



## **Are victims satisfied? Part two:**

A scoping review on the measurement and monitoring of victims' satisfaction with Police and Crime Commissioner funded support services.

**June 2018**

## Foreword by the Victims' Commissioner



I am pleased to be able to publish my second scoping review into the measurement and monitoring of victim satisfaction with the support services they receive. This report explores how Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) use victim feedback to inform and improve service design and delivery.

I have always placed great value on the inclusion of victims' voices in the criminal justice system; and offering victims the opportunity to reflect on their experience with the services they have encountered is an important part of this. By asking victims for feedback, victims can share how they have been well supported, and how they and others could be better supported in the future.

This scoping review is published during a time of change in terms of how PCCs are determining the scope and quality of the support services they offer to victims of crime. This 2018/19 financial year, the Ministry of Justice are using a new framework of indicators to hold PCCs to account for the funding they receive to deliver victim support services in their local areas. This means that from this year, revised outputs and outcomes will be written into PCC grant funding agreements. The framework focuses on how services have been able to help victims cope and recover from the impacts of a crime rather than how satisfied victims are with the service they have received.

The fieldwork for this review finished two months before the new framework became operational and I am grateful to the 21 PCCs who participated. I am pleased to report that the review found most of the PCCs who had participated had processes in place to continually measure and monitor victim satisfaction with the services they fund and deliver. This review found that PCCs use this information to assess service performance, make changes to existing service delivery and to inform contract awards. Some PCCs were using victim satisfaction data alongside information on outcomes and outputs to do so.

This scoping review also shares some of the self-identified gaps in PCC approaches to using victim satisfaction information to inform services. I welcome the honesty of the PCCs who answered this question. PCCs were also asked to share what support they feel they need to address these limitations, and I will reflect on the point raised by two PCCs who stated that they would find it helpful if the Victims' Commissioner disseminated good practice.

Looking ahead, I hope that PCCs continue to collect and collate victim feedback with their services and use this to help inform the design and delivery of support services for victims in their local areas. While the new indicators framework will provide PCCs and the MoJ with essential information, PCCs should not lose sight of the importance of victim satisfaction too; victim outcomes and victim feedback are both key components to delivering quality services that make a difference. My 2016 'What Works' rapid evidence assessment, found that the quality of service that victims receive is a key factor in victims' experiences of the criminal justice system. The opportunity for victims to feed back on the services they use and to shape them is empowering, and feeds into their sense of procedural justice.

Victim satisfaction is, therefore, an important way in which this quality can be determined and victims' experiences improved.

It is vital that victims' voices continue to be heard.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Baroness Newlove".

**Baroness Newlove of Warrington, Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales**

## Acknowledgements

The Victims' Commissioner would like to thank the Police and Crime Commissioners, their staff and staff from the support services they fund, who responded and took part in this scoping review. The Victims' Commissioner is also extremely grateful to Dr Jacki Tapley, Principal Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Portsmouth, for peer reviewing this report.

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## 1. Introduction

This scoping review is the second in a two-part series. It explores how victim satisfaction is measured, monitored and used to improve the services that Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) fund for victims of crime in the geographic areas that elect them. It follows on from the scoping review published by the Office of the Victims' Commissioner (OVC) in August 2017. The earlier review focused on victim satisfaction measurement and monitoring among police forces in England and Wales.

This two-part series of scoping reviews stems from the Victims' Commissioner's Second Term Strategic Plan<sup>1</sup>. In this plan, the Victims' Commissioner set out her aim to review the provision of victim services based on the four key principles of 'what works' in supporting victims of crime. These key principles were identified in a rapid evidence assessment published jointly by the OVC and the University of Portsmouth in 2016 (Wedlock & Tapley 2016). The assessment drew from international evidence available on 'what works' and it identified four key principles: information and communication; procedural justice; multi-agency working; and professionalised services. The principle of procedural justice, particularly relevant to this scoping review, outlined that the quality of service that victims receive from criminal justice professionals and associated agencies can often be a more important factor in victim satisfaction than the final outcomes of a case (Wedlock & Tapley 2016). In addition, many of the publications used to inform this evidence assessment relied on victim feedback to identify good practice. The Victims' Commissioner is interested in how police forces and PCCs similarly monitor and evaluate the quality of the services they provide to victims in their local areas, and how victims are included in this process.

### 1.1. Definitions

The term 'victim satisfaction' is broadly defined here to include all user feedback about the victim support service they have received, which is actively sought by PCCs, or service providers on the behalf of PCCs for the services they fund, deliver and commission. This definition does not include information gathered on 'outcomes', which tend to focus more on the changes that the support services effect for victims, rather than how victims experience these support services. The term 'scoping review' is also used to describe this report, which provides an overview of the work carried out by the participating PCCs, highlighting themes from their activities, rather than an in-depth research review.

### 1.2. Policy background

In the government response to the 2012 public consultation 'Getting it right for victims and witnesses' it was announced that the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) would be moving to a 'mixed model of local and national commissioning' of victims' services (MoJ 2012a:4). The consultation stated that responsibility for most victims' services was to be devolved to PCCs. PCCs were determined to be best placed to understand the needs of victims in their local areas and, therefore, from October 2014 they were to account for the provision of local victim support services<sup>2</sup>. Each financial year the MoJ distributes funding to PCCs for support

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<sup>1</sup> *Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales: The second term strategy* [online]. Available at: <https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/victimscomm-prod-storage-clhgxgum05k1/uploads/2014/10/VC-Strategy.pdf>. Also referenced as OVC (2016).

<sup>2</sup> In October 2014, 7 early adopters took on full responsibility for delivering local victims services. The MoJ continued to deliver referral and needs assessment mechanisms for the remaining PCCs for a further six months. Full responsibility for delivering local services was devolved to PCCs from the 1 April 2015.

services. PCCs then decide on how that funding is to be spent according to local priorities and in line with requirements set out in their grant agreements. Hall (2018) notes that this decision to devolve the responsibility for victims' services was the summit of a continuous movement towards more localised funding for victim support services that had started as early as the mid-1990s. National-level commissioning was, however, retained for specialist victim and witness support services including, among others, the homicide service, a witness service<sup>3</sup>, and more latterly, support for victims of human trafficking and rape support centres.

In the same 2012 consultation response, the Ministry of Justice signalled a move towards an 'outcomes based commissioning framework' (MoJ 2012a:10) and away from an approach which Simmonds (2016) and later Hall (2018) describe as output focused. Whereas measuring the effectiveness of victims' services using outputs focused on figures such as the number of referrals to support services, this outcomes framework proposed that the future provision of victims' services would be judged against whether services have been able to help victims 'cope' and 'recover' from the impacts of the crime they have experienced (MoJ 2012a:10). The guidance document issued for commissioners of victim services recommended eight categories of need 'which support services should aim to help victims with during the course of their intervention' (MoJ 2013:6). These categories included: mental and physical health; shelter and accommodation; family friends and children; education, skills and employment; drugs and alcohol; finance and benefits; outlook and attitudes; and social interactions.

In the 2015/16 financial year, PCCs were first required to report to the MoJ against 'cope' and 'recover' outcomes in order to demonstrate the impact of their use of grant funding. More recently, the government has decided that there should be a consistent framework of indicators across all PCCs and service providers. This requirement has been included in 2018/19 grant agreements. While no formal guidance has been published, this latest iteration of the PCC reporting requirement, requires PCCs to use a specified template to report against a range of agreed outputs, outcomes and demographics. The MoJ recognises that there may be a lead in time for some service providers to update their reporting systems accordingly. This new framework is currently being tested using 2017/18 data provided by PCCs who have already been collecting this information from their funded services. This scoping review took place as some PCCs were preparing in advance for this updated approach, and this is reflected in the scoping review findings.

Therefore, while there is increasing focus on outcomes in terms of assessing the quality of victim support services, and as PCCs prepare for the incoming indicators framework, this scoping review seeks to shed light on the ways in which PCCs are capturing victim satisfaction for the services that they fund for victims of crime. Victim satisfaction is mentioned only briefly in previous guidance to PCCs, therefore, this review seeks to understand how victims' experiences of these services, in terms of their delivery, are used to inform and improve the services on offer.

### 1.3. Aims and objectives of the scoping review

1. To explore whether PCCs seek victim feedback on the services they fund and/or deliver

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<sup>3</sup> In March 2018, the Mayor of London and Justice Secretary announced a more integrated approach to victims of crime in London, which will include bringing together elements of support provided to witnesses before a trial and victim support services that London already commissions. For all other geographic areas, a witness service remains commissioned by the MoJ (Mayor of London 2018).

2. To understand the methods/tools PCCs currently use to gain victim feedback on the services they deliver and/or commission.
3. To explore how victim feedback is used to inform and improve victims' services.
4. To assist in identifying any gaps in current approaches to gaining and interpreting victim feedback and the tools used to measure victim satisfaction.
5. To set out the support that PCCs feel is needed to address these gaps effectively.

## 2. Methodology

A qualitative survey<sup>4</sup> was issued to all PCCs in England and Wales. This includes The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), which are both treated as PCCs for all legislation affecting PCCs. The use of a survey follows on from the first scoping review report conducted with police forces. The survey for this second scoping review was facilitated in part by the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC).

### 2.1. Survey responses

The survey was first issued in Spring 2017, and responses from 26 PCCs were received. Due to a lack of staff capacity at the Office of the Victims' Commissioner (OVC), the analysis of these responses was delayed. As a result, PCCs were asked in January 2018 to provide updates on the information that they had returned the year before. PCCs who had not responded to the survey when it was first issued were also invited to respond.

Overall, 21 responses were received for the January 2018 circulation of the survey - exactly half of all PCCs in England and Wales<sup>5</sup>. The majority of these were PCCs providing updates to the information they returned in Spring 2017 (15 respondents). A further 6 PCCs who did not return information for the survey in Spring 2017, responded in January 2018.

Returns received in Spring 2017 from 11 PCCs who then did not update their original responses in January 2018 have not been included in this scoping review to ensure that only the most up to date data was used to inform this report.

### 2.2. Survey content

The survey asked open questions about how the PCC areas are measuring and monitoring victim satisfaction. The survey included questions on the type of information PCCs collect; how the findings are used; and the methods and sampling used by PCCs and their victim service providers. The survey also asked PCCs to detail any gaps in their approaches to satisfaction monitoring. In the January 2018 update, an extra question was added asking PCC respondents to outline what support they feel that they need in order to effectively address the gaps that they have highlighted.

### 2.3. Analysis

A thematic analysis was carried out on the open text responses to identify recurring themes across the PCC questionnaire returns. These themes were used to inform the findings reported in this scoping review.

### 2.4. Limitations

The qualitative survey approach enabled this scoping review to draw only broad conclusions about the activities that the participating PCCs are undertaking to measure and monitor victim satisfaction with the services they deliver or commission. This should be considered

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<sup>4</sup> A copy of the survey is included as Appendix A.

<sup>5</sup> The total number of PCCs counted here include MOPAC and the GMCA. All PCCs whose responses are included in this scoping review are listed in Appendix B.

when examining the findings from this scoping review, which are not generalisable to all PCCs.

In addition, often PCCs would answer the survey in line with what they do for their main victims' support service provider, with less detailed information provided for other services that they deliver or commission. There was also some confusion between respondents as to whether or not police force satisfaction monitoring processes should be included in their survey returns. As police force activities were covered in part one of this two-part series of scoping reviews, this report does not include this information except where police force monitoring covered PCC funded support services. It was not possible to conduct primary research with the PCCs who responded in order to obtain further details and to verify their questionnaire returns.

### 3. Gaining victim feedback on the services PCCs deliver and/or commission

#### 3.1. Do PCCs measure victim satisfaction with the services they fund for victims?

While it was difficult to get a very detailed picture of the activity of PCCs in supporting victims of crime in each area using the survey methodology, this review did encounter a diverse landscape of funded support services across the 21 PCCs that participated. Many PCCs delivered or commissioned a range of victims' services, including 'core' services that offer more generalised support for victims, and more bespoke and specialist services such as those that support victims of domestic abuse or sexual abuse. These services are also funded in a variety of ways, from fixed contracts with some service providers to more grant-style funding of others.

In the areas where PCCs commission a range of victim support services, many of the PCCs responded to the survey with information about how they monitor and measure victim satisfaction with the core victim support service that they fund. Survey responses were sometimes accompanied by copies of the questionnaires used by PCCs or their service providers if this approach to collecting victim feedback was used in their areas. Most PCCs then included less detailed information about their more specialist service providers. This was likely to have been a result of the survey approach used for this review, which did not lend itself easily to the variety of victim support services funded by PCCs in any one area. Consequently, this means that this scoping review cannot compare approaches used across similar services in different geographic areas in any detail.

Most PCC respondents could identify on-going processes which actively collect victim feedback about their funded support services. Only one participating PCC, Merseyside, stated that, at the time of the review fieldwork, they were not actively seeking victim satisfaction data for the services they commission. Merseyside outlined that while they do not actively seek victim satisfaction related data for their services, in their geographic area they maintain a victim feedback page on their website which they point victims to should they like to provide comments on the support services that they have received.

Merseyside had, however, undertaken a detailed victims' needs exercise in 2017 in order to collect and review satisfaction information to inform the delivery of local victims' services. This work directly sought the views of victims of crime through a range of methods. Similar to Merseyside, other PCCs also noted that they had undertaken or commissioned defined exercises which sought to collect and evaluate victim feedback on their services. Hertfordshire, for example, stated that in addition to on-going monitoring, they had previously commissioned an evaluation of their Beacon Victim Care service. Previously, Hertfordshire had also commissioned research projects to further explore the needs of victims of particular crime types such as hate crime and male victims of sexual violence.

South Wales and Sussex responded that they do not collect data on victim satisfaction at all. The two PCCs instead reported that they have fully moved across to the MoJ's updated indicators framework referred to on page 3. These PCCs only use this framework for monitoring the victim support services that they fund and the measures they use do not capture any victim satisfaction related information. Sussex did state that they will take victim feedback on board as additional information if service providers pass this on to the PCC. Generally, however, Sussex regard positive movement on any outcomes related to 'receiving an effective service' as to some extent indicative of victim feedback.

Most of the PCCs who stated that they do capture on-going data on victim satisfaction collate this information from the providers of the support services that they fund. Some PCCs stated that they were very conscious of the need to not overburden victims using their support services by over-surveying victims or directly asking victims themselves to provide feedback on their services.

Six PCCs noted that they obtain victim feedback with PCC funded support services using the police force satisfaction surveys running in their areas. For five of these PCCs (Avon and Somerset, Cambridgeshire, West Yorkshire, Warwickshire and West Mercia) this is in addition to satisfaction data from other sources. West Yorkshire, for example, uses information gained from police force victim satisfaction surveys, which include questions about services to which the victim has been referred to, in addition to service user feedback collected by their funded service providers.

These PCCs draw on police force satisfaction surveys for two main reasons. This is either because they provide a joint in-house service (Avon and Somerset and Cambridgeshire), and/or the local police force asks about the experiences of victims after they have been referred or signposted to PCC funded support service providers (West Yorkshire, Cambridgeshire; Lincolnshire; West Mercia and Warwickshire).

Finally, Northamptonshire was in the process of developing a new victim satisfaction programme of work, which was not yet in operation when this survey took place<sup>6</sup>.

### 3.2. What methods do PCCs use to monitor and evaluate victim feedback?

Reflecting the range of support services funded by PCCs, many PCCs that participated in this scoping review stated that the methods used to capture victim feedback varied between their service providers. Respondents advised that the methods used depended on the service providers delivering the support, and particularly the means by which this support is delivered. As underlined in the previous section, many PCCs set out the methods used by their core support service provider, accompanied by general statements that applied to all their specialist services.

Due to this variation, it is difficult for this review to assess the rigour of the methods implemented by PCCs and to provide any comparison. For example, many PCCs did not provide response rates for all of the surveys that may be run by their different service providers. It is, however, possible to obtain a broad overview of what methods are actively being used by PCCs and their victim support providers to collect data on victim satisfaction with these services.

Approximately half of all PCCs who responded to the scoping review (12) stated that surveys are used as one way to measure victim satisfaction with the services they fund in their areas. Surveys were by far the most common method reported by PCCs although they are delivered and completed in varying ways across PCC areas, such as face-to-face, by telephone, by text and by post.

Case studies were also a popular means of collecting victim satisfaction information. A third of PCC respondents (7) stated that they use case studies to capture victim feedback on their

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<sup>6</sup> Survey responses were circulated for updates between November 2017 and January 2018. Northamptonshire OPCC has since informed the Office of the Victims' Commissioner in May 2018 that they are now collecting and collating data on distance travelled type measures for their services.

experiences with the services they have received, as these provide examples of the support required by victims and the types of services provided to meet their specific needs.

Other methods mentioned by PCC respondents included dip sampling, interviews and focus groups. A couple of PCCs also mentioned service user reference groups as a method by which they obtain victim satisfaction information about their services. Although a reactive rather than a pro-active way of capturing victim satisfaction, some PCCs mentioned they reflect on service complaints and compliments fed back to staff or via websites to help inform service delivery.

For those already collecting data against a range of outcome measures, some of these PCCs stated that they use outcome star models or other ways of assessing the distance travelled by victims upon accessing their funded services. It was not clear, however, whether the victims involved are asked to complete this, or whether staff do so on the service user's behalf. Other PCCs did not specify what methods their service providers use to gain information against agreed outcomes.

One of the questions asked in this scoping review requested PCCs to detail which victims are included in their satisfaction measures. Eleven PCC respondents stated that they try to gather the views of all types of victims who use their services (particularly their core service). Many of these PCCs specified that victims of all ages and crime types are asked to participate and provide satisfaction information.

One PCC, Dorset, mentioned that they collect data from all victims of crime with some exceptions. Dorset stated that victims with self-disclosed mental health issues are not eligible for the survey run by their service provider Victim Support. Northumbria, however, stated that as they have specialist services commissioned for vulnerable victims, satisfaction monitoring for these services therefore includes feedback from these vulnerable individuals. Warwickshire and West Mercia also confirmed that they approach all victims to take part in the survey run by Victim Support in their area, but victims of certain crime types such as domestic violence, sexual violence and hate crime, are contacted by telephone only using 'safe contact details' rather than by auto contact.

Sampling approaches can, however, vary within PCCs. This reflects the different sources of satisfaction related data that PCCs draw from to inform and improve their services. In most cases, the variation in sampling is reflective of the different approaches to sampling used by police forces and support service providers. Cambridgeshire, for example, stated that the constabulary-run survey in their geographic area (which collects PCC relevant data) does not currently include the views of 'high risk' groups, though there are plans to change this in the future. Yet, similar to Northumbria, Cambridgeshire also note that many of their providers support vulnerable high-risk victims and, therefore, will proportionately seek satisfaction related feedback from these individuals. These varying sampling approaches are further exemplified by Warwickshire and West Mercia. In these two areas Victim Support approach all victims to take part in their survey (with victims of certain crime types such as domestic abuse, sexual violence and hate crime contacted by telephone using 'safe contact details' only rather than by auto contact). In addition, within these police force areas, the police-delivered victims of domestic abuse survey and victims of rape surveys, are subject to safeguarding and screening processes.

There was also some divergence in terms of capturing satisfaction information from victims under the age of 16 years. In Dorset, victims under the age of 16 years are not eligible for the survey run by their funded provider Victim Support. On the other hand, both Kent and

Cambridgeshire stated that where children are supported, contact is made via a parent or guardian.

Finally, Devon and Cornwall, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire stated that they accommodate service users who do not have English as a first language. Devon and Cornwall also stated that they assist victims with poor literacy abilities in order so that they can provide feedback on their experience.

### 3.3. What information do PCCs capture in their victim satisfaction measures?

Most PCCs responded that they ask victims a range of questions about the support service they have received. This information, when collated, is used to determine victim satisfaction with the services they fund.

Warwickshire and West Mercia, who both commission the charity Victim Support as their core service provider, noted that the questions asked by Victim Support are tailored to the level of support the victim will have received. This may be the case in other areas too, but this was not specified in other PCC returns. Such an approach has pros and cons. For example, while it can help to ensure that individuals are asked only questions relevant to their experience, and it may reduce the likelihood of participant drop-outs; at the same time some victims may be limited compared to others in terms of the level of feedback they are able to provide on their experience.

Overall, the topic areas covered across all PCCs included<sup>7</sup>: access to support services; communication (timeliness, helpfulness, clarity of service on offer); sensitivity of treatment; information received (helpfulness, amount of information received); support received (consistency of support, coordination of support, satisfaction with support, whether individuals would use the service again); support staff encountered (satisfaction with staff and volunteers); the criminal justice system (CJS) (confidence in the CJS, satisfaction with the outcome of any relevant court case, whether offered the chance to do a Victim Personal Statement); and overall satisfaction with the support service.

Those PCC areas already operating a victim outcomes-focused approach collect 'cope' and 'recover' information which seeks to identify the difference a service has made in supporting the victim through their experience in the aftermath of a crime. The questions therefore seek to capture whether the service received has helped victims to cope with the impacts of the crime they experienced. Some PCC areas were collecting this information in addition to other forms of victim satisfaction data listed in the paragraph above. Northumbria, for example, capture victim satisfaction measures as well as the impact of their Victims First Northumbria service on the recovery of the individuals they support.

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<sup>7</sup> Note this is a list of measures collated from all PCC returns.

#### **4. How PCCs use the victim feedback gained to inform and improve the services they deliver and/or commission**

Most PCCs who responded to the question of how they use the victim feedback they receive, stated that they use this information to scrutinise and improve the support services they offer to victims of crime. This scoping review found three core ways in which this information is used:

- 1) to assess performance;
- 2) to make changes to existing service delivery;
- 3) to inform future contract awards.

While these three areas have been highlighted separately here, in the examples PCCs used the categories were often not mutually exclusive.

Many PCCs responded that they use victim satisfaction information to assess the performance of their funded victim support services. This is either through using victim satisfaction information on its own or in conjunction with information on outputs (e.g. number of referrals to support services) and outcomes (to what extent victims have coped and recovered). Many PCCs stated that they use victim satisfaction to both identify good practice in terms of what is working well, as well as to locate and better understand areas for improvement to meet the needs of their service users.

Many PCCs provided examples of when they had used victim satisfaction information to assess performance. Dorset, for example, stated that early in their contract with Victim Support, respondents to their satisfaction surveys indicated that victims in one geographical area found it difficult to access their support service. This, therefore, highlighted a gap in service provision for victims and this information was used to submit a bid for additional funding to open another hub in the affected area. This bid was successful and Victim Support in Dorset now operate a series of drop-ins across the county to enhance the accessibility of their service.

PCCs also use victim satisfaction information to inform the delivery of existing victims' services. This was described in varying ways, from using feedback to inform ad hoc initiatives designed to improve victim satisfaction (Lincolnshire), to using satisfaction data to make changes to staff structure and delivery of a service (Gwent). Hertfordshire illustrated this in their response. They detailed how an evaluation of their Beacon Service found that the split between the police managed Victim Service team and the charity run Victim Support team had led to a varying level of expectation among victims of crime. Hertfordshire noted that, to a degree, this was about response times but also an emotional dissonance between the two services. Consequently, the service was reconfigured to provide a Case Manager model which was piloted with victims of burglary crimes and victims of persistent targeting, and is aimed at people who are flagged as being vulnerable in some way. Following the new model, the pilot was further evaluated in order to continue to inform improvements to this specific service. This involved interviews with victims who had recent experience of the service. The evaluation found the consistency and positivity of contact made by the case managers was important emotionally for victims participating in this study.

Finally, a small number of PCCs highlighted in their returns that they use victim satisfaction to inform future victim service funding decisions. Cambridgeshire, for example, described how positive survivor satisfaction data provided with two local rape crisis centres reinforced the PCC's decision to award them a joint county-wide services contract.

## 5. Limitations with current monitoring and evaluation of victim feedback

### 5.1. What do PCCs feel are gaps in their current approaches to victim feedback measurement and monitoring?

Sixteen PCCs set out in their responses the gaps that they have self-identified in their victim satisfaction monitoring. It is unclear whether the PCCs who did not respond to this question felt that there were no limitations in their current approaches. Again, a range of gaps were highlighted; common themes among the responses are explored in this section.

Some PCCs were very aware of the impact of satisfaction monitoring on victims themselves, and how this can affect feedback collection. Cambridgeshire, for example, stated that staff can feel insincere asking victims to provide feedback on the service they have received after time has been spent building up a rapport, particularly in distressing circumstances. Cambridgeshire stated that this uneasiness and discomfort can make it difficult to ensure all victims are given the opportunity to complete their survey. Both Warwickshire and West Mercia also commented on the emotional impact of capturing feedback from victims and specified that the timing of such processes is critical in order 'to not re-open old wounds'. Gwent and Merseyside stressed that capturing victims' satisfaction with the support services they have received relies on the willingness and capability of victims to engage in these processes, particularly where data collection processes are computerised. Finally, Avon and Somerset stated in their response that they were very aware of the need to not over-survey victims, particularly when the police and the services they fund collect this information. Therefore, Avon and Somerset do not collect this information in addition to data collected by the service providers they fund.

Another group of PCCs reported wanting more information about victims' satisfaction with their experience in the criminal justice system. North Wales, Staffordshire and Warwickshire all mentioned that they would like to have access to, or be able to gather, satisfaction levels for the whole of the victim journey, i.e. from the point of first call to the police to the point when the victim exits support services. Staffordshire, for example, described the current processes of collecting victim satisfaction information as fragmented and disjointed, making it difficult to gain a clear and consistent picture of victim and witness journeys in their area. Hertfordshire and Cumbria, however, reported wanting more satisfaction-related information with particular stages in the criminal justice system, such as satisfaction with onward referrals from commissioned services (Hertfordshire) and views on sentencing and disposal methods (Cumbria)<sup>8</sup>.

A small number of PCCs identified more methodological limitations of their approaches. Devon and Cornwall and North Wales mentioned that they would like to embed more qualitative methods in their approaches to measuring victim satisfaction, such as focus groups and interviews. Devon and Cornwall and Northamptonshire highlighted that they would like to be able to involve more 'hard to reach' groups in their feedback processes, though who counts as 'hard to reach' remained unspecified. Warwickshire and West Mercia, also stated that they would like to use more bespoke methods for victims with specific characteristics as well as conducting targeted work to understand any differences in satisfaction between certain groups and the overall service user population. Nottinghamshire stated that they would like to receive feedback from victims about funded services without

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<sup>8</sup> In June 2018, Hertfordshire OPCC informed the Office of the Victims' Commissioner that the Hertfordshire Criminal Justice Board has recently agreed a proposal to undertake service user satisfaction across all aspects of the Criminal Justice System.

having to rely on service providers. They are currently exploring how they might best do so. Finally, Northamptonshire stated that they are aware that they need to work on capturing follow up data from service users up to six months after users have exited support services. This is in order to capture the longer term influence of satisfaction on service user's recovery.

The capacity of PCCs and service providers to measure and monitor victim satisfaction was identified by a couple of PCCs as a limitation. Kent reported the difficulty of ensuring consistency in reporting between providers delivering large commissioned contracts and smaller more specialist support providers. The West Midlands also reported that victim satisfaction work was limited by the capacity of providers to undertake satisfaction surveys, but this was to be addressed in their 2018/19 commissioning process. Lincolnshire also stated that they would like to consult a wider range of victim types, although this is limited by the resource and funding available to support the work<sup>9</sup>.

Finally, a couple of PCCs mentioned that measurement and monitoring of victim satisfaction itself also has its limitations. Both Kent and West Mercia reflected in their responses that victim satisfaction with their funded support services can be influenced by many issues which fall beyond the remit of PCCs. This limitation needs to be recognised and taken into account when interpreting victim satisfaction data in relation to funded services and associated decision-making.

## 5.2. What support is needed to effectively address these gaps?

In January 2018, PCCs were asked to update the responses they had prepared to the scoping review survey. At the same time, PCCs were also asked to respond to a new question. This question sought to understand what support PCCs felt they need to effectively address the gaps they self-identified in their victim satisfaction measurement and monitoring.

Few PCCs responded to this additional question; this is likely due to its late addition to the survey questionnaire. Of those PCCs who did respond to this question, there were no common themes that could be identified from these responses.

Both Devon and Cornwall and Merseyside did, however, report that they would like the Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales to disseminate good practice in terms of how other PCCs approach victim satisfaction measurement and monitoring.

North Wales and Staffordshire felt that it would be helpful if other agencies involved in the victims' journey throughout the criminal justice system could also collect victim satisfaction data in relation to their services. In contrast to this, however, Cumbria outlined that they would want advice on methods by which they could capture data at the conclusion of the victims' journeys in order to avoid victims' being over-surveyed and having to repeat this information.

Further comments made in relation to this point are listed below:

- Effective supervision and training for staff who work with service users to record satisfaction data (Cambridgeshire);
- More resource and funding to support victim satisfaction work (Lincolnshire);

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<sup>9</sup> Lincolnshire OPCC has since informed the Office of the Victims' Commissioner in June 2018 that this work is now being undertaken and the OPCC is expecting to be able to consult a wider range of victims, including victims of varying crime types, by October 2018.

- Support from academics, such as advice on the best methods to follow up with and measure service users' recovery once they have exited support services (Northamptonshire);
- More understanding about the diversity in commissioning approaches and that reporting processes need to be considerate of this, such as the capacity and capability of smaller providers (Kent).

## 6. Conclusions

The landscape of victims' services across PCCs is diverse, and while this review does not explore this in any detail, it did find that most of the PCCs that participated are continuously measuring and monitoring victim satisfaction with the services they commission. Across these PCCs a variety of data collection and sampling methods are used to capture this information.

PCCs that participated in this review appear to be commissioning a range of victim support services; from generalised support provided to victims of a range of crime types, to more bespoke specialist services for victims of specific crimes.

Most PCCs have continuous processes in place to measure and monitor victim satisfaction with their services. This information tends to be collected directly by the services delivering support to victims, and then relayed back to the PCC. In addition to these processes, some PCCs had undertaken defined exercises to gain victim feedback on services and assess victims' needs in their local areas.

A very small number of PCCs stated that they do not collect victim satisfaction feedback on their funded services at all. These PCCs explained that they have moved to an outcomes-based approach, which focuses on the extent to which their funded services have enabled victims to cope and recover from the impacts of the crime they were subjected to.

A variety of methods are used by PCCs and their service providers to assess user satisfaction with the support services they provide. Surveys were the most commonly cited method used to assess satisfaction from service users. While most PCCs capture feedback from all service users, some PCCs in certain circumstances do not capture feedback from groups they considered to be more vulnerable, for example victims under the age of 16 years, or victims with self-disclosed mental health issues.

PCCs participating in this scoping review collect victim satisfaction information on a variety of subdomains. These include: access to support services; communication; sensitivity of treatment; information received; support received; support staff encountered; overall satisfaction with the support service; and confidence and satisfaction with the criminal justice system.

Most PCCs demonstrated that they are aware of gaps in their current approaches to the measurement and monitoring of victim satisfaction with funded support services. Some PCCs also flagged the limitations of using victim satisfaction as a form of measurement and monitoring for victims' services – particularly in terms of its ability to accurately differentiate between victims' satisfaction with the PCC funded support services they have encountered, and their wider experiences of the criminal justice system. In terms of support to address these gaps effectively, PCCs had a diverse view of what they would find helpful. More work is needed in this area to explore what PCCs would find most useful in terms of effectively collecting, evaluating and using victim satisfaction related feedback.

Despite these limitations, many PCCs stated that they used this information to scrutinise and improve the support services they offer to victims of crime in their area. This scoping review found that satisfaction data is used in three main ways: to assess performance; to make changes to existing service delivery; and finally, to inform future contract awards. This indicates to some extent the value of satisfaction data in terms of ensuring that the support services PCCs fund are fit for purpose. Importantly, it also ensures that victims' voices are heard in the design and delivery of the support services they receive.

Given the MoJ's new indicators reporting framework for PCCs is in its early stages, it remains to be seen whether PCCs will continue their activities to measure and monitor victim satisfaction, or focus solely on outputs and outcomes. However, while two PCCs stated that they had already moved to a solely outcomes focused approach, no other PCCs, when asked about their future plans for satisfaction measurement and monitoring, suggested that they would stop collecting and using this information<sup>10</sup>. Instead, the theme that was most prevalent in the responses to this question was that many PCCs were considering setting up victim service user panels and forums as another mechanism through which victim feedback could be gained. This was mentioned by Devon and Cornwall; Dorset; Gwent; West Midlands; and West Yorkshire.

This scoping review, therefore, concludes that victim satisfaction remains an important temperature check of how victim support services are working. Some PCCs, in their responses, noted the limitations of relying solely on victim satisfaction to assess service provision and delivery. Overall, however, it has been demonstrated by most PCCs who have taken part in this review to be a useful way of triangulating other data collected from PCC funded victim support services, such as output information and the data on victims' outcomes that some PCCs were already collecting and tracking.

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<sup>10</sup> Northamptonshire, who were in the process of developing new programme of work for monitoring their funded services when the fieldwork for this scoping review took place, have since informed the Office of the Victims' Commissioner that they are now collecting data on distance travelled type measures for these services.

## 7. Recommendations

The Victims' Commissioner is pleased to note that, at the time of the fieldwork for this review, most participating PCC offices were actively seeking to include victims' feedback in the monitoring of the services they fund for victims of crime. The Victims' Commissioner also welcomes the introduction of the MoJ's new indicators reporting framework, but notes that it is not clear whether PCCs will still be encouraged to collect victim satisfaction-related data alongside this new framework.

Following the findings from this scoping review, the Victims' Commissioner makes the following four recommendations:

1. PCCs should continue to seek victim feedback on a systematic basis and use this information to inform and improve the services they fund for victims of crime in their local areas. This is to ensure that victims have an input into the design and delivery of services that aim to meet their needs.  
*(PCCs)*
2. PCCs should routinely reflect on how victim satisfaction information is captured locally and whether there is scope to enhance the input of victims' feedback into the design and delivery of services they fund in their local areas.  
*(PCCs)*
3. The Victims' Commissioner is of the view that the new outcome-focused indicators framework, together with satisfaction feedback, are two key components for ensuring that services are effective in meeting the needs of users. The MoJ should reflect on how their new reporting framework could include, or be supplemented by, victim satisfaction feedback and how this could be effectively communicated to PCCs.  
*(MoJ)*
4. The findings highlighted gaps that PCCs had self-identified in their approaches to measuring and monitoring victim satisfaction. For example, some PCCs highlighted that they wanted to collect feedback from harder to reach victims' groups. The MoJ, Office of the Victims' Commissioner and the APCC should reflect on whether there would be value in conducting and/or commissioning a piece of work that could act as useful guidance for Offices of Police and Crime Commissioners (OPCCs) who are responsible for commissioning victims' services and, therefore, overseeing satisfaction measurement and monitoring processes.  
*(MoJ, OVC, APCC)*

## 8. References

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## 9. Appendices

### 9.1. Appendix A: Measuring victim satisfaction. Questions for Police and Crime Commissioners.

- 1) Do you currently measure how satisfied victims are with the services that you provide to them?
- 2) What information about satisfaction do you capture in your victim satisfaction measures (please supply a copy of the questionnaire or interview schedule where there is one available).
  - a. Do you capture the quality of interaction experienced by victims as well as quantitative data about the services?
- 3) How are the findings from your victim satisfaction measurement used to monitor and improve services for victims?
  - a. Can you give an example of a positive impact that your victim satisfaction monitoring has had on improving services for victims?
- 4) What sampling methods do you use to collect data on victim satisfaction?
  - a. For example, are all victims asked to take part or is random sampling used to collect data that is generalisable to the victim population?
- 5) Which victims are included in your measures of satisfaction? For example, are all ages and crime types included in the sample?
  - a. Do you gather the views of hard to reach groups such as children, victims of sexual offences, homeless victims and those whose first language is not English.
- 6) What methods are used to collect data on victim satisfaction? For example face to face interviews, survey, focus groups, victim reference group, telephone interviews.
  - a. Are there any limitations to your data collection methods?
- 7) What response rate do you typically achieve in your victim satisfaction monitoring?
- 8) Do you think there are any gaps in your current measurement of victim satisfaction?
- 9) What support do you need to address these gaps effectively?
- 10) Are there any plans to change your measurement of victim satisfaction in the future?

9.2. Appendix B: Police and Crime Commissioners who participated in this scoping review.

21 PCCs responded to the January 2018 circulation of the scoping review survey. The PCCs who responded to the January 2018 survey, and whose returns have informed this scoping review, are listed below in alphabetical order.

- Avon and Somerset
- Cambridgeshire
- Cumbria
- Devon and Cornwall
- Dorset
- Gwent
- Hertfordshire
- Kent
- Lincolnshire
- Merseyside
- North Wales
- Northamptonshire
- Northumbria
- Nottinghamshire
- South Wales
- Staffordshire
- Sussex
- Warwickshire
- West Mercia
- West Midlands
- West Yorkshire