compliance.

	2016	2017	2018
Crimes Requiring VCOP	67466	81679	88831
VCOPs Completed	59637	79532	88298
VCOPs completion compliance	88.4%	97.4%	93.85%

4.5.4 Future Victim Code Compliance Audits

The initial Victim Code compliance audit completed in June 2018 by Nottinghamshire Police Information Management Team, highlighted high levels of compliance with the Victim Code, however, recommended potential areas for development, as referred to in section 4.4.1 of this report.

This audit has now been commissioned annually, led by Richard Mace, an auditor from Nottinghamshire Police Information Management team. A meeting will take place in March 2019, to review the requirements of the audit to provide a baseline, upon which to undertake future annual audits to maximise organisational learning.

4.6 **Victim CARE**

4.6.1 Victim CARE referrals are automated on a daily basis through Management Information. Regular meetings have taken place between Nottinghamshire Police and Victim CARE to ensure timely and appropriate information sharing.

4.6.2 All police referrals (including those from the Witness Care Unit) are automated and sent electronically within 24 hours of consent being given.

4.6.3 In relation to terrorism, Nottinghamshire Police Special Branch and Victim CARE have a standardised process to identify and refer those victims/witnesses impacted by acts of terrorism who reside in the county, for which Victim CARE have specialist case workers to provide appropriate support and signposting.

4.6.4 Joint training utilising Police and Victim CARE staff has been developed by Inspector Grimwade in 2018 to further develop understanding of the Victim CARE services, Victim Code requirements, with an emphasis on Hate Crime to highlight the support available to victim/witnesses. This training has been trialled on new Police Officer cohorts and is due to be rolled out through the use of Force Champions to assist officers who have direct contact with victims/witnesses. This is still currently under development.

4.7 Developments

4.7.1 Currently in development is an APP for officers to use on mobile electronic devices. This can be used as an aide memoire for officers and it can also allow Officers to obtain and share Victim Care support information directly with victims/witnesses.

5 Financial Implications and Budget Provision

5.1 Victim Information Packs are in the process of being translated into the identified top six (6) languages Nottinghamshire Police used. There will be a financial cost of the initial translations.

6 Human Resources Implications

6.1 No Human Resources Implications identified.

7 Equality Implications

7.1 There are no equality implications identified as part of this report.

8 Risk Management

8.1 Work outlined above seeks to promote compliance with the Victim Code.

9 Policy Implications and links to the Police and Crime Plan Priorities

9.1 The Victims Code links to the Police and Crime Plan themes of protecting and supporting victims and improving the trust and confidence in policing.

10 Changes in Legislation or other Legal Considerations

10.1 Amendments to the Victim Code were made in October 2015, and have been absorbed into the work in force.

11 Details of outcome of consultation

11.1 Not applicable as this report is for information only.

12. Appendices

12.1 None