

Criminal justice

National report

 **audit**
commission



Victims and witnesses

Providing better support

The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively, to achieve high-quality local and national services for the public. Our work covers local government, housing, health and criminal justice services.

As an independent watchdog, we provide important information on the quality of public services. As a driving force for improvement in those services, we provide practical recommendations and spread best practice. As an independent auditor, we monitor spending to ensure public services are good value for money.

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Preface

Last year, around one-quarter of the population of England and Wales were victims of crime (**Ref. 1**). For just under one-third of us, the impact of disorderly or antisocial behaviour reduces our quality of life (**Ref. 2**). Yet many who experience these problems do not report them to anyone. Of those who do report crimes to the police, the majority will not see an offender brought to justice. And people who are on low incomes and who are lone parents are at greater risk of being repeat victims.

Victims and witnesses also expect to be protected from future victimisation or intimidation by offenders or their acquaintances. Yet up to one in five victims experience some kind of intimidation and cases of perverting the course of justice have increased six-fold since 1991.

As part of the drive to increase the number of offenders brought to justice and improve public confidence in the criminal justice system (CJS), the Government has made a commitment to putting victims and witnesses at the heart of it (**Ref. 3**). It has pledged to provide them with the support and services they need, whether within the CJS itself or through other agencies. In realising this commitment, the government recognises the need for greater co-ordination between the agencies within the CJS and beyond.

However, to date, no comprehensive evaluation has taken place of the services currently provided to victims and witnesses of crime, disorderly or antisocial behaviour. Victims and witnesses themselves have not been asked in depth about their experiences of trying to access the help and support that they need, or about their subsequent engagement with the agencies that provide this help and support.

To address this, the Audit Commission has looked not only at current service provision to victims and witnesses, but also at what those on the receiving end of these services think about them. It has talked directly to both victims and witnesses of crime, disorderly and antisocial behaviour,¹ as well as to practitioners and policymakers (Appendix 1). The Commission is well placed to conduct this research in the light of:

- its previous criminal justice work, including tracking the offender 'pathway' through the system (**Ref. 4**);
- its experience of reviewing service provision that involves multiple agencies; and
- its remit to assure the value for money of a range of public services on behalf of the public.

Building on our previous approach published in *Route to Justice* (**Ref. 4**), this work also takes a pathway approach, looking at what happens from when an incident occurs, through to the experiences of victims and witnesses at court and afterwards. It identifies six common themes around which improvements are needed along the

¹ MORI 2003, TPAS 2003.

whole pathway. These themes are as follows:

- agencies must understand the demand for services from victims and witnesses in order to respond appropriately and effectively;
- there must be cultural change to recognise that meeting people's individual needs is key to improving victim and witness satisfaction;
- clear accountability for performance and service quality is essential to drive improvement;
- better use and communication of information is critical to keeping victims and witnesses engaged;
- appropriate and timely support is critical to ensuring that victims and witnesses stay engaged; and
- agencies can achieve significant change by using local resources in a more co-ordinated way.

To help policy makers and practitioners involved in improving services to victims and witnesses, we have developed improvement products in addition to this report. These are:

- a self-assessment tool for practitioners in CJS agencies, local authorities and the voluntary sector;
- facilitated workshops for partners wishing to use the self-assessment tool; and
- web-based products, including our report, research conducted for us by MORI and the self-assessment tool.

As we develop our audit and inspection methodologies we will also take account of the recommendations in the report.

1



The problem and the policy response

Only a very small minority of all victims and witnesses currently see an offender brought to justice. The Government has responded to declining satisfaction with, and confidence in, the CJS by publishing a national strategy for victims and witnesses. However, much more needs to be done to understand and respond to the concerns of victims and witnesses, both at a national and local level.

- 1 The 2002/03 British Crime Survey (BCS) (Ref. 1) shows that the risk of becoming a victim of crime is 27 per cent for the general population, around the same level as in 1981 and one-third lower than the risk in 1995. Many people are also affected by disorderly or antisocial behaviour that may not be classified as a crime by police systems, but nevertheless impacts negatively on their quality of life.
- 2 Less than half (44 per cent) of all crime is currently being reported to the police (Ref. 1). According to the BCS, of all the incidents that the police came to know about in 2002/03, approximately 68 per cent resulted in a crime being recorded.^I Of the 5,527,000 crimes recorded by the police in 2001/02, 23 per cent were detected,^{II} with 14 per cent resulting in a charge or summons (Ref. 5). This means that very few victims and witnesses actually see their case go to court – and of these cases, around one-third will still not result in an offender being brought to justice (Exhibit 1).
- 3 The majority of people will have some contact with the criminal justice system (CJS) at some stage during their lifetime (Ref. 6). This breaks down as follows:^{III}
 - 52 per cent as victims of crime reported to the police;
 - 8 per cent as suspects appearing in court;
 - 22 per cent as a witness or spectator appearing in court; and
 - 10 per cent as a juror.

^I All comparable BCS/police crime categories (excludes crimes such as fraud, murder, drug-dealing, sexual offences, business thefts and crimes where victim is under 16).

^{II} Suspect is charged, cautioned, offence accepted for consideration in court, or no further action taken.

^{III} Note that categories overlap.

Exhibit 1

Approximate proportions of victims and witnesses dropping out of or being dropped by the system

Only a minority of victims and witnesses see an offender brought to justice.



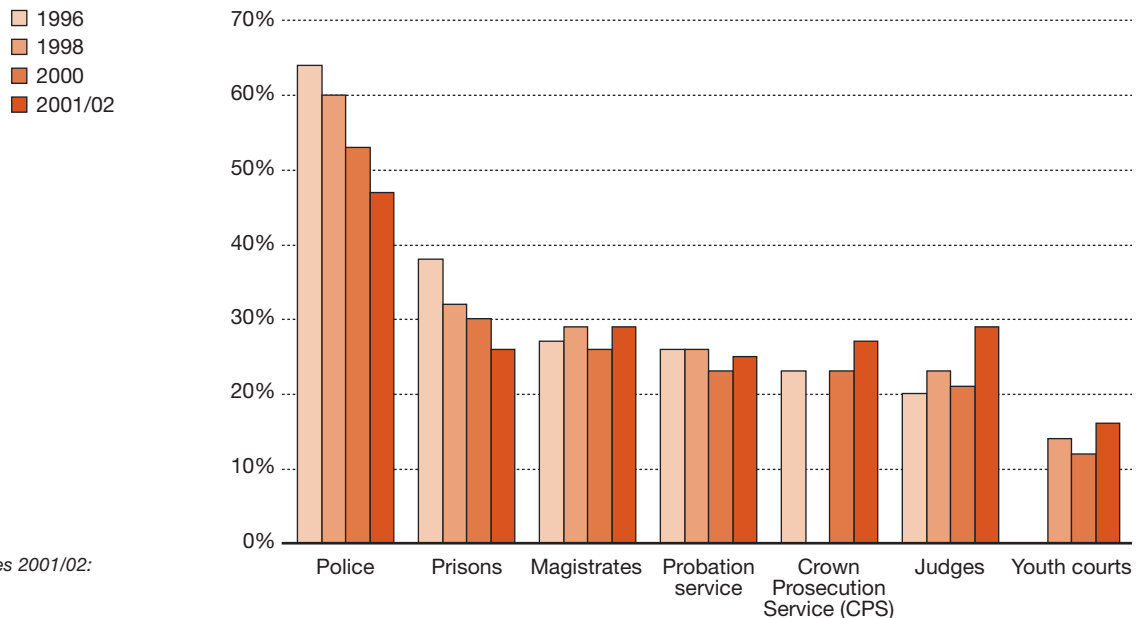
- 4 Public confidence in the CJS is generally low, with the police being rated most highly. Confidence in the police and prisons has declined over the past five years and for the rest of the CJS there is a gently rising trend.

Exhibit 2

Public perception of CJS agencies

Of all the CJS agencies, the public are most likely to think that the police are doing a good or excellent job.

Percentage saying agencies do a good or excellent job



Source: Crime in England and Wales 2001/02: Supplementary Volume (Ref. 7)

- 5 Over two-thirds of the public are 'not at all' or 'not very confident' that the CJS meets the needs of victims (Exhibit 3), and confidence is lower still among those who have been a victim of a crime that is reported to the police.

They didn't do much when I had a burglary.

Non-reporting victim of crime

I've reported before but nothing was done.

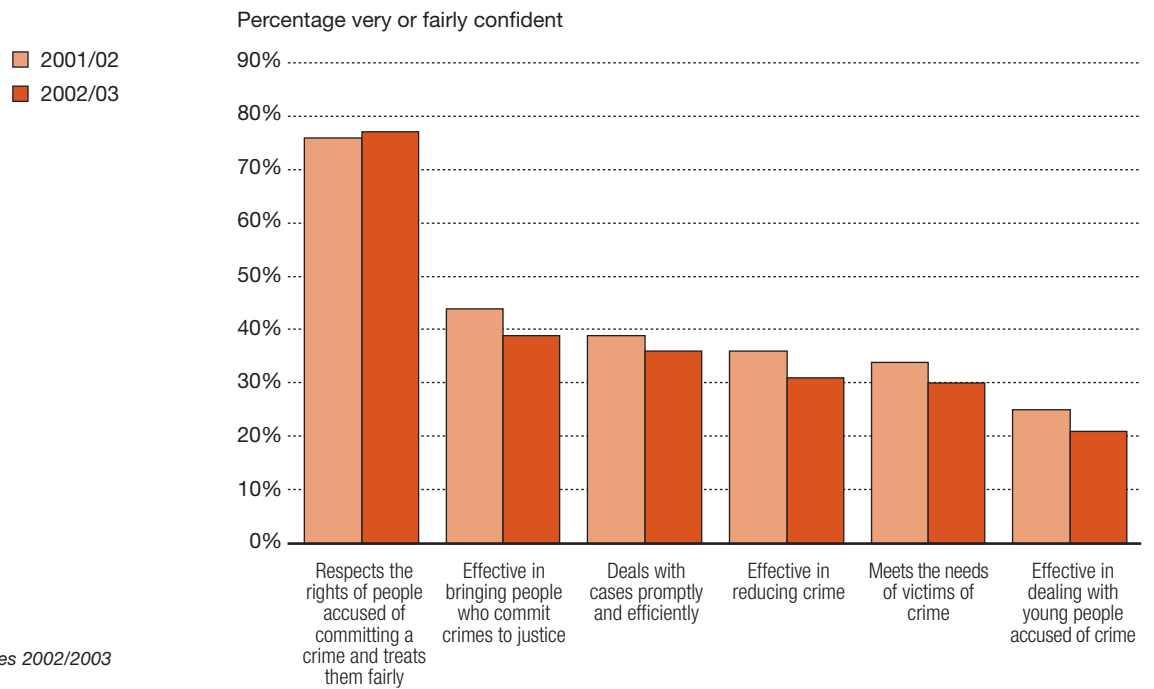
Non-reporting victim of crime

- 6 Many people's experience as a victim or witness lowers their confidence in the CJS. These negative experiences will reduce not only how likely they are to engage with the CJS in future, but also the likelihood of their friends and families to do so. User-focused organisations recognise that people are far more likely to relay bad experiences widely than they are good. Research for this study by MORI found that nearly two in five witnesses would not be prepared to be a witness again in similar circumstances (Ref. 8).

Exhibit 3

Public confidence in the CJS

Over two-thirds of the public are not at all or not very confident that the CJS meets the needs of victims.



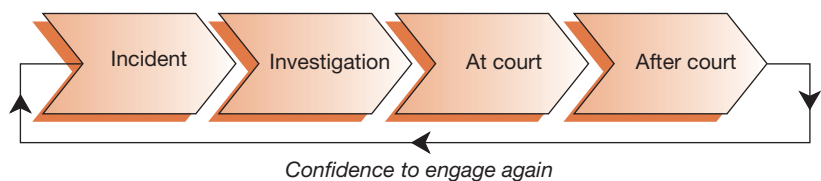
Source: Crime in England and Wales 2002/2003 (Ref. 1)

- 7 Victims and witnesses can have an unsatisfactory experience of services at any point along a pathway, which potentially extends from the initial incident through to court and beyond, with key milestones along the way (Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4

Key milestones along the victim or witness pathway

The failure of CJS agencies to maintain the engagement of victims or witnesses at any point may result in fewer offenders being brought to justice and less confidence in the system.



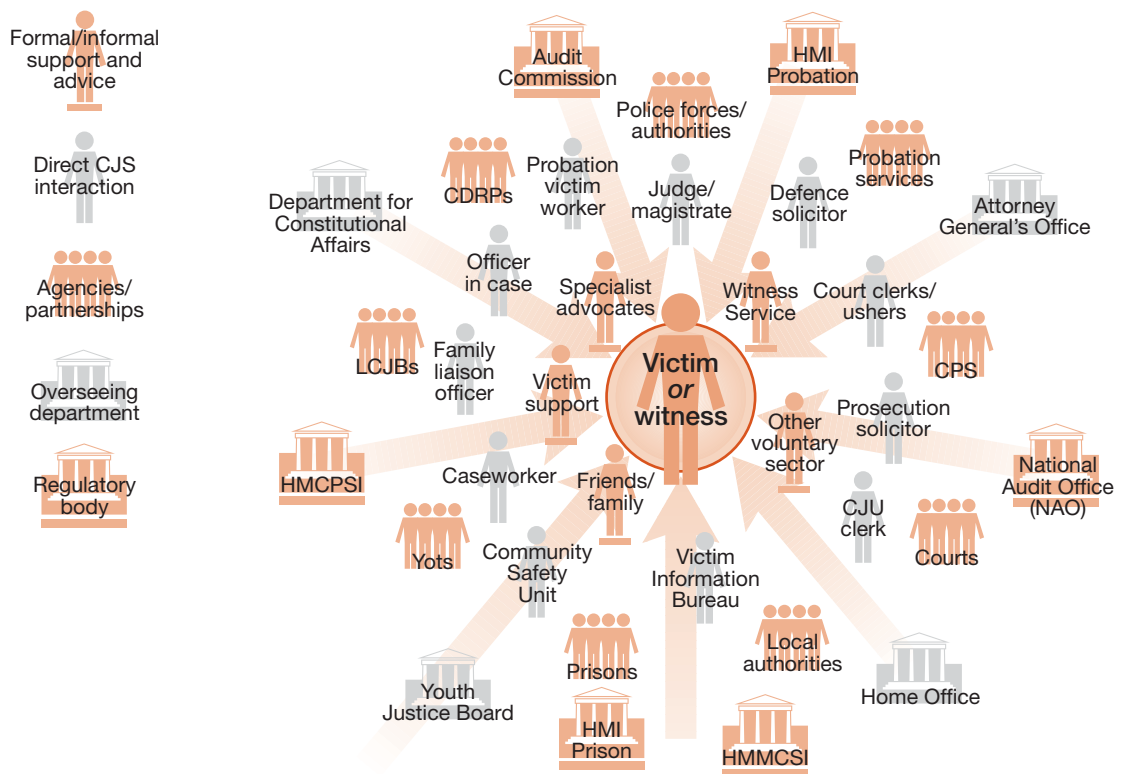
Source: Audit Commission

8 How well the agencies within the CJS work individually and together directly affects how victims and witnesses are treated at each stage of the pathway. A vast array of individuals, agencies, government departments and regulatory bodies may be involved in specifying, delivering or regulating victim and witness care (Exhibit 5). The key CJS agencies are guided by service delivery targets and standards, such as the Victim's Charter and National Standards of Witness Care (both adopted in 1996). Other types of engagement with victims and witnesses are much more ad hoc and the evidence suggests that people do not know that these exist or where to find them. Furthermore, research for this report found that the reality rarely matches the vision, and there is little in the way of accountability if standards are not achieved or if service is poor.

Exhibit 5

Service provision and regulation to victims and witnesses

A vast array of individuals, agencies, departments, voluntary sector organisations and regulatory bodies can be involved in victim and witness care.



Source: Audit Commission

Police, CPS, Court Service, Probation Service, Prison Service.

- 9 Improving confidence and rebalancing the CJS in favour of victims are key themes in the Government's CJS White Paper, *Justice for All*, published July 2002 (Ref. 9). At both a national and local level, there have been a plethora of initiatives and reforms aimed at improving support for victims and witnesses. However, most initiatives have addressed specific issues in individual agencies such as the Direct Communication with Victims Project introduced by the CPS, (see paragraph 74, page 37) and not more systemic weaknesses. In addition, there has been a lack of independent evaluation to establish whether these initiatives and reforms are meeting the needs of victims and witnesses or improving the efficiency of services on the ground.
- 10 Recently, the government published its national strategy for victims and witnesses (Ref. 3), along with a framework document for improving public satisfaction and confidence in the CJS (Ref. 10). In April 2003, 42 non-statutory local criminal justice boards (LCJBs) were created to strengthen joint working at a local level. Each LCJB comprises the key CJS agency chief officers.
- 11 Among other responsibilities, LCJBs are charged with delivering a CJS national public service agreement (PSA) target to:
improve the level of public confidence in the CJS, including increasing that of ethnic minority communities, and increasing year on year the satisfaction of victims and witnesses, whilst respecting the rights of defendants.
- 12 This target is owned by the three government departments responsible for the CJS – the Home Office, the Department for Constitutional Affairs and the Attorney General's Office. This is a helpful start in realigning the perspective of CJS agencies to put the victim at the heart of the CJS. Below this overarching objective, however, agency targets are concerned with 'process' rather than outcome and are not sufficiently informed by the user. A recent Audit Commission report on the use of targets^I highlighted that in order for national targets to be effective, they must be supported by a robust performance management framework which aligns user expectations and service priorities and, in doing so, motivates frontline staff.
- 13 The current lack of knowledge around the demand for services means that CJS agencies alone are unable to plan targets and resources effectively and tailor services to the needs of individuals and diverse groups. While the BCS provides a more comprehensive picture about victims' and witnesses' experiences of the CJS^{II} and is useful for national monitoring, BCS data cannot be used to inform local improvement, as the sample sizes are too small to be significant at a CJS area level. Thus, there needs to be a closer relationship between the CJS and wider crime reduction partners, such as local authorities and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPS).
- 14 A Witness Satisfaction Survey (WSS) was conducted in 2000 and 2002, in order to obtain a broad indication of the satisfaction of witnesses, both generally and with specific CJS agencies. The surveys questioned victim witnesses, prosecution and

I Targets in the Public Sector, Audit Commission September 2003.

II For example, satisfaction with speed of response, manner of treatment, provision of information and support offered.

defence witnesses and child witnesses. The important point to note is that the WSS only surveys people attending court who are willing to participate and where a court verdict has been reached. Therefore, it samples a small percentage of all victims and witnesses who engage with the CJS, and an even smaller percentage of all people who experience crime and disorder. As such, the survey misses a whole range of people who drop out of the system along the way and the results do not reflect the views of all victims and witnesses.

- 15 Around £13 billion is spent annually on the CJS. Apart from just over £29 million that is currently allocated to Victim Support,¹ no specific funding stream is attached to victim and witness care and no activity based costing exists in this area of service delivery. This absence of financial data, combined with the lack of a framework for managing performance, means that accurately evaluating the cost effectiveness of current services is impossible.
- 16 The following chapters cover in more detail what happens to victims and witnesses of crime and disorder as they travel along the pathway. They explore the reasons for dissatisfaction and an unwillingness to engage with the agencies that are responsible for addressing problem behaviour. Chapter 2 looks at the reasons why victims and witnesses are reluctant to report incidents and addresses the need for a better approach to responding to disorderly and antisocial behaviour.

¹ Victim Support is a national charity comprising a network of local schemes across England and Wales. Trained staff and volunteers work to deliver the organisation's two main aims: (1) to provide support and assistance to individual victims, witnesses, their families and friends; and (2) to raise public awareness and recognition of the effects of crime and to promote victims' rights.

2



Incident to report

Less than one-half of all victims of crime report the incident to the police. Around one-third of people experience disorderly or antisocial behaviour that makes them feel unsafe or reduces their quality of life. Police and local authorities need to understand the demand from victims and witnesses for help, support and protection and be better geared to meet demand and respond appropriately.

- 17 The previous chapter set out the environment and context of why improvement in victim and witness care is an issue for government. It looked at some of the steps being taken to address problems within the system. This chapter looks at what happens after an incident takes place and how this, and other factors, impact upon the likelihood of victims and witnesses reporting incidents to the authorities.
- 18 MORI research for this study (Ref. 8) found that 33 per cent of victims do not report incidents that **they perceive to be a crime** to the police. The majority do not do so because they believe that the police will not take action (Table 1).

Table 1
Non-reporting of crime

Thirty-three per cent of victims and 61 per cent of witnesses do not report to the police.

Victims

Reporting	67%	
Not reporting	33%	Top five reasons of victims and witnesses
		Did not think the police would do anything
		Incident was too trivial
		I could not be bothered
		It was a private matter
		It happens 'all the time'

Witnesses

Reporting	38%	
Not reporting	61%	Top five reasons of victims and witnesses
		Someone else reported or the police were present
		Did not want to get involved
		Did not think the police would do anything
		It happens 'all the time'
		I could not be bothered

Source: MORI (Ref. 8)

- 19 Unreported incidents – whether they are crimes or not – allow patterns of adverse behaviour to remain unchecked, creating a potential risk of repeat offending with consequential repeat victimisation. The task facing the police, local authorities and other agencies providing support to local communities is to minimise the factors that inhibit people from reporting incidents. This chapter explores the key issues that affect the willingness of victims and witnesses to begin engaging with the authorities by looking at:
- understanding the prevalence of crime and disorder;
 - victims' and witnesses' expectations of authorities; and
 - managing demand.

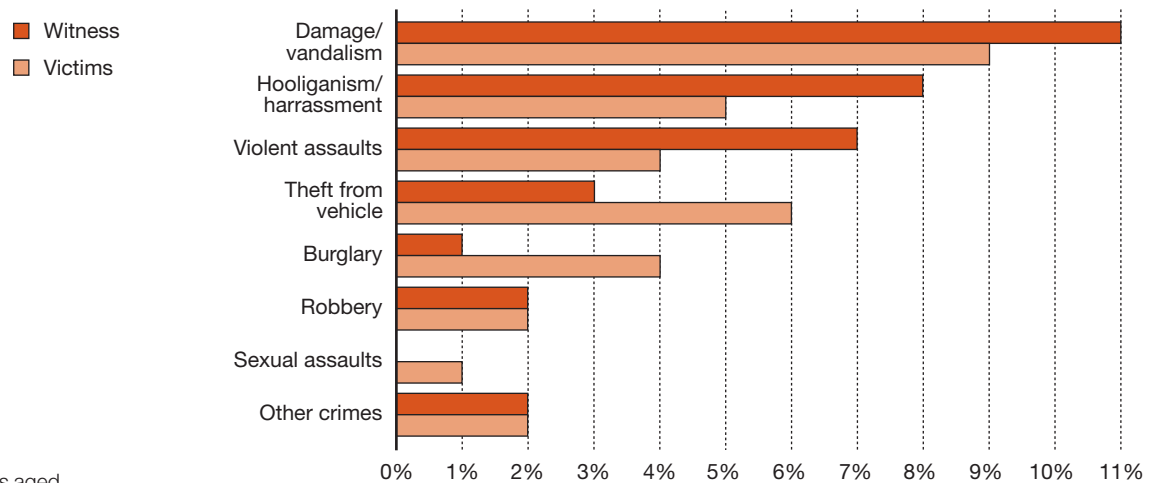
Understanding the prevalence of crime and disorder

20 Results from the MORI omnibus^I show that 23 per cent of respondents thought that they had been a victim of crime within the last year, comparable to the figure of 27 per cent given in the 2002/03 BCS (Ref. 1). The MORI research also found that 23 per cent of respondents said that they had personally witnessed a crime during the same period. However, in many cases the incidents they refer to are ones that would not count as a 'crime' under the National Crime Recording Standard (Exhibit 6). This highlights a significant difference in perception between the public and the CJS.

Exhibit 6

Prevalence of crime and disorder (self-reported)

Damage/vandalism is the most common type of incident experienced by victims and witnesses.



Source: MORI (Ref. 8)^{II}

- ^I Base: 1759 males and females aged 15+ interviewed in 198 sample points across England and Wales between 5th and 10th June 2003 (Ref. 8).
- ^{II} Percentages do not add up to 23 as some victims and witnesses may fall into more than one category.
- ^{III} The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Ref. 12) defines antisocial behaviour as acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household. This definition is being updated in the Antisocial Behaviour Bill (Ref. 13) to behaviour by a person which causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm, distress to one or more other persons not of the same household as the person.

21 It is important to note that these figures are based on personal perceptions of what a crime is. Assessing the prevalence of disorder is more difficult still, due to the absence of formal, consistent definitions and counting rules used by both CJS agencies and community safety partners, such as local authorities. Research by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) (Ref. 11) found that an unclear and inconsistent definition of antisocial behaviour was a key barrier to agencies devising effective interventions to deal with such behaviour. Although Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) frequently use the terms 'disorder', 'youth nuisance' and 'antisocial behaviour' in crime and disorder strategies, there is sometimes a lack of consensus between members about what behaviours these terms refer to.^{III} These issues of common definition were examined in Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) thematic inspection report *Calling Time on Crime* (Ref. 14).

- 22 Antisocial behaviour is perceived differently in different places. These differences are due to the context in which such behaviour takes place, the location, the tolerance levels of the local community and people's expectations about quality of life in the area. For around one-third of people, antisocial behaviour (such as harassment, vandalism, littering, or teenagers 'hanging around') makes them feel unsafe and reduces their quality of life (**Ref. 2**). This is particularly true for people who live in deprived areas, who are at greater risk of becoming crime victims and can be more reluctant to report such incidents.
- 23 The statutory CDRP is a good forum for police and local authorities to understand the prevalence of both crime and disorder. To start to identify the overall amount and nature of reported antisocial behaviour in England and Wales, the Antisocial Behaviour Unit in the Home Office recently held a one-day count of reports of acts of antisocial behaviour. They segmented behaviours into four types:
- misuse of public space;
 - disregard for community/personal wellbeing;
 - acts directed at people; and
 - environmental damage.
- CDRPs now need to build on this to develop a fuller understanding of problems in their local areas.
- 24 Victims and witnesses have individual expectations of the authorities to deal with criminal, disorderly and antisocial behaviour. These expectations, and whether or not victims and witnesses feel that they will be met, are a key factor in deciding to report incidents.

Victims' and witnesses' expectations of authorities

- 25 CJS agencies and local authorities need to respond in a way that meets more closely victims' and witnesses' expectations. Where the capacity or willingness of the authorities to respond is low, people are less likely to report problems. This can mean that minor incidents escalate into bigger problems, which are more resource intensive to resolve (**Case study 1**).
- 26 To win the trust and confidence of victims and witnesses, the criminal justice agencies – and the police in particular – must respond appropriately to each report of an incident. Research has shown that the public has either a negative, or at best, a neutral view about whether local public services respond appropriately or 'keep their promises' (**Ref. 15**). Police and local authorities must recognise that reporting is the crucial first stage where victim and witness expectations are set, and they must work together to develop a common understanding of the problems and potential solutions.

Case study 1

Leslie's story

Leslie regularly witnesses antisocial behaviour on the estate where he lives and is abused and threatened by local youths when he leaves his home. He is unwilling to report what he sees because he does not trust the police or the council's housing service to support him. Leslie feels that the police and the council 'tolerate' antisocial behaviour and do not have a 'serious determination or will' to investigate the incidents. Local residents recently petitioned the council to take action against the worst offenders, but Leslie says the council did nothing, and, following intimidation by some of the offenders, the residents withdrew their petition. Leslie is now highly reluctant to report information to the police because he fears reprisals by the perpetrators and feels isolated and unsupported.

Source: Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) (Ref. 16)

- 27 A snapshot survey of CDRPs found that only 33 per cent currently have a strategy for victims and witnesses and 39 per cent have a champion for victim and witness issues.¹ While they may appreciate where the weaknesses in the current system lie (**Box B**), many CDRPs are underestimating the role that they could play in improving services to victims and witnesses, and are not yet working strategically with LCJBs to deliver this.

Box B

CDRPs' concerns about services to victims and witnesses

CDRPs' top concern about service provision to victims and witnesses is a lack of communication and information.

CDRPs were asked to list their top three concerns about the provision of services to victims and witnesses in their area. Sixty-four CDRPs responded to the survey, with the following themes emerging:

Theme	Number CDRPs	Percentage CDRPs
Communication and information	33	52%
Availability of support for victims and witnesses	27	42%
Intimidation of victims and witnesses	15	23%
Repeat victimisation	8	13%
Resources for victim and witness care	8	13%
Facilities for victims and witnesses	6	9%
Antisocial behaviour	3	5%

Source: Audit Commission

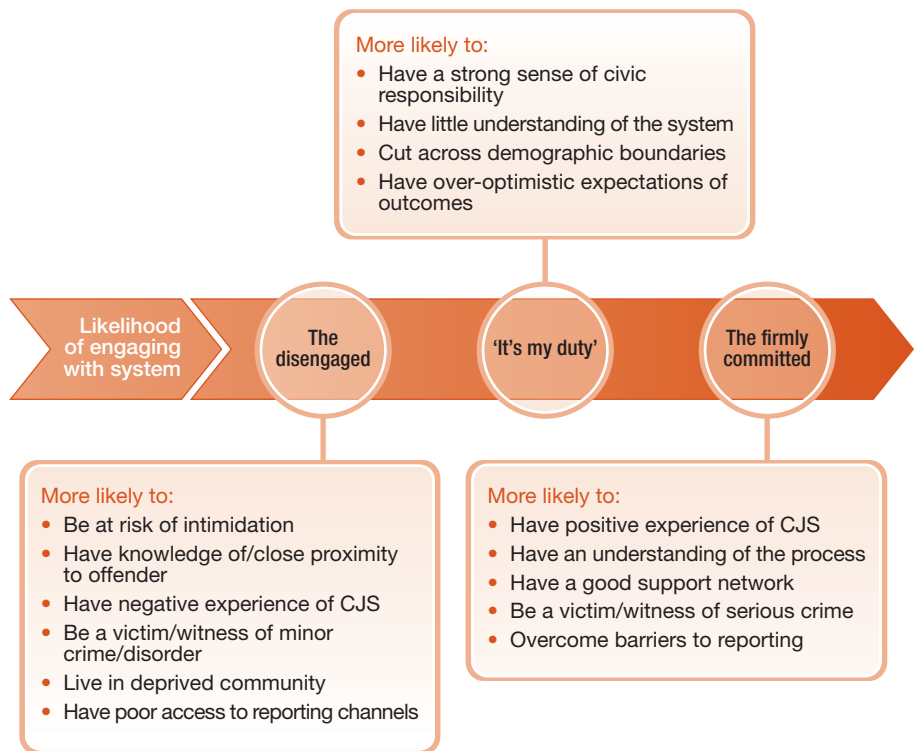
¹ Of the 64 CDRPs that responded to the Audit Commission survey.

28 MORI research for this project identified three broad types of attitudes towards the CJS. These attitudes provide a first step in understanding what makes some victims and witnesses engage but not others (**Exhibit 7**). While the model looks specifically at the CJS, it could equally apply to engagement with local authority services dealing with disorder and antisocial behaviour.

Exhibit 7

Likelihood of engagement with the CJS

Victims and witnesses can be categorised according to their attitudes towards the CJS.



Source: MORI (Ref. 8)

29 Different types of victims and witnesses expect different types of responses. For example, the lone elderly person who experiences regular littering of their front garden by local youths may feel more victimised than a young man robbed on a single occasion for his mobile phone. Although only the latter is a crime and therefore fits the criteria for a police response, both of these people would expect that if they reported the matter to the police, action of some kind would be taken. The gap between expectation and actual response determines how satisfied a person will be and this can change over time (**Box C**).

Box C

Categorising expectations by time

Short term expectation	Medium term expectation	Long term expectation
Outcomes:	Outcomes:	Outcomes:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victim is visibly helped or protected. The offender's actions are constrained. Helpful information is given to the victim, for example, a crime number and sources of further assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What happens next is explained clearly. The incident is investigated. The offender is identified. The offender is punished. The victim or witness receives support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The offender is kept away from the victim/witness. The offender is rehabilitated. The offender stops offending.

Source: Audit Commission

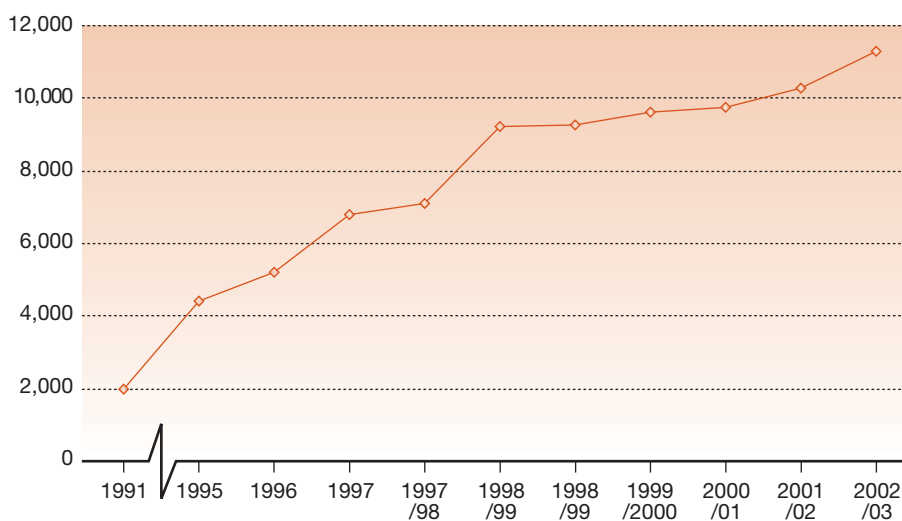
- 30 Victims and witnesses also expect to be protected from future victimisation or intimidation by offenders or their acquaintances. The likelihood of such intimidation or repeat victimisation is a key factor in their decision to report crime and disorder. Reducing the risk and fear of such intimidation is therefore crucial to ensuring that victims and witnesses stay engaged with the system.
- 31 Research over the past decade has shown that intimidation occurs in just under 10 per cent of all reported crime and 20 per cent of unreported crime (**Ref. 17**). In many more cases, victims and witnesses will fear such intimidation. Cases of perverting the course of justice have increased six-fold since 1991 and more than doubled since 1997/98 (**Exhibit 8, overleaf**). This category of crime includes threatening witnesses and suggests a rising trend in this kind of intimidation.
- 32 The potential for people to be repeatedly victimised is greatest when adequate support and protection are not easily available or sustainable. Recent research shows that people who are on low incomes and/or who are lone parents are at a greater risk of being repeat victims (**Ref. 18**). Some respondents to the TPAS survey (**Ref. 16**) said that visits by uniformed police and council officials can often be highly visible and add to their problems (**Case study 2, overleaf**).

Exhibit 8

Incidence of perverting the course of justice 1991-2002/03

A six fold increase in incidence of perverting the course of justice suggests a rise in the intimidation of witnesses.

Recorded crime by offence: perverting the course of justice



Source: Crime in England & Wales 2002-03 (Ref. 1)¹

They [the police] were on about having protection for us but they just didn't want to listen no matter how many times I rang them.

Victim of serious crime

Case study 2

Philip's story

Philip lives on a housing estate and will not make statements about the crime and disorder he has witnessed because he perceives that there is a high risk that the perpetrators will retaliate. His home has been burgled twice, each incident witnessed by a neighbour who also refused to make statements. Another neighbour reported witnessing a fight to the police; a police car arrived and parked outside her house and the next day her front fence was 'smashed to pieces'. So far, Philip's own losses through burglary have cost him £5,000. He describes the estate where he lives as having a climate that allows the 'offenders on the streets to continue doing whatever it is they wish to do', and says that behaviour will continue unchecked until local residents regain trust in the police and in other local agencies.

Source: TPAS (Ref. 15)

- 33 Fieldwork suggested that identification of repeat victimisation is an area in need of improvement (Case study 3). For example, Race Equality Council (REC) officers reported that the better reporting of hate crime has resulted in greater numbers of individual reports of hate crime, rather than better identification of linked incidents. Recording incidents in this way may not reflect the true nature of repeat victimisation, making it more difficult to provide an appropriate response.

¹ Two sets of data for 1998/99 reflect the impact of a change in the counting rules that came into effect 1 April 1998.

Case study 3

Reading REC

Reading REC is working with Thames Valley Police's local Community and Race Relations Officer (CARRO) to improve understanding of race crime. The organisation's work in analysing reports of potential racist incidents to the police and the Local Education Authority has identified that:

- antisocial behaviour is not recorded by the police and so potential racial harassment may not be recognised sufficiently early to prevent repeat victimisation;
- current methods record incidents separately, failing to immediately identify potential repeat victimisation (for example, multiple instances of racial abuse by one offender were not always connected); and
- the local CARRO had an effective presence in the community, helping to raise confidence and reporting rates.

Source: Audit Commission

- 34 Deciding to report incidents can be a major step for victims and witnesses. Once this decision has been made, the agencies involved need to respond to such demand appropriately and recognise that quality of service at the first point of contact is crucial.

Managing demand

- 35 A member of the public can currently report problem behaviour in a number of ways (**Exhibit 9, overleaf**). Feedback from victims and witnesses^I shows that the ease or difficulty of reporting crime greatly influences perceptions of the adequacy of the eventual response. Victims and witnesses strongly criticised the following common difficulties in accessing help:
- being connected by telephone to the wrong person;
 - being asked to leave a message with a person or on an answering machine;
 - leaving messages that remain unanswered; and
 - impersonal attitudes of central switchboard or call centre staff.
- 36 There is a lack of useful information about how people report incidents. For example, there are no meaningful national data that describe incident type, reporting method or victim/witness demographics. The absence of data makes any prediction about service levels or reporting preferences impossible – a major barrier to proper management of demand. Useful data about reporting preferences do exist for some crimes. For example, Metropolitan Police data^{II} show that, in one monitoring period, 62 per cent of victims of domestic violence reported by 999 call compared with 17 per cent in person at a police station. The comparable figures for victims of hate crime were 37 per cent and 27 per cent. While some forces do record data about reporting preferences, this tends to be piecemeal and is not generally used to inform response planning.

^I TPAS survey (**Ref. 15**).

^{II} Source: Performance and Information Bureau, Metropolitan Police Service.

Exhibit 9

Examples of reporting channels

Most victims and witnesses will report problem behaviour directly to the police.



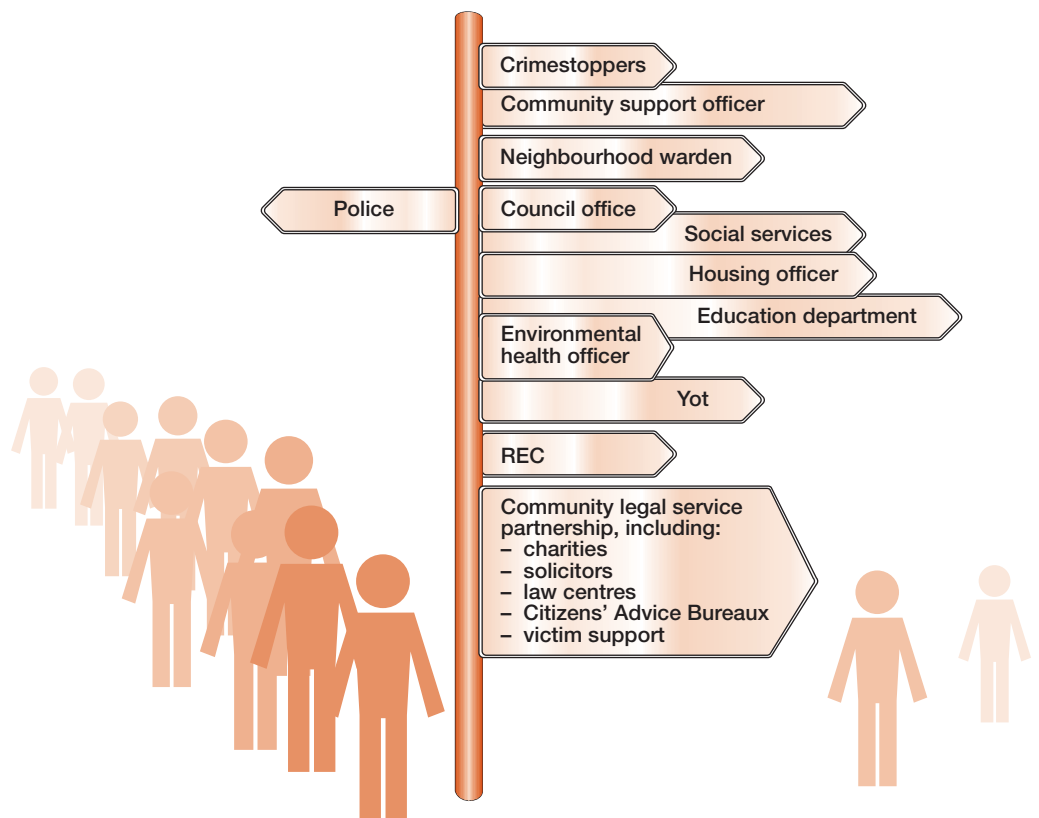
Source: Audit Commission

- 37 As a highly visible, accessible and 24-hour public service, the police receive most reports of disorder and antisocial behaviour, even though they may not be the best-placed or most appropriate agency to respond. The challenge for local authorities is to configure resources to enable them to respond to those incidents that require immediate, as well as long-term, solutions and that may be provided by more than one service provider. Victims and witnesses then need to be signposted to the most appropriate reporting channel (**Exhibit 10**).
- 38 Other agencies, notably local authorities, have statutory duties with regard to crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour. A survey of 65 local authorities conducted for this study (Appendix 1) found:
- a marked difference in attitude between local authority and police responses to reports or complaints of antisocial behaviour, meaning that local authority response times are longer with less immediacy;
 - that the few local government performance indicators that do exist fail to match police response targets; and
 - that there is little clear accountability for action over referred reports of antisocial behaviour.

Local authorities therefore need to address responsiveness and tailor services more closely to the seriousness of the incident in order to deliver more satisfactory services in this area.

Exhibit 10**Alternative sources of reporting and referral for victims and witnesses**

Other agencies or individuals may be better placed to respond quickly and appropriately, and will divert some demand away from the police.



Source: Audit Commission

- 39** The police National Intelligence Model (NIM) uses local intelligence to understand all policing issues in an area, including criminality, disorder and antisocial behaviour. This analysis allows managers to make informed decisions about what their strategic priorities are, to manage identified risks and allocate resources effectively where they can make most impact.¹ However, local authority partners do not currently have a framework in place to allow them to benefit from such an approach, especially in relation to tasking and responding to non-crime problem behaviour.

¹ Source: www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/national_intelligence_model/national_intelligence_model_main.asp

- 40 Some areas have started to design services that are more tailored to the convenience of users (**Case study 4**). Key to being able to do this is an understanding of the demand profile facing the agencies, and from this being able to plan the resources necessary to deal with this demand, from the initial communication and response, through to investigation and resolution. This approach also creates the possibility of sharing call centres that are already in use by one agency, thereby streamlining reporting channels.

Case study 4

Atlas Court Integrated Call Centre

Public communication with the police is seen as an end-to-end process that must be managed throughout.

A new integrated multi-media contact centre at Atlas Court aims to improve South Yorkshire Police's service to the public. Atlas Court will consolidate the police's area communications rooms, crime recording, PNC^I and PHOENIX^{II} operations in one location. Call handlers will provide public services beyond simple query handling, for example, crime prevention advice and local intelligence gathering. A key aim is to deal with as many calls as possible at first contact. Call handlers will be supported by a database of frequently asked questions (FAQs) to ensure that callers are given accurate and consistent information and are referred to the correct people or agency.

A 'systems approach' to managing calls makes customer interaction an end-to-end process where satisfaction is influenced at each stage. This approach means that commitments made to callers will be treated as contracts to be fulfilled – for example, all call-backs should be made at the agreed time. Call handlers will have access to information to identify, for example, if a caller is a vulnerable person or repeat victim. After public consultation, the centre includes more modern communication methods to meet specific needs (for example, text messaging for the deaf community).

Source: Audit Commission

- 41 Responding to the challenges of managing demand requires an assessment of the existing and additional resources that can be used to improve victim and witness care. In many areas a variety of funding streams exist under the umbrella of Area Based Initiatives (ABIs), which are co-ordinated by the Regional Co-ordination Unit in the ODPM.^{III} Many ABIs support crime reduction outcomes that are highly compatible with better victim and witness care. Access to projects and available ABI funding is more achievable with good co-ordination between LCJBs, CDRPs, Drug Action Teams (DATs) and youth offending teams (Yots). A combined effort using the capacity of LCJBs and CDRPs to target and bid for funding could potentially make a difference to the resourcing of victim and witness initiatives at local level.

- 42 The next chapter follows the progress of victims and witnesses who do decide to report incidents. It looks at the factors that impact on their decision to engage or disengage with the process up to the case being heard at court.

^I Police National Computer.

^{II} Police Home Office Extended Name Index.

^{III} Via www.government-offices.gov.uk

Key messages and recommendations

1. Victims and witnesses do not differentiate between crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour – but CJS agencies and local authorities do.

Recommendations

- Local CJS and community safety partners should:
 - ensure that recording systems use the agreed definitions and are capable of collating and sharing data; and
 - use these data and other local information to understand the nature, prevalence and patterns of crime and disorder affecting communities and individuals.

2. Many CDRPs are underestimating the role that they could play in improving services to victims and witnesses, and are not yet working strategically with LCJBs to deliver this.

Recommendations

- Local authority chief executives should use their duties under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, to co-ordinate activities relating to victims and witnesses with LCJBs, to provide better read-across between civil and criminal cases and greater access to local information.

3. Expectations and needs differ between and within neighbourhoods, communities and individuals. Failure by the police and other authorities to respond appropriately may cause an escalation of the problem behaviour, damage community confidence and leave the door open for intimidation and repeat victimisation.

Recommendations

- In order to secure engagement, agencies need to understand and manage victims' and witnesses' individual expectations, from initial response through to longer-term outcomes.
- LCJBs, CDRPs and voluntary organisations need to share information to identify 'root causes' of intimidation and repeat victimisation.
- All agencies, including voluntary sector partners, should develop co-ordinated responses to intimidation and repeat victimisation, using organisations with local credibility to provide targeted support.

4. The police and local authorities lack comprehensive information about victims and witnesses and about how demand is currently being met. As such, they cannot accurately target resources in the most efficient way.

Recommendations

- To understand demand and respond appropriately, police and local authorities should develop a framework for gathering information about victims and witnesses, their reporting behaviour and preferences.

- Police and local authorities should develop a co-ordinated approach to dealing with calls and reports to ensure that resources are best directed to meet victims' and witnesses' needs.
- Local partnerships, for example, LCJBs and CDRPs should:
 - involve local communities in designing services for victims and witnesses, using common standards and performance targets;
 - improve inter-agency co-ordination in order to obtain better value from available resources;
 - borrow from the principles of the police NIM to analyse, task and respond to antisocial behaviour in a targeted, consistent way; and
 - monitor performance and develop good practice.

3



Report to court

Once victims and witnesses report a crime to the police, they face a potentially long and complicated pathway that can cause them a wide range of practical and emotional difficulties. The CJS agencies and voluntary sector need to work together to meet the need for individual support and information and to ensure that victims and witnesses feel able to attend court.

- 43 The previous chapter reported on the barriers that victims and witnesses face when deciding whether to report crime and disorder to the authorities. It also covered some of the difficulties that the agencies involved have in responding to the expectations of victims and witnesses. The report from here concentrates mainly on what happens to people who have been a victim or a witness of a recorded crime, from the initial police response through to court and afterwards. It is important to note that, either through choice or for other reasons, millions (Ref. 1) of people every year disengage with the system before any criminal investigation takes place.
- 44 Victims and witnesses have very different experiences and circumstances at the point at which they come into contact with the CJS. This means that their need for support, advice and guidance and their expectations about court differ greatly too. MORI research has identified four types of victims/witnesses, sitting along a 'continuum' of expectations and needs (Exhibit 11).

Exhibit 11

Characteristics of different types of victims and witnesses

Victims and witnesses can range from the very vulnerable to the confident.



It needs to be remembered that at the heart of the process is the issue of the treatment of the victim...the best evidence can only be gleaned from the best treated victim...our findings reveal that there is much that can be done by the police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), sometimes in conjunction with other organisations, to enhance the treatment of victims and the collection and presentation of evidence.

HM Chief Inspector of CPS, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary (Ref. 19)

- 45 The key factors that help to determine these types of victims and witnesses include:
- the perceived severity of the incident;
 - prior or potential exposure to intimidation;
 - previous experience of court;
 - the type and level of information received;
 - the number of delays experienced as the case progresses; and
 - the type and level of support received from agencies, family and friends.

- 46 It is important that these different types of victims and witnesses are recognised so that agencies can provide a more targeted approach to the delivery of guidance, advice and support services prior to and at court. Currently, however, this targeting rarely happens, with more vulnerable and nervous victims and witnesses not always getting the level of help that they need.

- 47 This chapter explores what currently happens when a victim or witness reports a crime to the police and the subsequent investigation of this crime. It identifies the key considerations for Government and the CJS agencies involved in improving this experience by looking at:
- the initial police response;
 - support to victims and witnesses; and
 - information and communication.

The chapter goes on to suggest ways to address the problem issues, outlining national initiatives and local good practice that contribute to improvement.

Initial police response

- 48 Evidence suggests that the first contact that a victim or witness has with the CJS is instrumental in shaping their perceptions of future service. People's experience of reporting crime and the initial response they receive will, therefore, impact not only on their satisfaction with the police, but also on their confidence that the CJS as a whole will deal professionally with their case and secure the best outcome.
- 49 As the first CJS agency to have contact with victims and witnesses following a report of crime, the police has an important role to play in keeping them engaged.¹ In an ideal world, the police would be able to investigate thoroughly every report of crime. The public, including victims of crime, acknowledge that this is not always possible and, indeed, that this would be a poor use of resources in many instances. But even in cases where police and victim agree that there is little likelihood of the perpetrator being found, those affected by the crime still need to feel that there was a point to them making the report and that their experience has been taken seriously.

¹ The 1996 Victim's Charter sets out what happens after an offence has been reported to the police and the standards of service that should be expected.

- 50 Data show that the overall satisfaction of victims with the police handling of their case is substantially higher when they have had face-to-face contact (**Table 2**). Satisfaction with the level of information provided by the police is far lower than the other factors relating to quality of service.

Table 2

Victim satisfaction with police handling of matter^I

	Respondents saying 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied			
	White	Asian	Black	All victims
All contact	59%	60%	47%	58%
Face-to-face contact				62%
No face-to-face contact				50%
Didn't have to wait/waited a reasonable amount of time for police				71%
Police showed enough interest				63%
Police put enough effort into dealing with the matter				57%
Victims kept well informed by the police				31%

Source: *Crime in England and Wales 2001/2002 (Ref. 7)*

- 51 From the moment a member of the public makes a witness statement, they are entering into an agreement that they will give evidence in court if required. However, evidence from fieldwork suggests that not all police officers make this clear to victims and witnesses at the time that a statement is taken. While the decision to prosecute is that of the CPS, cases are unlikely to proceed unless the co-operation of key witnesses has been secured from the outset.

- 52 Research by MORI (**Ref. 8**) found that initial contact with the police was a highly positive experience for many victims and witnesses, with officers generally perceived as helpful and supportive. This was supported by the quantitative findings, with 70 per cent of victims and 69 per cent of witnesses reporting that they were well treated by the police.

I felt a bit like he [the PC] actually cares, he's not just doing it 'cos it's his job. I know he was, but at the time it was a bit more like they were actually keeping an eye on us, checking we were alright.

Victim of crime – post-case interview

^I Of incidents that the police came to know about.

^{II} There is no absolute definition of 'serious crime', but section 116 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (**Ref. 20**) identifies some 'serious arrestable offences', including murder, rape and kidnapping.

- 53 Satisfaction tended to be more marked for victims of 'serious'^{II} crime, who often experienced extreme sensitivity and support from the police.

I think they're trying really hard. I was treated very, very respectfully and I was surprised, really surprised...she [the police officer] works out of a domestic violence unit and she was my contact, I could call her any time.

Victim of serious crime

They were just so rude to me and didn't give a damn. I think that because I sound so young on the phone they didn't take me seriously.

Female witness, pre-case interview

- 54 By contrast, victims and witnesses of more 'minor' – but high-volume – crime were less likely to feel that they received the service they expected or deserved, leaving them feeling bitter about reporting the incident and about the CJS more generally (**Case study 5**). There is a lack of a 'customer service' ethos in relation to attitudes towards victims and witnesses, who are often thought of in terms of whether they are 'useful' or a 'burden'.

Case study 5

Incident handling

The victim reported a stolen scooter to police and went to the police station to give contact details – no statement was taken at the time. After the police recorded the details incorrectly, the victim was called by police on her home phone rather than mobile to say that the scooter had been found. On hearing the message she called the police and was informed that, having been left where it was found by officers (in an area with high levels of crime), the scooter had been re-stolen.

The police called the next day to say that they had arrested the offenders but that the scooter had been involved in an accident and taken to a pound, requiring the victim to pay to have it released. When the police later called at her house, the victim felt that they were more interested in having caught the offender than in taking a statement or discussing compensation.

Source: MORI (Ref. 8)

- 55 Having reported a crime to the police and provided a statement, victims' and witnesses' needs for additional support to cope with the aftermath of the crime vary, and they may not know where to turn. Current provision of support to victims and witnesses is patchy, varying from area to area.

Support to victims and witnesses

It was like, 'case is coming up, are you okay?'...he was always there, he always turned up on time. And they [police officers] would come round occasionally and sort of have another chat to you and things like that.

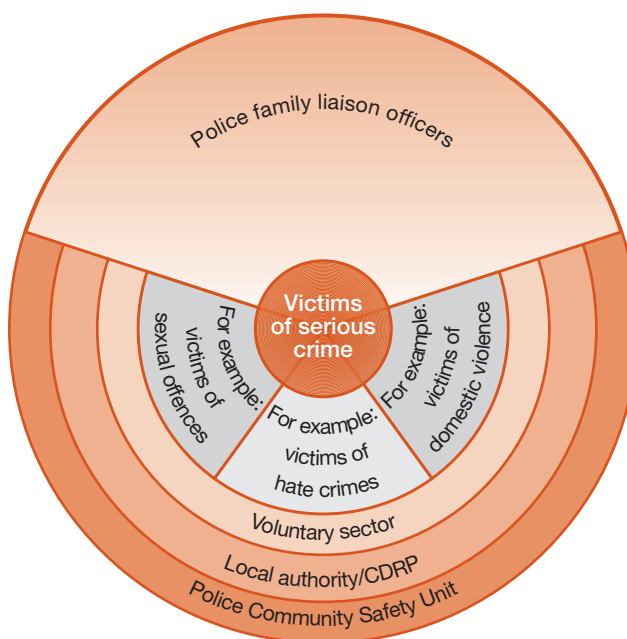
Victim of crime, post-case interview

- 56 Research shows that while satisfaction with initial police response is high, satisfaction then declines as the case progresses (**Ref. 21**). Whether support is available from the voluntary sector or not, the police still have a key role in supporting victims and witnesses, offering reassurance and practical help. As well as being important to the victims and witnesses, it helps to ensure that they stay engaged, thereby assisting the investigation and building the strongest possible case against the offender.
- 57 In a small minority of cases, more robust and ongoing support for victims may be provided by specialist police units or by other parts of the voluntary sector (**Exhibit 12, overleaf**). Organisations such as Leicester Witness Cocoon (LWC) (**Case study 6, overleaf**), who provide support for victims and witnesses of higher volume, more minor crime and disorder, are relatively rare.

Exhibit 12

Examples of specialist support

Victims of serious crime have access to more specialist support from local public services, the CJS and the voluntary sector.



Source: Audit Commission

Case study 6

Leicester Witness Cocoon (LWC)

Staffed by volunteers who are trained in supporting and advising witnesses, LWC works with local communities. LWC operates in partnership with the local Tenants' and Residents' Associations, the police, local authority and social landlords, as well as Victim Support/Witness Service and the Leicestershire Mediation Service. LWC provides support to witnesses, helping them to cope with the effects of crime and antisocial behaviour. Volunteers are supported by a small team of paid staff, who oversee work to ensure that witnesses are valued and their decisions supported. LWC volunteers enable witnesses to report and discuss crime and antisocial behaviour. By providing a confidential, reassuring environment, witnesses feel more willing to share both concerns and information. LWC advocates on behalf of witnesses, by communicating with, or accompanying them during contact with the police, council or other organisations. The average length of time for support is between 9 and 12 months, during which time there are an average of 147 contacts with, or on behalf of, the witness, and costing just over £40 per week per witness.

Source: Audit Commission

- 58 According to the International Crime Victimization Survey 2000 (Ref. 22), 18 per cent of victims of burglary and contact crime in England and Wales^I were supported by a specialist agency. A third of respondents stated that whilst they did not receive help, they would have appreciated such help. Where support is offered to victims of crime in the aftermath of a report to the police, this role is undertaken in the majority of cases by the national charity, Victim Support. This happens by the police referring victims to the charity through local crime reporting procedures. Among all incidents recorded by the police and reported to the 1998 BCS, around 29 per cent of victims remembered having some form of contact with Victim Support (Ref. 23) and 26 per cent of those people were subsequently visited by a volunteer.
- 59 Victim Support received almost 1.2 million referrals in 2000/01, 97 per cent of which were from the police. Referral rates vary depending on the area and on the nature of the crime; for example, police referrals for victims of burglary in their dwelling ranged from just over 20 per cent in one force to just under 100 per cent in another (Ref. 24).
- 60 Resources do not allow Victim Support, or any other specialist agency, to 'proactively' seek out and offer help to all victims of crime, let alone witnesses. Understandably, those crimes or victims where the greatest need has been identified take priority.
- 61 The 1998 BCS found that 74 per cent of general respondents and 79 per cent of victims had heard of Victim Support. However, only 10 per cent of crime victims recalled any form of contact.^{II} Those victims who had direct contact with Victim Support volunteers tended to rate it highly, particularly those that described themselves as 'very much affected' by the crime and those who said they had wanted 'someone to talk to' (Ref. 23). Exhibit 13, overleaf, shows that face-to-face contact results in the highest levels of satisfaction.
- 62 The 2002 Witness Satisfaction Survey^{III} found that 39 per cent of victim witnesses had contact with Victim Support and, of these, 83 per cent were satisfied (Ref. 25). However, the sample surveyed involves only those who had been called to give evidence in court and is not reflective of the full population of victims and witnesses.

I've got nothing but praise for Victim Support. I don't think they'll ever understand how much they actually helped me. It's being able to talk to someone about it you know?...they were a tower of strength right the way through the whole case.

Victim, post-case interview

If you are in a state and you don't know what to expect and you're also working you're not always going to phone. Whereas if I'd had a telephone call saying 'you have been a victim, is there anything they can do to help', then you're more inclined to take up the offer.

Victim, post-case interview

^I Burglary with entry, robbery, sexual incidents, assaults and threats.

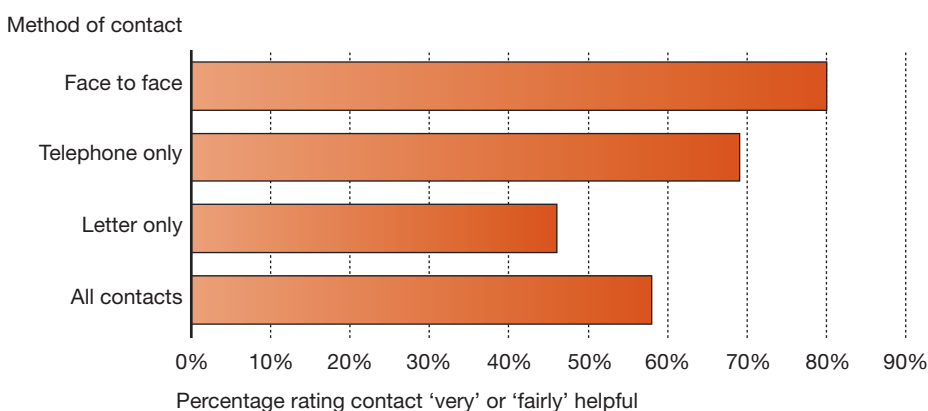
^{II} Allowing for non-recorded incidents, this translates to an estimated contact rate of 29 per cent for BCS comparable offences, compared with a referral estimate from Victim Support of 45 per cent.

^{III} Sample from witnesses in crown and magistrates' courts.

Exhibit 13

Percentage of those having contact with Victim Support rating it ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ helpful

Eighty per cent of victims who had face to face contact with Victim Support found it ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ helpful.



Source: 1998 BCS (Ref. 23)

- 64 Where cases are referred to Victim Support, people are generally positive about the service they receive. However, the referral process from the police is inconsistent. The majority of cases are not referred to any support agency and non-victim witnesses to crime are very rarely offered support. If victims and witnesses disengage from the system or the case does not proceed to charge, there are no support mechanisms in place to pick up any ongoing emotional or practical needs that they may have.
- 65 In 2002/03, total Home Office funding to Victim Support was £29.3 million. This comprised a block grant of £26 million for the provision of Victim Support’s community-based service and the Witness Service, a £2 million fund for increased support to vulnerable and intimidated witnesses and £1.3 million for additional support to victims of street crime.¹ The National Audit Office (NAO) review of Victim Support (Ref. 24) conducted in 2002 stated:

The continuing challenge for both the Home Office and Victim Support is to ensure that victims and witnesses have reasonable access to these services, irrespective of where they live, in particular that services are made accessible to those victims of unreported crime and defence witnesses who would like it

With regard to performance management, the NAO concluded :

the Home Office needs to clarify its specification of its priorities for Victim Support and strengthen its arrangements for monitoring the level and quality of service delivered and the financial sustainability of Victim Support.

¹ In conjunction with the Street Crime Initiative.

The Government’s national victim and witness strategy (Ref. 3) sets out a commitment to devolve the Witness Service funding to all LCJB areas by 2005/06.

- 66 Financial devolvement is based on the premise that resources should be linked with performance at the point closest to service delivery. Devolvement can offer opportunities to use alternative service providers. For devolved funding to be effective, there must be clear lines of accountability in place, strong corporate governance arrangements, well developed performance management frameworks and a set of service and quality standards in place. Our study of LCJBs *Local Criminal Justice Boards – Supporting Change Management* (July 2003) (Ref. 37) highlighted that LCJBs are non-statutory partnerships with accountability being made complex due to multiple accountabilities of the individual partners.
- 67 Alternative models for ensuring strong accountability for performance and ensuring that local Victim Support services continue to develop and maintain high satisfaction ratings from all victims are set in **Box A**. Whichever model is chosen, a critical success factor would be the role of the local authority chief executive in exercising their statutory duty under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998.

Box A

Title

Alternative 1 – Devolve Home Office funding for Victim Support charity to LCJBs

Advantages

- helps LCJBs to deliver confidence framework objectives to assess victim and witness support services and implement an action plan for improvement
- LCJBs have freedom to contract services locally
- 42 LCJB areas similar to 49 Victim Support regional structure helps in terms of administration and communications
- Victim Support has a chance to influence the LCJB decision making and become part of the solution

Disadvantages

- LCJBs are non-statutory and still in early development
- issues of accountability and corporate governance would have to be resolved
- there is little evidence of pooled budgeting by LCJBs – devolvement could be premature
- Independence of Victim Support as a charity could be compromised
- unclear how the crucial links with Local Authorities and CDRPs would take place

Alternative 2 – Local Authority and CDRP to be given duty for victim and witness support

Advantages

- Local Authority chief executive takes lead role for victims and witnesses in statutory CDRPs
- accountability and governance frameworks are already developed
- linking victim and witness support services to CDRPs gives access to crime reduction partners and close links with the crime reduction agenda

- local authority and CDRP has access to Area Based initiative funding which is concerned with dealing with causes of crime and disorder
- Victim Support branches are already actively working with CDRPs and provide police with local intelligence in relation to crime hotspots and low level harassment
- mainstream local authority services in housing, social services and education already include victim and witness care and work to tackle causes of antisocial behaviour

Disadvantages

- there could be insufficient linkage to the work of LCJBs where most of the dissatisfaction with process arises
- potential for fragmentation – over 350 CDRPs
- CPS are not ordinarily CDRP members so loss of direct contact would have to be managed separately or through LCJBs

Alternative 3 – Keep funding Victim Support nationally, introduce robust performance management framework and give Victim Support a place on the LCJB as ‘critical friend’ representing all victim groups

Advantages

- Victim Support could be lead agency for local voluntary sector so ensuring a more diverse representation
- robust performance framework would provide baseline assessment and intelligence which can be used as basis for future devolvement
- could be a first step towards evolving to other models
- ‘critical friend’ role offers challenge and expert assistance to LCJBs as they develop and implement their victim and witness action plans
- retaining charitable commitment of volunteers

Disadvantages

- value for money through option to contract locally would still have to be tested
- all voluntary sector partners may not wish to be represented by Victim Support

Alternative 4 – Police as lead agency for victim and witness care

Advantages

- Victim care is a core element of police activity – fits with duties of the police
- Victim Support staff are generally located in police premises and are seen as part of the police processes
- links to CDRPs already in place
- single point of contact which is operational 24 hours a day

Disadvantages

- would only cover crime victims
- potential to be disconnected from local authority crime reduction agenda
- another mechanism to link with health service would be needed
- Antisocial behaviour issues would have to be picked up elsewhere

The police were polite, helpful, understanding. They took a statement and everything seemed fine. I had a call from the police two days after the incident. They explained that the suspect was going to court on a number of offences. After that I heard nothing at all. I didn't pursue the police, but I did expect to hear more about what happened.

Victim of crime, pre-case interview

I think it would have been nice to have pre-empted in terms of a phone call, it would have been more personal, because you don't hear anything for a while...I think they need to look towards customer service really – to have a letter and find yourself going to court, well, I didn't feel adequately prepared.

Witness, post-case interview

- 68 An important part of meeting the emotional and practical needs of victims and witnesses is ensuring that they feel informed and empowered about their case. The way in which timely and appropriate information is communicated is therefore crucial to ensuring that victims and witnesses feel that they are an important part of the process and that they want to stay engaged.

Information and communication

- 69 Satisfaction with information provided by the police is low (Table 2). Large gaps in activity and information provision following a report of a crime lead to victims and witnesses feeling that their case is not being progressed and is not considered important enough to investigate properly. MORI research found that while initial experiences at the reporting stage are generally positive, post-incident information provision by the police is less consistent. Only one-quarter of both victims and witnesses surveyed for this project agreed that they were kept well informed about what was happening during their case.
- 70 Most victims and witnesses expect to hear something after an initial report – even if there is little progress to communicate. A lack of contact is often perceived as a lack of action. Where progress is made with the case, at the bare minimum, victims and witnesses want to be kept informed about key decisions and milestones during their case, including:
- whether a suspect has been arrested and charged;
 - how they are going to plead;
 - if the case is going to trial – and if so, where and when;
 - whether they will be required to give evidence;
 - what the outcome is likely to be; and
 - bail and conditions of bail.
- 71 In the majority of cases, information of this type is provided by the police criminal justice unit (CJU) or equivalent. The focus of these units tends to be on warning witnesses where and when to attend court, this is generally done via a standard computer-generated letter. The MORI research found criticism about the lack of personal contact experienced by many victims and witnesses after the initial reporting stage, particularly from those who were 'nervous' or 'concerned' about attending court.¹

¹ See Exhibit 11, page 27.

They kept phoning up and leaving messages with our reception 'would I phone X police station'...it was not appreciated because it's a fairly large building I work in and it took about 30 seconds for the rumours to start."

Victim of crime, post-case interview

- 72 However, other victims and witnesses, particularly those of less serious crimes, and those who were 'confident' or 'unworried' about attending court, felt that letters were an effective and appropriate way of conveying information, and were suitably unobtrusive. This shows the importance of a tailored approach to victim and witness care (**Case study 7**). Furthermore, reactions cannot be presumed; an outwardly confident person can be highly anxious about attending court, while a shy introvert can make the calmest, most credible witness.

Case study 7

Northumbria Police

To improve information provision to, and contact with, both victims and witnesses, Northumbria Police recently introduced a victim/witness database that enables all victims and witnesses to be updated at every stage of the case by letter, telephone, text or email (the choice is theirs).

Source: Audit Commission

- 73 According to the MORI research, those victims and witnesses who were most satisfied with the service they received tended to be those who had liaised with one officer throughout, building up trust and a relationship with them. Many of those who did not feel the need for regular contact nevertheless appreciated having a contact number that they could call for information if required (**Case study 8**).

Case study 8

Metropolitan Police's Victim Focus Desk

In November 2003, Southwark Basic Command Unit (BCU) launched the country's first cross-agency Victim Focus Desk, bringing together police, Victim Support and the Southwark Mediation Service. The aim of this desk is to provide an enhanced service to all victims of crime in Southwark (adhering to a 'victim first' principle) and, ultimately, to increase public confidence in the police.

The roles of the Victim Focus Desk include:

- providing a single point of contact for victims;
- contacting all victims of crime by telephone, providing an update on the investigation and the crime reference number;
- explaining why an investigation has failed or cannot be continued;
- contacting officers and directing them to victims if necessary;
- offering crime prevention advice and arranging visits from home beat officers, Police Community Safety Officers, or community wardens (where appropriate);
- making an instant referral to a Victim Support worker based in the same office;
- referring victims to specialist support for race, domestic and homophobic crimes;
- referring victims to the Southwark Mediation Service if appropriate;
- offering a free lock-fitting service to all vulnerable victims of crime; and
- providing personal alarms.

The desk aims to contact 95 per cent of victims of crime within two days. There are also satisfaction targets (80 per cent of victims very or fairly satisfied with the service received) and an annual target to reduce the fear of crime in the borough. The cost to the police of running the desk has been projected at £170,000 for 2003/04, rising to £241,000 in 2004/05. This is being met by the BCU Commander's fund, with Victim Support and the Mediation Service funded by a separate project until 2004/05.

Source: Audit Commission

Case study 9 Warwickshire Victim and Witness Information Partnership

The CJIT programme is funding a pilot initiative in Warwickshire that will bring all of the key agencies (police, CPS, probation, Yots, Victim Support, Witness Service, domestic violence and antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) co-ordinators) together in one building. The service, known as the Victim and Witness Information Partnership (VIP), will offer a more proactive, one-stop-shop service to victims and witnesses, 12 hours a day Monday to Friday and 8 hours on Saturdays.

Source: Audit Commission

- 74 How CJUs (or their equivalent) and their staff are configured varies greatly; increasingly, they include both police and CPS staff. The information that the units are able to pass on to victims and witnesses will only be as timely and reliable as the information they receive from other police departments and other agencies. Effective communication, with and between the agencies and the victims/witnesses is thus fundamental to information exchange. Fieldwork found that agencies are unsure what limitations the current data protection legislation places upon information sharing – interpretations of the legislation vary widely. The Government is tackling this in part through the Criminal Justice Information Technology (CJIT) programme¹ (**Case study 9**).
- 75 Historically, the CPS provided information that enabled the police to inform victims of any decision to drop or alter charges substantially. Under the Direct Contact with Victims (DCV) initiative (a key element of the CPS's approach to improving its service to victims and witnesses), the CPS assumes this responsibility. The DCV scheme requires the decision-making lawyer to provide a written explanation to all identifiable victims when a charge is discontinued or significantly altered. In the most serious cases, the victims should be offered a face-to-face meeting with the lawyer. Many areas have established a dedicated Victim Information Bureau, where caseworkers draft letters on behalf of lawyers.
- 76 MORI research for this project found that involvement with CPS solicitors and barristers was the element of the CJS with which victims and witnesses were least satisfied. Frequently mentioned was a lack of contact prior to the hearing and the subsequent unfamiliarity of solicitors with the case (**Case study 10**). This led to a lack of confidence in the quality of advocacy being received. Some witnesses also felt that they were not treated with respect or were ignored altogether.

Case study 10 Contact with CPS

The witness's first and only contact with the CPS was 'five minutes' before the case started. At this contact, the CPS lawyer told the witness that he had only been given the case file earlier than morning. Just after the start of the hearing, the magistrate threw the case out at the request of the defence because the prosecution had not established the case properly. Evidence that the witness had provided to the CPS had not been used.

Source: MORI (Ref. 8)

¹ Improving IT and information sharing, including a secure email initiative, by the end of 2005.

Key messages and recommendations

1. Many crimes do not merit proactive investigation, given that resources are stretched and the likelihood of ever identifying the perpetrator is slim. This perpetuates the impression that the police do not take crime seriously and may belittle victims' and witnesses' experiences.

Training for police officers and staff lacks an emphasis on victim and witness care, which may lead to inappropriate treatment from the outset of a crime report and impact negatively on overall satisfaction with, and confidence in, the CJS.

Recommendations

- Police need to manage victims' and witnesses' expectations about what they will and will not do in response to a report of crime.
- All police staff who come into contact with victims and witnesses, including front counter staff, call handlers and response officers should receive initial and refresher training in customer care and diversity issues.
- Customer care should be reflected in the competencies of staff in victim/witness contact roles.

2. A 'one size fits all' approach to victim and witness care fails to take account of differing needs. Early risk and needs assessment of victims and witnesses is poor in most cases, which often leads to a lack of appropriate support at a time when victims and witnesses may feel very disempowered.

Victims who are referred to Victim Support are generally positive about the service that they receive, but the referral process is inconsistent, the majority of cases are not referred to any support agency and non-victim witnesses to crime are very rarely offered support.

Local authorities and CDRPs have a critical role to play in victim and witness care.

If victims and witnesses disengage from the system or if the case does not proceed to charge, no support mechanisms are in place to pick up any ongoing emotional or practical needs they may have.

Recommendations

- LCJBs, in partnership with CDRPs, should conduct a local review of current support provision to victims and witnesses to identify gaps and to access resources for targeted support from a range of agencies.
- Identifying the broad characteristics of victims and witnesses, and tailoring support accordingly, will lead to a better targeted and more cost effective approach.
- Clearly defined service standards for Victim Support should exist at national and local levels, and service provision and value for money should be monitored by LCJBs as part of a comprehensive framework for managing the delivery of services to victims and witnesses.
- Once a baseline and robust set of information is in place, a new model of local service provision can be introduced within the context of a national framework.

Local authorities, CDRPs and LCJBs should have clear duties and accountabilities within this new model.

3. Poor communication with, and information for, victims and witnesses leads to a lack of confidence, a risk of disengagement and a reluctance to go through the process again.

The responsibility of agencies for communicating with victims and witnesses at each stage of the process is not always clear. Where more robust systems are in place for communicating with victims and witnesses, such systems are often standardised and impersonal.

Recommendations

- Better up-front communication between police and victims and witnesses is likely to save time in dealing with enquiries further down the line and will improve the satisfaction levels of victims and witnesses.
- Even where there are long periods of inactivity, while a case remains open, police should maintain contact with victims and witnesses.
- Where possible, the police and/or the CPS should configure resources to provide a single point of contact for victims and witnesses from report to court.
- Victims and witnesses should be asked what information they would like and in what format and these requirements should be met where feasible.

4. Agencies are unsure what limitations data protection legislation places on information sharing, and the handover of information between agencies can be poor. Greater co-operation between the statutory and voluntary agencies in exchanging information is essential in order to improve the quality of service that victims and witnesses receive.

Recommendations

- Protocols for information sharing and referral should be developed further to ensure that all relevant agencies are involved and that all victims and witnesses are included.^I
- The upgrading of CJS IT infrastructure should be used as an opportunity for breaking down cultural barriers to information sharing.

5. The CPS has a low public profile, which makes it seem out of touch to the general public. Victims and witnesses have little, if any, engagement with the CPS prior to court, in contrast to the profile of the defence solicitor/barrister role.

Recommendations

- Greater visibility of the CPS is needed to improve victims' and witnesses' perceptions of the level and quality of advocacy they receive.
- The CPS should be fully involved in local strategies to assess victim and witness risk and need, learning from the victim and witness care pilots.^{II}
- Consideration should be given to the inclusion of the CPS in local partnerships, such as CDRPs.

I The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and Victim Support have developed a victim referral agreement that ensures that victims' details are passed between the relevant agencies in a way that is data protection compliant, while giving victims the opportunity to say if they do not wish their information to be passed on. Currently, however, this agreement does not include the CPS, and does not extend to non-victim witnesses. More robust protocols need to be in place to ensure that such witnesses are getting the support they need and are referred to the Witness Service in the event of being called to give evidence at court.

II The CPS and the Office of Public Services Reform (OPSR) are undertaking a project to identify the changes needed to improve the provision of services to victims and witnesses and to develop operational models to deliver this improvement. Pilots will develop local approaches to needs and risk assessment of individual witnesses, putting in place dedicated multi-agency witness care teams to manage their needs and to provide a single point of contact. Enhanced levels of information will be provided throughout, using LCJBs to ensure a partnership approach to victim and witness care. The pilots will provide appropriate training to relevant staff, and local community engagement exercises will be run in each of the pilot areas.

4



At court and afterwards

Attending court can be a daunting and intimidating prospect for many witnesses. The criminal justice agencies must understand and respond to witnesses' fears and anxieties about the court environment and procedures and ensure that they are given the practical and emotional support that they need to go to court and present their evidence.

Don't let witnesses get in the way of a good trial.

CJS practitioner

- 77 The preceding chapter contested the 'one size fits all' approach to victim and witness care. Successfully meeting an individual's needs increases the possibility that they will remain involved with the system as a victim or witness, as well as securing 'best' evidence. This chapter examines the key issues for victims and witnesses associated with attending court and afterwards, looking at how, through better-quality services, victims' and witnesses' experiences of the CJS can be improved.
- 78 Anxiety levels increase as victims and witnesses approach the point where attending court becomes a reality for them. For people who have never attended court, the prospect of doing so and giving evidence is often a daunting and intimidating one. Those who have some previous experience tend to be less concerned. The adversarial nature of the court process will necessarily make a trial an experience of conflict. However, too often the approach of some in the CJS is to treat witnesses as a useful commodity and not as individuals.
- 79 Although the data suggest that seeing a case through to a conclusion is likely to increase overall satisfaction with, and confidence in, the CJS, around two-thirds of witnesses are still likely to be concerned about attending court (**Ref. 25**). The main concern (24 per cent) is meeting or seeing the defendant, but other causes of anxiety include:
- the pressure of their evidence being necessary to bring an offender to justice;
 - conversely, the feeling that their evidence may be unnecessary or irrelevant; and
 - cross-examination by lawyers, and fear about the use of legal jargon, failure of memory, or being disbelieved or not taken seriously.
- 80 The MORI Omnibus (**Ref. 8**) found that:
- only 19 per cent of victims and 35 per cent of witnesses thought that their evidence had helped to bring a criminal to justice;
 - the majority of both victims and witnesses felt that they had been treated with respect by the police, but were ambivalent about their treatment by the courts;
 - 44 per cent of victims felt that their engagement with the CJS had been a worthwhile use of their time; and
 - 58 per cent of witnesses attending court would be prepared to be a witness again in a similar situation.
- 81 Ensuring that more victims and witnesses feel that they are a valued and important part of the system is fundamental to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the judicial process. In order to do this, courts and partner agencies must address the following issues:
- meeting the expectations of victims and witnesses;
 - supporting witnesses to attend court; and
 - supporting victims and witnesses after court.

I don't really know an awful lot about the courts – this is the first thing that's ever happened to me apart from going to court with my divorce, so I don't really know the court system at all.

Witness, post-case interview

All you've ever seen of court room things are reports on the news or dramatisations. Particularly in American things, I think they tend to go in for more shouting and yelling in American courts.

Witness, post-case interview

I didn't have a clue...I have never been to court so I didn't know what to expect.

Witness, post-case interview

Meeting the expectations of victims and witnesses

- 82 The 2002 Witness Satisfaction Survey (**Ref. 25**) found that four out of five victims and prosecution witnesses were fairly or very satisfied with their treatment within the CJS. Witnesses who were also victims were less satisfied (71 per cent against 82 per cent of all prosecution witnesses). Despite the high level of overall satisfaction, 60 per cent of victims and witnesses surveyed had concerns about attending court and nearly one-half of all witnesses admitted to being intimidated by either the process itself or by someone associated with the process. Victims' and witnesses' expectations about the court experience vary considerably and are influenced by such factors as gender, age, exposure to media and prior experience.
- 83 Timely, accurate and useful information is key to managing witnesses' expectations about the court process. In response to this need, victims and witnesses now have access to information leaflets and packs, and real or 'virtual reality' tours of courts.¹ These are obviously having an impact, with 90 per cent of magistrates' court users reporting that the quality of information and assistance was satisfactory or very good (**Ref. 26**) and 57 per cent of witnesses being given the opportunity to visit a court room before giving evidence (**Ref. 25**).
- 84 Victims and witnesses have expectations not just about the case, but also about the outcome. Fieldwork showed that courts often perform badly in terms of providing the results of court cases to the police and victims, with long backlogs and an over-reliance on paper-based systems, rather than email use between agencies. Sometimes the court produces and hands over the information on time, but there is then a delay in passing this information on to the victim or witness. Whichever agency is at fault, the net result is the same – victims and witnesses are left feeling devalued and disempowered.
- 85 Furthermore, victim and witness satisfaction is closely aligned with the outcome of the case and their expectations and understanding of the result must therefore be managed (**Case study 11**). For example, victims need to understand that the court may only find and make an award of compensation within the means of the defendant. Negative perceptions of outcomes will impact not only on victims' and witnesses' satisfaction with the CJS, but also on the confidence of their friends, families and acquaintances – potentially a sizeable pool of people.
- 86 The provision of information is essential in managing witnesses' expectations. However, many other potential barriers exist, both logistical and psychological, that may prevent or discourage witnesses from attending court. CJS agencies must work together to overcome these.

¹ Virtual reality tours via the internet at: www.cjsonline.org/virtual/victims/launch_victims.html

Case study 11

Robert's story

Robert suffered months of noise nuisance and harassment from his neighbours, which culminated in him being assaulted in front of his children. Having reported the matter to the police, Robert received good support from his local Antisocial Behaviour Unit (ASBU), and speaks highly of his local police beat officer. The ASBU installed a discreet camera to help record any acts of intimidation, and he was fully informed of the legal action being taken.

As a result of this proactivity, the case went to court. Robert acted as a witness, but found it a very negative experience. He says that after a difficult trial, during which the defence solicitor made him 'look like a fool', his neighbour was fined and was ordered to pay Robert only a small amount of compensation. He feels that this result does not address the fear, intimidation and anxiety he suffered. Robert is now disillusioned with the whole process and says he would not go through it again, as he feels the courts do not do enough to protect victims.

Source: TPAS (Ref. 15)

Supporting witnesses to attend court

- 87** In the main, the MORI survey found that victims and witnesses felt that they had been given enough time to prepare for court following notification. The greater frustration and anxiety comes from adjournments, sometimes multiple, and often at short notice. The split responsibility between police and the CPS for witness warning can cause problems when changes are made to trials (for example, at pre-trial reviews) – and these problems can also extend to notifying and ensuring the availability of professional witnesses. Guidance has been issued to LCJBs and CJS agencies on the improvements needed to keep witnesses informed about, and engaged with, a case (**Box D**).¹

Box D

Witness Availability and the Witness Warning Process

The guidance sets out the general requirements for communication with witnesses, from initial report through to case disposal and final contact. Key actions for LCJBs include:

- updating or establishing local protocols for witness warning, including clear management control;
- defining the roles and responsibilities of each agency and ensuring that systems and staff are customer focused;
- developing a strategy for CJS agencies' communication with, and provision of information to, witnesses;
- monitoring the implementation of protocols and taking remedial action; and
- considering training needs and the scope for joint training.

Source: www.cjsonline.gov.uk/library/pdf/18865_witness_guidance.pdf

I had one [police officer] ring me and say 'it's my rest day and I'm going to Ascot' and I'm like 'well that's not really important because I've got a witness on the phone crying her eyes out'. They don't seem to recognise what we do.

Staff in witness warning role

I felt physically sick...I'm frightened they will make me look like the one who has done wrong. I feel more worked up about it as time has gone on, I keep thinking that this time next week it will all be over and done with but then I get a phone call saying it has been postponed.

'Very vulnerable' victim

- 88 Assuming that witnesses receive sufficient warning to attend court, they may then find that trials are delayed or adjourned. This not only inconveniences witnesses, but can also cause emotional upheaval and lower their satisfaction with and confidence in the system.
- 89 One reason for such delay is defendants 'missing without good cause', which may result in the court issuing an arrest warrant.^I Due to the additional workload that arrest warrants mean for the police, many fail to be executed. Thousands are currently 'written off' by the courts every year when the probability of successful prosecution becomes unlikely. However, there is currently no national picture, and only a partial local picture, of how many arrest warrants remain outstanding. While warrants are outstanding, witnesses are effectively 'in limbo' until the defendant is caught and a new date set. If a warrant is written off, the witness may never be notified of this.
- 90 In the first quarter of 2003, 22 per cent of the 14,718 cases listed for trial in the crown court did not go ahead on the day, and around one-quarter of these (5 per cent of all trials, or around 740 cases) stalled because a prosecution witness failed to attend court.^{II} However, there is still a poor level of understanding about why this may happen. Practitioners frequently blame intimidation, but other reasons include a lack of confidence in the system, logistical barriers to attendance, or witnesses' fear that they will not remember their evidence or will not be believed.
- 91 Many practical and administrative hurdles face witnesses who are required to attend court. For example, travelling to court is a problem for many victims and witnesses, especially those living in rural or deprived communities, because of the cost or lack of public transport. Travelling costs are generally paid up front by the witness and claimed back after court, which may in particular deter (or even prevent) low-income witnesses from getting to court. Additionally, cases may be moved between courts in different towns at little notice, and even on the day itself. Where this happens, only the most vulnerable witnesses are likely to receive support in meeting the logistical and emotional demands of travel to a new venue.
- 92 Furthermore, in many cases, although witnesses can recoup some of the extra costs they incur through attending court, e.g. childcare, subsistence and loss of earnings, many do not know this. They also cannot claim for the travel costs of friends or relatives to support them unless the court agrees they must be there.^{III} Defence witnesses should be given an expense claim form by the defence advocate, but the Witness Satisfaction Survey (Ref. 25) shows that this is less likely to happen than for prosecution witnesses.

My husband [a co-witness] is a contractor and he's lost out on a lot of money because they only pay the basic amount...we've been adjourned twice, we've lost money and we really feel like saying 'well we don't want to turn up for a third time.'

Victim of crime, post-case interview

^I Empowers the police to arrest absentee defendant and bring them before the court.

^{II} Ineffective trials delivery group.

^{III} www.cjsonline.gov.uk/citizen/witnesses/court_expenses.html

They were hanging around in the corridors. I mean I wouldn't even go to the toilet, I was too scared...I didn't expect like all the family and their friends to be there, but I found that all the comments and insulting remarks that were thrown to me and my family, nothing whatsoever was done about it, even though I reported it.

Witness, post-case interview

- 93 Once at court, witnesses surveyed by MORI generally had very few criticisms about the nature of court facilities, due, in part, to the low (or in some cases, complete lack of) expectations held. However, many felt that the court, its locale and facilities allow or even encourage intimidation and this was a key concern for many witnesses.
- 94 Most incidents of reported intimidation took place in communal areas, such as corridors, cafes and toilets. Although 83 per cent of witnesses recently surveyed said that they were kept in a room that was separate to the defendant (**Ref. 24**), the MORI survey found that 'segregation' of victims and defendants sometimes only meant sitting on opposite sides of the waiting room. Many also felt that the court atmosphere was too informal, and would have preferred greater distance from the opposing side during the trial.
- 95 No-smoking policies within court buildings now mean that all types of courts user, including staff, witnesses, defendants and their associates tend to congregate around the entrance of the court building to smoke. This not only adds to the stress and potential intimidation of those witnesses wishing to smoke, it may also add to the reluctance of witnesses arriving to enter the court.
- 96 Fieldwork uncovered a tendency for courts to find barriers to improving the physical environment of the court (for example, a court's listed building status) rather than looking for opportunities to improve it. Many courts are old buildings, which can make modifications more difficult, but some areas have found that these barriers can be overcome with greater flexibility and co-operation over the use of floor and office space, and through capital investment in improvement projects (for example, to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (**Ref. 27**)). In some areas, better use of assets to provide improved witness care is proving beneficial (for example, the new witness suite in Portsmouth's Crown House).
- 97 The majority of victims and witnesses are provided with support with 81 per cent of all witnesses in court having had contact with Witness Service (**Ref. 25**). The Witness Service, based in all magistrates' and crown courts from April 2001 is provided as part of the £29 million grant allocated to Victim Support. While four out of five victims and witnesses are satisfied with the Witness Service overall (**Ref. 25**), the funding is not separately identified, so there is little sense of 'value for money'. **Box E**, overleaf, describes the shortfalls in support experienced by victims and witnesses.

Box E

Shortfalls experienced by victims and witnesses while attending court and afterwards

- Transport to/from court
- Arranging childcare
- Taking time off work
- Obtaining food and refreshments
- Reviewing statements prior to giving evidence
- Advice on claiming expenses/compensation
- Prior knowledge of court room and procedures
- Protection from offender, friends and family
- Timely notification of court results
- Referrals to appropriate support services after court

Source: Audit Commission

There were a couple of women in the waiting room who gave me a cup of tea and so on, ticked me off a list and told me where to sit.

Witness, post-case interview

- 98 The Witness Service is not a core CJS agency and our fieldwork revealed that this can present a problem in terms of information sharing. CJS agencies need to be more open and share information with the Witness Service so that they can do their job properly. A consequence of this is that witnesses can present themselves to court for the first time to find that they and their circumstances are unknown to Witness Service staff. This creates unnecessary anxiety and prevents the Witness Service from making timely arrangements to support more vulnerable witnesses. CJS agencies therefore need to be more aware of the information needs of the witness service.
- 99 The Witness Service has a basic service specification and a code of practice. Consequently, our fieldwork found that there are differing interpretations of role and responsibility, highlighting the need for consistent monitoring. Chester Crown Court provides a service which adopts a more holistic approach (**Case study 12**).

Case study 12

Chester Crown Court Witness Service

The Witness Service in Chester Crown Court has been running since 1994. The Service now has a dedicated volunteer pool and has developed its role beyond support and advice into a 'holistic' witness management approach. Volunteers see around 2,500 victims and witnesses annually; only around 10 per cent of these are defence witnesses. Volunteers and CPS staff meet at the beginning of each day to confirm the number and names of witnesses due to attend. On arrival at court, all witnesses (including professional witnesses) are directed to the Witness Service desk, so that the Witness Service is aware if anyone fails to attend. Volunteers provide the court ushers with a daily 'batting list' and ensure that the relevant witness is present in court at the right time.

The roles fulfilled by the Witness Service in Chester Crown Court include:

- greeting people on arrival;
- ensuring that people re-read their statements in private before giving evidence and, if required, assisting them with this task;
- notifying the CPS if a victim or witness wishes to change their statement;
- providing pre-hearing/trial visits into a courtroom;
- explaining court procedure;
- keeping the witness advised of the reason for and nature of any delay;
- segregating witnesses heard by the court from witnesses still to give evidence;
- preventing intimidation of victims and witnesses;
- providing a post-evidence recovery area, with emotional support if required;
- referring witnesses on to other specialist support agencies, for example, Rape Crisis; and
- providing a 'court result hotline' telephone service to victims, witnesses and police officers.

Source: Audit Commission

- 100 Encouragingly, the CJS agencies are starting to change processes so that they better meet the needs of the victim or witness (for example, the setting up of domestic violence courts). However, there is still a failure to recognise the 'spectrum' of emotions and needs that exists among witnesses, and the consequent flexibility of approach that is necessary to meet these needs (**Box F**).

Box F

Attitudes towards court

Type	Example attitude
'Very vulnerable'	I'm living in fear here....I'm just scared I'll go blank in the court and she [the defendant] knew it.
'Nervous'	Dubious, nervous and in two minds about doing it. The guy I'm going up against has got a bit of a reputation round here so I'm hoping nothing happens afterwards.
'Unconcerned'	I see it as pretty straightforward. I'm not worried or concerned about it. I just don't want to have to take any time off work.
'Confident'	It was a sense of, if you like, duty. And also, in a strange sense, curiosity.

Source: MORI

Box G**Special measures**

The Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (Ref. 28) provides some protection to witnesses following an application to a court. The 'special measures' that a court may approve are available to vulnerable, young or intimidated witnesses. These measures include giving evidence by way of a video link or behind screens, removing wigs and gowns or clearing the court. Under the Act, which was implemented in July 2002, both the police and CPS staff are required to conduct a risk assessment of the needs of witnesses. This should inform whether an application is made to the judge for the provision of special measures.

Source: *Streets Ahead* (Ref. 29)

101 For example, the needs of defence witnesses are poorly understood and considered compared to those of prosecution witnesses. Defence witnesses attend court in much lower numbers and tend to be either professional witnesses, for example, providing scientific or health evidence, or character witnesses. While they are less likely to have concerns about attending court, according to the 2002 Witness Satisfaction Survey (Ref. 25), defence witnesses are:

- less likely to receive information;
- less likely to have contact with the Witness Service;
- less likely to receive an advance warning letter;
- less likely to have a pre-court visit; and
- more likely to have to wait to give evidence.

102 Many victims and witnesses in the CJS are highly vulnerable, for example, through youth, infirmity, psychological problems or close relationship to a perpetrator of crime. Reforms introduced by the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (Ref. 28) address the need for special measures to support vulnerable victims and witnesses as they travel through the CJS and to reduce the number who are unwilling to attend court (Box G).

103 Effective implementation of special measures to support vulnerable victims and witnesses is currently mixed. Early identification of vulnerability by police and CPS is weak in many areas, which can lead to a lack of information provided to courts and a failure to apply for special measures sufficiently in advance of a trial. No single agency has overall responsibility for special measures, which means that eligibility is not always identified. The Witness Service also needs to be alerted to vulnerable witnesses to ensure that they are given appropriate support, both before and at court. In 2002/03, the Witness Service identified 16,701 vulnerable or intimidated witnesses that had not been identified as such by the police and CPS. Victim Support is currently in the process of negotiating a national protocol with the relevant agencies for referral of vulnerable or intimidated witnesses to the Witness Service.

So, if we know [for example, about deaf witnesses] it saves them the embarrassment on the day. And we can at least eliminate that part of the stress for them.

Staff in witness warning role

104 Fieldwork for this study found that some practitioners remain unconvinced of the benefits of special measures to support vulnerable victims and witnesses, for example, evidence provided in court via television link or on video tape. Conversely, others are strongly supportive, pointing to increasing levels of special measures applications to local courts in justification. Evidence from witnesses suggests that the use of special measures is highly beneficial to some, but that others prefer to confront the offender in court, or to gain 'closure' from the court experience.

I don't think I should have had to see him at all... I felt intimidated when he was there, just waiting and the court case had to be adjourned...because I was shaking so much. I had to take a tranquilliser and I went in and then I was blank.

Domestic violence survivor (Ref. 30)

105 The rate of applications to courts for special measures for victims and witnesses is increasing, but there are concerns on the ground that these measures may be being offered inappropriately. In the absence of a broader range of options to address differing types of vulnerability, there is a risk of over-reliance on this kind of high-cost support. Better risk assessment could help to identify more tailored and cost-effective support to meet individual needs.

My son witnessed everything, he was ten years old, they wouldn't take him, they said they couldn't put him on the stand because he was my son, he was always going to be on my side, he doesn't know what's really going on, he's a child. What I don't like is the way they treated him. They didn't take his experience, what he said seriously because of his age and his mental disability.

Domestic violence survivor (Ref. 33)

We were treated quite young actually. I know I'm only 17, but because legally I'm under 18 it felt a bit funny because they treated us the same as an 8 year old would be.

Witness, post-case interview

106 Children are disproportionately more likely to be victims of crime – the MORI youth survey 2003 (Ref. 31) found that 54 per cent of all pupils had been a victim of crime in the last year, and the BCS reports that young people are at a four-fold greater risk of being a victim of crime. However, courts are frequently not child-friendly environments. A survey of young offenders and parents showed that the main barriers to understanding the court process were the formality, the intimidating environment and difficulty understanding the language (Ref. 32). It is reasonable to expect that similar difficulties are likely to be experienced by young victims and witnesses. In the 2002 Witness Satisfaction Survey (Ref. 25), only one-third of child witnesses remembered receiving the Young Witness Pack¹ and only one-quarter said they had any contact with a Child Witness Liaison Officer.

107 MORI research found that where victims and witnesses were not in court to hear the outcome of a trial, this information sometimes did not subsequently get passed on, particularly in cases of more minor crime. The pre-case 'divide' between the way in which the police tend to handle serious and less serious crime can be seen to continue through to post-case experiences.

I tried to get in contact with the magistrates afterwards and I just couldn't get anywhere. I tried directory enquiries and they were giving the same number which was coming up as non-existent. So in the end I gave up. So I was quite pleased when your [MORI's] letter came because I thought this isn't right, there's no support afterwards, there's no-one to contact.

Victim of crime, post-case interview

I definitely think something needs to be sorted out with the result, you know, finding out the outcome. Hopefully for us we're trying to sort out our little bit, but we would appreciate help from the police and the CPS in doing that.

Witness Service

108 For many victims and witnesses, the need for support and information does not end with the outcome of the case. Yet for most, this is when the duty of care on the CJS agencies ends, and any further help must be sought through the voluntary sector.

¹ Relunched in 1998 by the CJ agencies, ChildLine and the NSPCC.

Supporting victims and witnesses after court

- 109** Reform of the probation service under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (**Ref. 34**) included the creation of a post-court victim care role. From April 2001, Section 69 of the Act placed a statutory duty upon the probation service to consult and notify victims of violent or sexual offences about final release arrangements of offenders sentenced to 12 months or more. National standards were revised in 2002 (**Ref. 35**), requiring probation areas to:
- make a written offer of face-to-face contact with the victim within eight weeks of sentence;
 - provide information to victims (or family) about the criminal justice process and keep them informed if they wish;
 - allow victims (or family) to give views on proposed conditions surrounding the offender's release;
 - inform the victim (or family) of any conditions of release that relate to them; and
 - ensure that any information relating to victims (or family) is kept secure and separate from offender's case record.
- 110** Home Office data show that in 2001, 7,702 offenders were sentenced to 12 months or more in custody, for violent or sexual offences – less than 1 per cent of all offenders found guilty or cautioned (**Ref. 5**).¹ Monitoring by the probation service during this period found that 15,041 victims met the criteria for post-sentence contact – almost twice the number of offenders (**Ref. 35**), but still only a very small proportion of the total number of victims passing through the CJS.
- 111** The Witness Satisfaction Survey (**Ref. 25**) showed that 26 per cent of people surveyed said that they were provided with information about post-court support. Of those eligible for support by the probation service, 80 per cent of victims were contacted by the probation service within 8 weeks of sentencing, and 23 of the 42 probation areas exceeded the National Probation Service target of 85 per cent (**Ref. 36**). The figures indicate good performance by the probation service in making contact, with around one-half of victims subsequently taking up the offer of support.
- 112** Victims of serious crime interviewed by MORI reported a mixed picture; while some reported having their opinions sought and taken into account by the probation service, some felt they had been 'abandoned' after the initial contact, others reported not having been approached at all. Being involved in the release conditions was of particular importance to those who had been subjected to intimidation; others just wanted to know when the offender would be released. Fieldwork suggested that victims often find that the prison service is more willing to provide information about when and to where an offender will be released.

They are going to let me know when he's getting out, and then I'll be able to set things like, he won't be allowed in to my street or to come within a radius of me.

Victim of serious crime

¹ Excluding summary motoring offences.

Box H

Valuing the Victim

- Develop new national standards for victim contact work.
- Develop and implement a national strategy to ensure that staff are appropriately trained for victim work.
- Consider taking explicit account of victim contact work in the cash limit allocation formula.
- Progress the development of a workload monitoring tool for victim contact work.
- Provide guidance to ensure consistent monitoring and evaluation of victim contact work.
- Develop a standard assessment framework for victim liaison officers to use when working with victims.
- Facilitate good communication with other organisations involved in victim work.
- Ensure that all victims have equal access to contact and address specific needs of those from minority groups.

Source: HMIP (Ref. 35)

113 For a number of victims, however, while the offer of help was a welcome one, this was not subsequently followed through. Some were not aware that they could be involved in setting post-sentence conditions and others found it difficult to get the information they required about release dates.

We were told that before he was released we would be informed...but we've never heard a thing. Now she told us he was coming out in the spring...I mean we found a lot more out through the newspaper to be honest.

Victim of serious crime

114 The new Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) guidance issued by the National Probation Directorate (NPD) makes detailed reference to the duty of care to victims.¹ It also broadens the probation service's public protection role by requiring it to consider the needs of potential victims and recognise the importance of information from victims in the ongoing risk assessment of offenders.

115 Despite these positive steps, there is still room for improvement. At a national level, recent guidance from the NPD on releasing personal information deals comprehensively with an offender's rights under the European Convention on Human Rights, but it fails to balance this need with that of the victim. Practitioners voiced concerns about the barriers to information sharing between the agencies, and about the consequent lack of joined-up and timely information about an offender's sentence being available to victims and witnesses.

116 The extent and nature of the post-court support that most victims and witnesses need is currently unclear. Evidence from fieldwork indicates that many more victims could benefit from post-sentence support than are currently eligible; for example, victims of domestic burglary and victims of domestic violence. Although more research is necessary to discover the full extent of potentially unmet demand for post-court support from victims of crime, simple courtesies towards victims and witnesses may be sufficient for many individuals to feel more valued.

117 The statutory duty represents the legal minimum that must be offered by the probation service. It does not, in theory, limit the discretion of local boards to offer such support in other cases if they feel it is needed (for example, in cases of domestic burglary). However, this is constrained by available probation resources, and the reality is that few boards currently have the capacity to deliver above and beyond the statutory minimum. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) reported in 2003 on a thematic inspection of national victim contact arrangements. Key recommendations for the NPD are set out in **Box H**.

¹ www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk/files/pdf/MAPPA%20Guidance.pdf

Key messages and recommendations

1. There is a tension between supporting victims and witnesses through a court case and the adversarial nature of a trial. Many witnesses have no idea what to expect in court and perceptions are often based on media and dramatic portrayals.

Many also perceive that the current culture of the court is not one that responds to witness needs and demands as readily as it does to those of court professionals and the defence.

Recommendations

- Witnesses' expectations must be better managed by the police and the CPS, including the experience of court, and being realistic about the outcome and what will happen afterwards.
- Supporting witnesses should not be over-prescriptive and should always be proportionate to the need of the witness concerned.
- Better marketing of actual and virtual tours of courts – and inclusion of such tours on the new citizenship curriculum in schools – will help to raise awareness and understanding about how the courts operate.

2. Logistical and psychological barriers to attending court have implications both in terms of the likelihood of victims and witnesses staying involved and their overall feelings of satisfaction.

Recommendations

- Early risk assessment of witnesses is essential to ensure that agencies understand where they sit on the 'spectrum' of need and can therefore meet their practical and emotional needs to attend court.
- Courts need to work with the Witness Service to minimise any behavioural and environmental factors that may encourage intimidation at court.

3. A sense of 'civic duty' still underpins many people's willingness to act as a witness. A lack of respect for witnesses and a failure to acknowledge the importance of their contribution may be their most enduring memory of the CJS.

Recommendations

- Protocols should be developed for acknowledging the contribution of witnesses, including ensuring that decisions are explained in court and that explanations are provided when a case fails to proceed for any reason.
- Responsibility must be agreed at a local level for notifying both victims and witnesses of court results and for answering any questions that they may have.

4. Post-sentence support is only routinely available to a very small minority of victims and there is a lack of recognition of the ongoing needs of many victims and witnesses post-court.

Recommendations

- LCJBs should look for local solutions to allow ongoing support to be offered to victims and witnesses who are not eligible under the current criteria.
- Police, the probation service and the prison service need to work more closely to meet the requirement to provide victims and witnesses with timely and accurate information about an offender's whereabouts and planned release.
- The NPD, in conjunction with LCJBs, should implement HMIP's recommendations for improving victim contact arrangements.

5



The way ahead

Improving services to victims and witnesses requires commitment and action from Government, local partnerships, the criminal justice agencies, local authorities and the voluntary sector. By working together and focusing on the needs of victims and witnesses, all the agencies involved will be better placed to provide such people with the support they want, when and how they want it.

- 118 Greater public confidence in the CJS is a key objective of the Government, but the CJS agencies cannot achieve this goal alone. The national and local contexts that govern how CJS agencies work contain ambitious – and sometimes conflicting – demands. Our research has identified six common themes that span the whole victim/witness pathway:
- Agencies must understand the demand for services from victims and witnesses in order to respond appropriately and effectively.
 - There must be cultural change to recognise that meeting people’s needs is key to improving victim and witness satisfaction.
 - Clear accountability for performance and service quality is essential to drive improvement.
 - Better use and communication of information is critical to keeping victims and witnesses engaged.
 - Appropriate and timely support is critical to ensure that victims and witnesses stay engaged.
 - Agencies can achieve significant change by using existing local resources in a more co-ordinated way.
- 119 The Government’s national strategy for victims and witnesses (**Ref. 3**), alongside other framework documents, was introduced to provide a basis for improving the support for victims and witnesses. The challenge for leaders is to champion and deliver a culture change that will support a truly user-focused approach to victim and witness care.
- 120 National action should include setting common goals for government departments, with associated service standards and performance targets for agencies. Local action should focus on better services that make victims and witnesses feel that they are an important and valued part of the process. Local multi-agency partnerships already exist that form a good starting point for achieving this; for example, CDRPs, Yots and LCJBs. Critical to improvement is a shared local vision of victim and witness care, with clarity about who is responsible for action. Because local capacity to improve will vary widely, our research suggests that the following overarching levers for improvement are necessary:
- all CJS and crime reduction partners should design services around victim and witness needs;
 - national targets need to be explicit with regard to victim and witness care. They should apply to local authorities, CDRPs and the criminal justice system so that whole system improvement is achieved;
 - activity based management accounting should be introduced across the CJS and crime reduction agencies;
 - LCJBs need to be given a statutory basis to support greater devolvement of resources and freedoms to lead service improvements involving CDRPs and Yots;
 - strategic regulation of LCJBs should be designed and delivered jointly by CJS regulators, with a high emphasis on user focus and the effective use of resources;
 - CDRPs must broaden their analysis to include incident reporting and non-reporting;

- performance improvement frameworks being developed for CDRPs should be supported by joint inspection processes and public reporting of performance against their crime reduction strategies;
- the performance of local authorities relating to their duties under the Crime and Disorder Act (**Ref. 12**) and their effectiveness in providing integrated support to CDRPs and LCJBs should be incorporated into CPA; and
- Yots should support LCJBs in their work with victims of youth crime (**Ref. 37**).

121 Perhaps the greatest challenge facing the agencies within the CJS is the need to see victims and witnesses not only as critical to their performance, but also as valued stakeholders, whose differing needs must be recognised and supported. At all stages of the pathway, therefore, a tailored approach is needed. The over-riding aim of collaboration between local authorities, CJS agencies and partnerships should be to make places safer for people, with incidents dealt with in a co-ordinated and timely way by the agency that is best placed to respond. Such collaboration should also underpin the development of longer-term solutions to local problems of low confidence and the under-reporting of incidents.

122 The following table (**Table 3**) translates the above aims into an improvement checklist. Recent and ongoing initiatives by Government and others are referenced, but are not an exhaustive list and are not in themselves the whole solution. The checklist is supported by a separate self-assessment tool for collective use by local CJS and other agencies to take stock, plan and prioritise service improvements.

Table 3
Improvement checklist

Priority areas for improvement	Who?	Examples of current initiatives
Theme: Understand the demand for services from victims and witnesses		
There is an understanding of who victims and witnesses are; how, why and where they need to engage with local agencies.	All agencies	
The general public are reassured that when they report an incident, their concerns are addressed irrespective of the severity.	LCJBs, local authorities, police	
There is agreement on accountability and prioritisation for responding to reports of disorderly and antisocial behaviour.	Police, CDRPs	ASB Unit work to identify types of ASB
Information systems capture, analyse and share incident and victimisation data.	Police, CDRPs	
Access to, and the variety of, reporting methods better meets the needs of local people.	Police, CDRPs	
Shared call handling and reporting facilities provide a basis for greater cost efficiency and consistent service quality.	Police, local authorities	Police call-handling projects; local initiatives
The principles of the police NIM are used to target and co-ordinate responses to disorderly and antisocial behaviour.	Police, CDRPs, local authorities	

Priority areas for improvement	Who?	Examples of current initiatives
Theme: Cultural change to recognise that meeting people's individual needs is key to improving victim and witness satisfaction		
Changes in agency culture are led by local champions.	LCJBs, CDRPs, all agencies	
Customer care is reflected in the competencies and performance appraisal systems of all staff with victim and witness contact roles.	LCJBs, all agencies, regulators	Home Office police service standards initiative; police probationer training
Staff receive regular refresher training that ensures consistently high standards of user-focused services.	All agencies	
Staff training for those with a remit for victim and witness care includes an explanation of all local agency roles, responsibilities and service standards.	All agencies	Police probationer training
Theme: Clear accountability for performance and service quality to drive improvement		
All statutory agencies with a remit for victim and witness care are included in the Government's strategy for improving confidence in the CJS.	Government departments	Confidence framework
National and local Performance Indicators (PIs) are based on victim and witness expectations of satisfactory outcomes.	Government departments, CJS agencies, CDRPs	Confidence framework; Policing Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF); BVPIs
An over-arching performance management framework based on national service standards and performance indicators holds all agencies to account, within both public and voluntary sectors.	Government departments, regulators	Confidence framework; PPAF; BVPIs; Victims and Witnesses Bill
Local agencies are clear about key improvement issues, and for each issue, a local lead agency is responsible.	LCJBs, CDRPs	
Regulators incorporate victim and witness care in inspection frameworks.	Regulators	HMIP thematic <i>Valuing the Victim</i> (Ref. 35)
Service standards are aligned between the agencies, meaningful, accessible and based on local capacity to deliver	Government departments, all agencies	Office of Public Services Reform (OPSR) work on citizen-focused public services
Theme: Better use and communication of information		
Information is recognised as critical to the performance of agencies and to the satisfaction of victims and witnesses.	CJS agencies, local authorities	CPS/OPSR Victim and Witness Care Project; Direct Contact with Victims (DCV) project
Information is provided at all stages of a case, from initial report through to case disposal and post-sentence.	Police, CPS	CPS/OPSR Victim and Witness Care Project; CJS Online 'Victims' Virtual Walkthrough'
There is a readily-accessible, case-managed approach or single point of contact for victims and witnesses.	Police, CPS	

Priority areas for improvement	Who?	Examples of current initiatives
Theme: Better use and communication of information (continued)		
Communication at the right time, with the right information, in the right way, meets the individual needs of victims and witnesses.	All agencies	CPS/OPSR Victim and Witness Care Project
Realistic and timely information is used to manage victims' and witnesses' expectations throughout a case.	CJS agencies	Central Office of Information/ Home Office work on revising leaflets
Information sharing between agencies and the voluntary sector facilitates the progress of a case and efficient handover.	CJS agencies, Victim Support, voluntary sector	Criminal Justice IT initiative; CJS Online
Theme: Appropriate and timely support ensures that victims and witnesses stay engaged		
Early risk assessment of all victims and witnesses identifies individual support needs.	Police, CPS	CPS/OPSR Victim and Witness Care Project
Greater procurement of victim and witness services more closely meets local needs.	Government departments	National Strategy for Victims and Witnesses
Better monitoring and evaluation of local initiatives identifies what support works and when.	LCJBs	
'One size fits all' services are replaced by services that are designed to fit individual victim and witness needs more closely.	LCJBs	CPS/OPSR Victim and Witness Care Project
A better understanding is developed of the local capacity and potential to deliver better services to victims and witnesses.	LCJBs, Police, CPS	
There is better post-sentence support for vulnerable victims and witnesses not eligible under the current probation service criteria.	LCJBs	
Theme: Agencies achieve significant change by using existing local resources in a more co-ordinated way		
National and regional funding streams relating to victim and witness care are mapped and streamlined	Government departments, LCJBs, CDRPs	
The strategies and activities of CJS and CDRP partners are mapped to identify and remove gaps and duplication.	Government departments	
There is greater co-ordination of projects that use area-based funding to improve victim and witness care.	LCJBs, CDRPs, local strategic partnerships	
Management accounting systems are capable of tracking the cost of victim and witness support throughout the CJS pathway.	Regulators	
The effective use of resources is built into the performance management frameworks and regulation of local CJS and CDRP partners.	Government departments, regulators	

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Glossary

ABI	Area Based Initiative
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ASB	Antisocial Behaviour
ASBO	Antisocial Behaviour Order
ASBU	Antisocial Behaviour Unit
BCS	British Crime Survey
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicator
CARRO	Community and Race Relations Officer
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CJIT	Criminal Justice Information Technology
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CJU	Criminal Justice Unit
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
DAT	Drug Action Team
DCA	Department for Constitutional Affairs
DCV	Direct Contact with Victims
FAQS	Frequently Asked Questions
LA	Local Authority
LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board
LWC	Leicester Witness Cocoon
HMCPSI	Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
HMMCSI	Her Majesty's Magistrates' Court Service Inspectorate
MAPPA	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
NAO	National Audit Office
NIM	National Intelligence Model
NPD	National Probation Directorate
NPS	National Probation Service
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OPSR	Office of Public Services Reform
PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence Act
PBV	Police Best Value Indicator
PI	Performance Indicator
PLO	Police Liaison Officer
PNC	Police National Computer
PPAF	Policing Performance Assessment Framework
PSA	Public Service Agreement
REC	Race Equality Council
TPAS	Tenants' Participation Advisory Service
VIB	Victims' Information Bureau
VIP	Victim and Witness Information Partnership
WSS	Witness Satisfaction Survey
WSU	Witness Support Unit
Yot	Youth Offending Team

Appendix 1: research methodology

Fieldwork for the project was conducted in four criminal justice areas – Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Thames Valley, Avon and Somerset and North Wales. Research involved:

- structured interviews with staff in CJS agencies, Victim Support and other local stakeholders, such as the judiciary, magistracy and Race Equality Councils;
- reviews of key local documents and protocols; and
- observations in crown and magistrates' courts.

Other research included:

- investigating 'notable' local practice;
- a survey of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships;
- a telephone survey of 65 local authorities to ascertain response to antisocial behaviour queries.

The Commission contracted MORI Social Research Institute to undertake two key areas of research:

- an Omnibus poll of nearly 2,000 people; and
- qualitative research with victims and witnesses in three police and three probation areas across the country.

In addition, the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) was commissioned to survey and interview social housing tenants who had experienced antisocial behaviour.

Research was carried out by Jeanette York, Georgina Barnes and Sean Quiggin of the Audit Commission, and was overseen by Sharon Gernon-Booth.

An advisory group comprising senior practitioners from CJS agencies, the voluntary and housing sectors, as well as representation from the magistracy, inspectorates and the Home Office provided the study team with professional insight and practical advice.

The Commission is grateful to all the individuals, agencies and organisations that co-operated with and contributed to both the research and report, and for the hospitality of the fieldwork areas visited. Responsibility for the conclusions and recommendations in this report rest with the Audit Commission alone.



Local Criminal Justice Boards: Supporting Change Management

Drawing on the experiences of three case study Boards, this report identifies the key challenges they face, as well as providing strategies to address them.

Management Paper, 2003, ISBN 186240450X, £25,
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Community Safety: Learning from Audit, Inspection and Research

This report identifies how effective leadership and a clear focus on a limited number of priorities will enable multi-agency partnerships to provide safe neighbourhoods for local people.

2002, ISBN 1862403775, £18, Stock code LLI2785



Route to Justice: Improving the Pathway of Offenders through the Criminal Justice System

This national report describes the path of four adult offenders through the criminal justice system, highlighting where system inefficiencies and failures occur and how these might be improved.

National Report, 2002, ISBN1862403651, £25, Stock code LNR2762,



Safety in Numbers: Promoting Community Safety

The Crime and Disorder Act has made community safety a top priority for local government, as well as for other public agencies. This topical report tracks the development of the Act and calls for local partnerships to get local delivery right. Highlighting best practice, it suggests how all the agencies involved can improve joint working to tackle the problems.

National Report, 1999, ISBN 1862401314, £20, Stock Code LNR1311



Misspent Youth '99: The Challenge for Youth Justice

This update reports on the results of an audit exercise that took place in the second half of 1998 in England and Wales. The audit assessed improvements in local criminal justice agencies and the progress that still needs to be made.

Update, 1999, ISBN 1862401586, £10, Stock Code LUP1331

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