

For Information	
Public	
Report to:	Strategic Resources and Performance Meeting
Date of Meeting:	
Report of:	Chief Constable Guildford
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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 (this should include background information and options appraisal if applicable)

4.1 Niche – System and Process

- 4.1.1 Niche has fully integrated VCOP into the system and the use of webforms 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 All Victim CARE referrals made via the Police are recorded within Niche and automated to Victim CARE within 24hrs of being recorded.

- 4.1.4 It is now standard within Niche to provide victims / witnesses of hate incidents the mandated offer of Victim Care services via webforms. This exceeds the requirements of the Victim Code.
- 4.1.5 As a result of amendments and improvements to Niche webforms in 2018/2019, Nottinghamshire Police is better able to capture data in relation to the offer and acceptance of Victim Information Packs (VIPs), victim updates and finalisation updates. This provides more accurate compliance data in relation to the Victim Code and areas for continued development.
- 4.1.6 Nottinghamshire Police have developed Niche to enable officers to automatically send emails victims / witnesses directly with officer contact details, occurrence reference and signposting to support services when recording an occurrence.
- 4.1.7 Currently in development within Niche, is the ability to send automated text messages to victim / witnesses of crime.
- 4.1.8 Nottinghamshire Police continue to work on a national level with other Police Forces to review and improve Niche to provide better performance, in terms of use and requirements and its ability to provide Management Information

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 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.
- 4.2.3 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 with the OPCC to ensure it is up to date with Victim CARE details and wider agencies providing support.
- 4.3.2 The VIP's 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.

4.4 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 is available and been 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 The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) during 2019 provided all Police Forces with guidance in relation to completing Victim Code Audits. The guidance provided the following:

- A dip sample of not fewer than 30 cases per quarter, for each agency involved in the victim's journey to be completed.

For the Police, this encompasses the following key points to be included in future audits:

- Does the victim receive a written acknowledgement that a crime was reported?
- Is the victim assessed and, unless opting out, referred to support services, within 2 days of the crime being reported?
- Are the updates the victim receives on the next steps including arrest, charge and bail timely and of a high quality?
- Is the victim informed of the end of their CJS journey?
- Was a VPS taken?

Prior to the MoJ guidance being published, Nottinghamshire Police already had a schedule to audit the Force's compliance with the Victim Code, which provides greater scrutiny than that suggested by the MoJ guidance.

The Nottinghamshire Police Audit, was completed in September 2019 sampling 200 occurrences from the first quarter of 2019/2020. The Audit included 13 tests of compliance with the Victim Code, including those suggested by the MoJ.

The Victim Code Audit highlighted the following:

- 94% Compliance with Victim Code requirement and evidence of Victim's needs assessment completed.
- 89% Compliance of victims assessed being referred to Victim CARE services within 48 hours.
- 75% Compliance of all victim updates being completed within Victim Code requirements and as agreed with victims / witnesses.
- 73% Compliance that victims were clearly updated of the finalization of their investigation.

As a result of the Audit, the key recommendations were made and the following actions have been undertaken and / or proposed to be taken:

- 1) Advice sought from the MoJ to confirm whether verbal acknowledgement via the telephone is an acceptable method of providing the victim with crime, officer details and signposting.
 - Nottinghamshire Police are currently working with OPCC and Regional Criminal Justice Board (RCJB) colleagues to address concerns with the requirements of the MoJ Audit requirements and are in the process of writing to the MoJ to raise these concerns for guidance and clarity.
- 2) Officers and Supervisors to be instructed to ensure they are using the correct OEL's within Niche; and
- 3) Officers and Supervisors to be instructed to ensure OEL's are fully completed to the required standard.
 - Communications have gone out to all staff and officers in relation to the requirements of the Victims Code and to ensure they are correctly recorded and inputted onto Niche.
 - Niche has been updated to increase the number of mandatory fields within Victim Code OELs to improve compliance.

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.

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

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Crimes Requiring VCOP	67466	81679	88831	90520
VCOPs Completed	59637	79532	88298	81260
VCOPs completion compliance	88%	97%	94%	90%

Whilst 2019 suggests a deteriorating position, this needs to be taken in context with other operational changes.

A significant impact factor has been the Forces improved compliance with National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS), whereby identifiable crimes are recorded on Niche within 24hrs of receipt of call for service. This has seen increased crimes being recorded on initial incident details, and victim's contacted at a later date.

Further, this has impacted upon increased numbers of multiple crimes created for the same incident/victim.

To address these issues, amendments have been made within Niche and changes to working practices, though the full impact will not benefitted until 2020.

Finally, in 2019, the above shows Victims Code compliance in relation to the VCOP being completed upon the correct victim. A further 5,333 VCOP's were completed for victims and witnesses who were not required under the requirements of the Victim Code. This has been included within the recommendations of the Victim Code Audit.

4.5.4 Future Victim Code Compliance Audits

For 2019 / 2020 Nottinghamshire Police will complete further Victim Code Audits to ensure quarterly sampling is completed as required by the MoJ. Nottinghamshire Police plan to exceed the requirements of the MoJ requirements will audit sample occurrences of the following crime types:
Vehicle Crime

Dwelling Burglary
Violent Crime (Including weapon enabled violence)
Domestic Violence
Hate
Sexual Offences
Historic Sexual Offences

The inclusion of sexual offences and historic sexual offences supports the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and provides further scrutiny of victim code compliance.

Nottinghamshire Police are committed to continuing to Audit the Victims Code compliance and have gone beyond the requirements of MoJ, however future Victim Code Audits for 2020 / 2021 are being reviewed and will ensure to reflect MoJ recommendations and meet local requirements for continued learning and development.

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 delivered in 2019 to develop understanding of the Victim CARE services, Victim Code requirements, with an emphasis on Hate Crime to highlight the support available to victim/witnesses. The training has been rolled out through the use of Force Champions to assist officers who have direct contact with victims/witnesses.
- 4.6.5 Nottinghamshire Police and Victim CARE have developed an APP for officers to use on mobile electronic devices. This can be used as an aide memoire for officers and allows Officers to obtain and share Victim CARE support information directly with victims / witnesses. This has now been applied to all front line officers' mobile devices.

5. Financial Implications and Budget Provision

- 5.1 Costings associated with this report relate to implementation and use of automated text messaging to provide victims and witnesses with crime confirmation details.

6. Human Resources Implications

6.1 No Human Resources implications identified.

7. Equality Implications

7.1 None identified.

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 themes of protecting and supporting victims and improving the trust and confidence in policing.

10. Changes in Legislation or other Legal Considerations

10.1 None.

11. Details of outcome of consultation

11.1 Not applicable.

12. Appendices

12.1 None.

13. Background Papers (relevant for Police and Crime Panel Only)

13. Not applicable.

NB

See guidance on public access to meetings and information about meetings for guidance on non-public information and confidential information.