

Effective Support for Anti-Social Behaviour Victims



An overview of Victim Support work with victims
of anti-social behaviour across England and Wales

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ASB HELP

Don't suffer in silence

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1. Introduction

ASB Help is a new charity which began operations in 2013. Its remit is to help and advise victims of anti-social behaviour (ASB) wherever they may be in England and Wales, primarily through informing them and signposting them to the appropriate local agency to help them deal with the problem they are experiencing.

ASB Help recognises that the field of anti-social behaviour is incredibly complex, can involve a range of different agencies, and is highly localised. However, from a victim's perspective that is irrelevant – they are simply looking for help in the quickest way possible. In addition to this, local areas differ widely in how clearly they explain to victims how to get help with anti-social behaviour and when a victim contacts them and receives an unhelpful response, they are often helpless to know what to do next.

As we researched anti-social behaviour from a victim perspective we quickly became acquainted with the work of Victim Support which in some areas is providing exactly the kind of support we would recommend – a clear explanation of what can be done by the agencies involved, emotional support to deal with the ongoing anti-social behaviour and its effects, and a voice to represent the victim in multi-agency meetings.

As we look to signpost victims of anti-social behaviour for help on the ground, the presence of such a service by Victim Support is a key resource for us. We proposed the following research so that we could gain a good understanding of the level of coverage of Victim Support's ASB teams or ASB Victim's Champions across the country.

Research was gathered by questionnaires to Victim Support Divisional Managers and ASB Managers/Victim's Champions in June and July 2014. All information supplied was taken at face value and has not been corroborated. It represents the Victim Support ASB services provision at the time of writing. This is an ever-changing environment and provision may already have changed by the time the report is published, as Police and Crime Commissioners announce new victims' services funding initiatives, some of which involve Victim Support.

Thanks are given to these staff members of Victim Support for their time and helpful contributions to this research.

2. Executive Summary

Findings

Our research into Victim Support work with victims of anti-social behaviour has led to the following findings and conclusions:

1. Victim Support local offices are available for support for victims of anti-social behaviour in areas that represent approximately 23% of the population of England and Wales. This means that in certain areas of the country a victim of anti-social behaviour can have a specific, independent point of contact who can help guide them through the minefield that is anti-social behaviour. This also means that there are huge swathes of the country without this kind of provision. Given the well-recognised skill and expertise of Victim Support staff and volunteers in supporting victims of serious crime, they are well placed to offer similar support to victims of anti-social behaviour.
2. We accept that many local authorities and housing associations have anti-social behaviour teams within their organisations which can provide dedicated support to victims. HouseMark can give testimony to excellent examples of such work by Registered Social Landlords¹. However, where resources are limited (particularly in local authorities and smaller housing associations), these teams appear to be shrinking or can be non-existent in some areas.
3. Anti-social behaviour often requires a multi-agency response, and it can be unclear which agency should be leading on the case. In worst case scenarios, agencies send a victim back and forth between each other as each seeks to delegate the responsibility of dealing with the problem to the other. We welcome initiatives from Police and Crime Commissioners such as Victims' Hubs. Here victims of crime and anti-social behaviour can have a direct point of contact to assist them as they manoeuvre their way around the complexities of effectively reporting anti-social behaviour and getting a resolution to the problem. Victims have a right to expect this, regardless of how many agencies it might involve.
4. Victim Support anti-social behaviour work varies tremendously from place to place, in almost every aspect: the way it is funded; the scope of the work; the level of profile it has; the way it is staffed; and the future prospects for that work. Victim Support has developed a standard ASB toolkit to guide anti-social behaviour workers within its organisation but this must be adapted to suit the capacity and circumstances in each area. As such, one cannot say that the support a victim helped by Victim Support in Newcastle receives is the same as Victim Support in Leicestershire although all service provision meets Victim Support's service standards.
5. The practice of co-location is particularly effective, where a Victim Support employee works within the council ASB office or community safety partnership office. By operating in this way, the Victim Support employee becomes an integral part of the local council (or similar funding agency) team which we believe enables them to be more effective in their work with victims.

¹ **HouseMark**, *ASB Benchmarking. Analysis of results 2012/13*
[www.housemark.co.uk/hmresour.nsf/lookup/ASB_BM_report_2013.pdf/\\$File/ASB_BM_report_2013.pdf](http://www.housemark.co.uk/hmresour.nsf/lookup/ASB_BM_report_2013.pdf/$File/ASB_BM_report_2013.pdf)

6. Victim Support staff and volunteers gain an invaluable understanding of how the different agencies operate within their area, including the courts, and can help victims understand the options available to them and the preferences of the different agencies (and different members of staff within those agencies) when it comes to taking action.
7. Where there are self-referrals to Victim Support, through calling the national Supportline or other methods of contact, a victim of anti-social behaviour will not be turned away. They will be given full support and assistance. However, offices with already functioning anti-social behaviour teams, with specialist caseworkers, are likely to be better equipped to provide the most relevant support specific to ASB incidents.

Recommendations

The results of our research have led to the following recommendations for government, Police and Crime Commissioners, local authorities and other agencies working in the field of anti-social behaviour:

1. Anti-social behaviour support is patchy and inconsistent. Victim Support work with victims of anti-social behaviour covers 23% of England and Wales. Victim Support is not the only provider of support but overall many that need help cannot access it. We believe that the key thing is that there is specific support in every local area for victims of anti-social behaviour – numbers of victims helped will differ year on year but this is a good way to guarantee that the most vulnerable victims are supported.
2. The introduction of local commissioning of victims' services through Police and Crime Commissioners enables each local area to prioritise what matters most to them and address problems in the way they believe to be the most effective. However, given the complexities of anti-social behaviour, we believe some clearer national minimum standards of support would help victims of anti-social behaviour across the country feel like they are taken seriously and receive necessary assistance in finding a robust solution to the problem that is causing them distress.
3. Even where there are statutory organisation anti-social behaviour teams in place, we believe there is great value in independent assistance for victims of anti-social behaviour. This would allow for identification of inconsistencies and problems with local authorities in responding effectively to victims of anti-social behaviour. Police forces are audited by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary on how they respond to anti-social behaviour calls, but we are not aware of any similar independent review of local authorities, specifically in the field of anti-social behaviour.
4. We recommend that there is greater support to victims whose case goes through civil court. The Victims' Code sets out the level of support that victims of crime should by statute receive, including victims who are vulnerable. The new legislation being implemented this year (the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014) includes an Injunction to help agencies tackle anti-social behaviour. The Injunction has been designed to be quick and effective in order to bring fast respite to victims.

Replacing the Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO), the Injunction is processed through the civil courts and only requires proof 'on the balance of probabilities' rather than 'beyond all reasonable doubt'. This should speed things up, but because it will not go through the criminal court, victims will not be entitled to the support set out in the Victims' Code. We suggest that Police and Crime Commissioners consider whether there is scope to include greater support to victims where an agency is seeking an Injunction, especially since the anti-social behaviour can include behaviour that has caused deep distress to victims, as well as often involving vulnerable and/or repeat victims.

5. The government recognises that many victims of anti-social behaviour have not been taken seriously or have been passed from one agency to another. The new legislation also includes a tool designed to help such victims, called the Community Trigger. We welcome this new provision as it is our mission to ensure victims do receive the help they need and are entitled to receive. We would recommend that every Community Trigger activated should generate an automatic referral for the victim to Victim Support, or a similar independent organisation, so that victims get effective assistance as they navigate this new process.
6. We recommend greater information-sharing across agencies within an area, something that will be necessary where a Community Trigger is activated. Victim Support anti-social behaviour work illustrates some examples where local authorities have joined together to fund an anti-social behaviour worker. With greater transparency and sharing of best-practice victims should be put first on the anti-social behaviour agenda and as a result see their complaints taken more seriously and acted upon promptly.
7. We would also recommend that Police and Crime Commissioners share best practice following the consultations they have undertaken in their local areas. We are unsure how much of this information is shared from one PCC to another but believe it would benefit the public, as would any such best practice sharing between different local authorities, housing associations and police forces.
8. We recommend that ease of access to the relevant information must be prioritised (whether Victim Support anti-social behaviour teams, in-house teams, Victims Hubs commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioners, or other alternatives). If agencies are serious about providing assistance to victims of anti-social behaviour, they must invest in getting the word out as widely as possible. This is particularly true of the Community Trigger – any tool designed to give victims a voice is only empowering if the victims actually know about it and understand what it is there for. Only then can this approach become truly victim-focused.

3. Scope of the research

Research was gathered by way of a questionnaire which was addressed to each Victim Support Divisional Manager, asking them how many ASB teams or caseworkers they had within their division (largely correlative to the Police Force areas).

Some Divisions had none at all, but where they did, further information was sought on the full-time equivalent (FTE) of staff working for the project, how it was funded, how many victims it had worked with and the level of victim satisfaction. Questions were included about whether the relevant local authority had some kind of Anti-Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference (ASBRAC) to deal with anti-social behaviour issues and what role the Victim Support staff member had in that conference. The questionnaire can be found at Appendix A.

Victim Support is currently funded centrally for their Homicide Service and Witness Service. Its Victim Service, which takes into account other serious crime such as violent assault and burglary, has also been a core service, although is now subject to commissioning from Police and Crime Commissioners locally. Anti-social behaviour does not fall into this category of core services and as such the level of support Victim Support can offer victims of anti-social behaviour depends not only on the funding they receive, but also on Victim Support staff choosing to bid for such funding.

In some situations a vulnerable victim of persistent anti-social behaviour can have every bit as much need for the kind of support already offered by statute to a victim of serious crime. To help achieve this change in mindset, the government has moved to a focus on the harm caused rather than the nature of the crime.² The Victim's Code is an example of such recognition for victims of crime, affording vulnerable victims and those exposed to persistent crime enhanced services even where the crime is not categorised as "serious".

Serious crime is a police matter and the police have then historically referred the victim onto Victim Support. The process is clear and support through Victim Support offered to every vulnerable crime victim. However, given the complexities of anti-social behaviour, we believe some clearer national minimum standards of support would help ASB victims across the country feel like they are taken seriously and receive necessary assistance in finding a robust solution to the problem that is causing them distress.

It does not require much imagination to picture a vulnerable victim – perhaps with learning difficulties or a mental health problem – suffering ongoing despicable treatment at the hands of others and yet not able to clearly articulate it, or recognise it as anti-social behaviour, and therefore whose calls to the police, local authority or other relevant agency, might be discounted. Her Majesty's Inspectorate and Constabulary's (HMIC) Anti-social Behaviour: Stop the Rot report estimates that only 28% of incidents of anti-social behaviour are reported to the police each year.³ In the year ending March 2013, 2.3 million incidents of anti-social

² HMIC, *Personal, Situational and Incidental Vulnerabilities to ASB Harm: a follow up study*, 2013; The Home Office and ACPO, *Focus on the Victim: Summary Report on the ASB Call Handling Trials*, 2012; Home Office, *Putting Victims First. More Effective Responses to Anti-social Behaviour*, 2012

³ HMIC, *Anti-social Behaviour: Stop the rot*, 2010, page 2

behaviour were reported to the police.⁴ This means that approximately 5.9 million incidents go unreported. Others report the anti-social behaviour to other organisations such as the local authorities.

Even for those who do report ASB, frequently they feel that results do not ensue. Victims of anti-social behaviour who visit the ASB Help website and complete the survey to rate their local agencies provide recent evidence that this still occurs:

This experience has left me a broken man. ... The Police seem unwilling to act despite the countless times they attend the property as they feel it is the duty of the housing association to deal with, and vice versa...

We are stunned by the lack of interest and action by the local council.

Getting nowhere despite numerous complaints to police and the council.

JUST SOMEONE DO SOMETHING

Victims of anti-social behaviour often need to be persistent and assertive to get results. Given that they are under great stress, and often do not report it until the behaviour has become unbearable, a calm, assertive victim is likely to be difficult to find. This is why cases such as that of Fiona Pilkington occur, who killed herself and her daughter Francecca in 2007 after her 33 calls to the police about harassment were ignored. Sufferers of persistent anti-social behaviour, often pushed to their physical and mental limits, are not well equipped to navigate the minefield of trying to find the right person to talk to for the problem they are experiencing. Finding help can be difficult enough for someone not under stress, especially when having to navigate agency switchboards to speak to the right person.

Searching online for the ASB Champions and ASB Teams that exist often only brings up a minute from an old council meeting where the post was appointed rather than a clear explanation of the current service offered and relevant contact details. This is an opportunity missed – if councils or community safety partnerships are serious about providing assistance to victims of anti-social behaviour, they need to prioritise ease of access to the relevant information.

ASB Help seeks to inform victims and guide them to the right agency for the problem they are experiencing but that is no substitute for a local person they can talk to and from whom they can find support and understanding.

It is important to note that people who self-refer to Victim Support for anti-social behaviour (by directly contacting Victim Support through their helpline or other methods of contact) will

⁴ Office for National Statistics, *Crime Survey for England and Wales*, Year ending March 2013

never be turned away. They will be treated in the same way as a victim of serious crime is treated with tailored support and assistance. It is likely, however, that a victim contacting a Victim Support office where there is already a functioning ASB team or ASB caseworker will get a higher standard of support simply because the office already has relationships with the appropriate contacts within each agency and usually attend, or in some cases even chair, the multi-agency risk conferences for victims of anti-social behaviour.

In 2013 Victim Support received 97.6% of its referrals through the police. More publicity would be valuable so that victims of anti-social behaviour know that Victim Support exists to serve them too.

Vulnerable victims in particular are far more likely to seek out help if they can quickly find the information they need. Imagine the experience for a victim under severe stress who looks for help and can go online to their council or local police website and quickly locate the name, photo and direct contact number of their Victim Support Anti-Social Behaviour Champion. Now, rather than wading through dry text on websites, eventually giving up and continuing to suffer the ASB in silence, they know about that targeted support available to them and how to initiate contact. That surely exemplifies a victim-focused approach.

Case Study 1: Noise Nuisance

The Leicester Police ASB Unit referred a victim to the local Victim Support ASB team as he was experiencing serious problems from customers at a nearby night-club. The behaviour included shouting, racist remarks, public urination, vomiting and general rowdiness. The noise nuisance had a severe impact on the victim, causing him to lose sleep, which caused stress and was exacerbating a heart condition.

The caseworker phoned the victim and arranged a meeting. The victim was also encouraged to contact the noise department of the council.

The victim and the caseworker discussed the details of the problems. It became apparent that there had been similar problems with the nightclub some years before, which had been resolved by the council's noise team.

The caseworker encouraged the victim to see that this proved that there were actions that could and would be taken. The council's licensing department confirmed to the caseworker that the ASB was clearly in breach of the club's licensing conditions. The department also confirmed that if the disturbance continued the club's certificate could be put up for review. The caseworker was able to develop an action plan with the victim which included requesting a licence review if he reported further ASB, and providing the council with a doctor's letter to prove the effects on his health.

As a result of this support and advocacy the victim called two weeks later to report dramatic improvements. The club owner had started shutting the external gates much earlier so there was less noise. The victim had received an email from a councillor confirming that the licensing team would keep in regular contact with the club.



4. Results of the research

The research indicates that the provision of anti-social behaviour work undertaken by Victim Support offices is patchy due to the inconsistent funding for such work. As a result there are huge swathes of England and Wales with no Victim Support ASB specific team or caseworker who can help victims of anti-social behaviour. 23% of the population of England and Wales is covered by Victim Support though this increases to 38% for Wales. The 77% without this provision translates into a staggering 42.976 million people. There is a huge variety in the geography of each ASB caseworker or ASB team – some covering a city, e.g. Hull, others a whole county, e.g. Nottinghamshire, and others specific sections of counties such as Lichfield and Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire.

Whilst some of the larger cities have a Victim Support caseworker team, such as Birmingham and Leeds, others are sparsely resourced such as Sheffield (just one member of staff). Other densely populated cities such as Bradford and Liverpool have no Victim Support ASB provision at all (note that while there may not be Victim Support coverage there may be other agencies doing the work and other ways of accessing support). London and Manchester have certain areas (determined by local authority funding) with an ASB case worker whereas other areas have nothing. Therefore, if you live in Rochdale, Greater Manchester you will receive support from Victim Support; if you are suffering anti-social behaviour in Oldham you will not.

Of the 32 London boroughs, only 10 currently commission some kind of support through Victim Support. This covers 34% of the population of Greater London, leaving 5.4 million people without this particular opportunity of independent advice, guidance and emotional support.

Victim Support generally measures victim satisfaction with the service they offer, as it ensures that services can be improved through feedback and provides information for funders, local or national. High satisfaction rates are recorded. We have not corroborated this data but it leads us to conclude that where there is an ASB team or caseworker in place, victims can expect to receive a good service and be satisfied with the support they receive. (Note: this is not the same as being satisfied with the resolution of the problem and/or the action the relevant agencies took but with the way they felt supported through the process by Victim Support.)

Case Study 2: Managing Complex Needs and Coordinating Professional Help

C lived with her partner and one of her older children on an estate. She was initially referred due to problems with her immediate neighbours, and was given practical and emotional help for a period of nine months. She had both physical and mental health issues.

Problems arose with another neighbour, which resulted in C and her family feeling very unsafe in their home and requesting a housing move. The ASB Champion provided a letter of support for her and helped manage her huge disappointment when this request was turned down. She required emotional support on a regular basis, sometimes several times a week at particular points, to enable her to talk through how she was feeling and dealing with the situation. The Champion also obtained information on the progress of her case from both the police and her housing officer.

C realised that the situation had an impact on her well-being and sought professional help. She began to focus on improving her health, both physical and mental. When the situation in her neighbourhood had become more settled, and professional health help was in place, the ASB Champion was able to close the case.



Victim Support has recently produced an ASB toolkit to guide all staff workers. It also prides itself on high standards of training and quality assurance, and is serious about making the service it provides the very best that it can be. Although Victim Support has a standardised ASB toolkit, each project looks a little different and there are significant variations in almost every aspect of the support provided. This will be examined in section 6. There are a few main models, however, with the most popular being the Victims' Champion model that in some areas has been operating for a number of years and is well-established in the area. We look at this and two other main models of support provided by Victim Support in the next section.

Victim Support considers that the ASB projects which are most effective are those where there is co-location; that is the Victim Support caseworker operates from within the funding agency office. This is often the council office, or perhaps the community safety partnership office or a housing association. By virtue of being physically in the same building they are seen as an integral part of the local team seeking to tackle anti-social behaviour and help victims. They can just go down the corridor to ask a question of their council colleagues and make partnership working more of a reality on the ground.

Each ASB project differs in the full-time equivalent of staff who are funded to do the work, affecting the number of victims they can support. This is not the only limiting factor, however. Some ASB contracts do not allow the project to promote the service outside the council and police, so referral sources are limited. Another crucial difference is whether the ASB caseworker or team takes on all victims of anti-social behaviour or whether it is just medium and high risk cases.

Where Victims' Champions are receiving calls from victims of anti-social behaviour at all levels they can work with many more victims as some may just need information on who they should contact for their particular situation. Others require greater support which is much more time-consuming. With this diversity in clients, the Cardiff Victims' Champion receives 70 new contacts a month, amounting to 840 a year. In Hull, however, there are over 5,000 ASB incidents reported a year but the Victims' Champion only works with the high and medium risk cases – which totalled 147 victims in the year April 2013–March 2014.

Recording data for victims of anti-social behaviour is difficult and Victim Support does not have a national standardised way of recording this. One of the complications is that some victim work may take years because of the nature of the persistent anti-social behaviour: perhaps the worker supported the victim through getting an injunction or ASBO but then that is breached and so the victim contacts Victim Support once more to go through the process of ensuring action is taken to deal with the return of the anti-social behaviour.

Any conclusion we can take from this must go back to the focus on victims – they are not numbers to be processed, but individuals who are suffering and need support, some more than others because of the complexity of the anti-social behaviour or relationship with the perpetrators, others because of the vulnerabilities of the victim. Some are particularly complex because both aspects are at work. We believe that the key thing is that there is support in every local area for victims – numbers will differ year on year but this is a good way to guarantee that the most vulnerable victims are supported, if the service is accessible and well-publicised.

5. Models of support

5.1 Victims' Champion

Victim Support has recently produced a standardised ASB toolkit. This is most applicable to the most common model of support that they offer to victims of anti-social behaviour, entitled here the Victims' Champion.

Some areas have ASB teams, namely Newcastle, Leeds, Nottinghamshire, Somerset and Tower Hamlets, but many areas have just one paid member of staff who is the 'champion' for victims. This is the case for 25 different areas across England and Wales, from Sunderland in the north to Winchester in the south, from Hull in the east and Caerphilly in the west.

These Victims' Champions can:

- Help victims to deal with other agencies such as the police or their housing department
- Help victims to cope with the emotional effects of experiencing ASB
- Support the victim and other members of their family if necessary
- Help the victim get in touch with other organisations that can assist them if there are problems Victim Support cannot deal with.

The role of Victims' Champion is not usually published – this may be a lost opportunity as victims may feel more inclined to get in touch where there is a friendly name and a face for victims to deal with. The title lends itself to making victims feel like they will be heard and represented, their cause championed. This is likely to provide significant reassurance to victims when compared with dealing with a large agency.

One of the disadvantages of the role being just one person in so many places across the country is the lack of service resilience if a Champion becomes unwell or leaves the post. Research into what would happen in these instances was not undertaken, beyond the fact that the Victims' Champion post for St. Albans and Dacorum was vacant at the time of the research so presumably referrals in those boroughs were temporarily frozen. Of course the reason there is only one staff member appointed to anti-social behaviour in these areas is all down to funding.

5.2 BRAVE

BRAVE is a flagship Victim Support initiative in Birmingham. It stands apart from all the rest as the only project to get national funding, from the Big Lottery. Standing for the Birmingham Residents Anti-Social Behaviour Victim Empowerment project, it supports people in Birmingham living with persistent anti-social behaviour. Working with around 250 victims a year, satisfaction with the project is good and higher than with the normal core service in Birmingham.

What BRAVE can do is very similar to the Victims' Champions, namely:

- Give you information about reporting anti-social behaviour
- Give emotional support
- Give you the information you need to access other agencies

- Act as a single point of contact for you
- Support you through the civil court process – if your case goes to court
- Put you in touch with Victim Support’s Witness Service or support in the criminal courts (if appropriate)
- Talk with you about the type of support that you want and listen to what you are telling them.

The original BRAVE bid offered tailored emotional and practical support, guidance, information and advocacy through those who have experienced ASB themselves. Its primary aim was to utilise the knowledge and experiences of previous victims to help prevent more people suffering from the effects of ASB. In practice, this aspect of the project has led to problems with local resident supporters needing more time to move on from the effects of the anti-social behaviour they themselves had experienced in the past. As a result, BRAVE has now successfully changed its delivery model and employs caseworkers similar to the Victims’ Champion model.

The funding for BRAVE comes to an end in February 2015 so the team is currently seeking local sources of funding to enable the project to continue beyond that date.

Case Study 3: Advocacy and Support with Neighbour Dispute

B is a homeowner who lived in a detached property on his own. He had recently lost his wife to cancer and had then been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness. *B* was referred to BRAVE after reporting to his local neighbourhood policing team that his neighbour, also a home owner, was throwing debris onto his garden and driveway, damaging his car.

The BRAVE caseworker contacted *B* and arranged a home visit. *B* spoke in depth about his recent bereavement. He also informed the caseworker that he had CCTV footage of the neighbour throwing stones and other debris, but that the police had not seen this. *B* explained he felt scared and intimidated by his neighbour.

The caseworker arranged for *B* to get information about two local bereavement counselling agencies and explained that he should contact Birmingham Community Safety Partnership (BCSP).

BRAVE and *B* agreed a support and contact plan; this included providing a volunteer to give *B* longer term emotional support to look at the impact the ASB had on his wellbeing, providing personal alarms to help him feel a bit safer coming to and from his property, and discussing appropriate reporting methods.

The BRAVE caseworker also advocated with the local neighbourhood policing team on *B*’s behalf, explaining the stresses that *B* was under and describing the CCTV footage.

Another source of stress for *B* was his need to downsize and move house. The caseworker discussed strategies to manage this and help his emotional wellbeing.

B made successful contact with one of the bereavement support agencies, and the BRAVE caseworker also continued to provide him with support in the form of stress management, ensuring that this contact helped reduce *B*'s feelings of isolation.

The neighbourhood policing team visited the neighbour after viewing the CCTV footage, and gave him a verbal warning. They told him that they would be monitoring the situation closely, increasing their presence in the local area. Finally *B* was successful in finding a buyer for his property and was able to secure an onward purchase. He explained that after the support he had received from BRAVE he felt confident to move on from his experiences of ASB and ready to get support for his ongoing health needs.



5.3 Restorative Justice

Another model of working for Victim Support, potentially likely to grow with the introduction of the Community Remedy in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, is restorative justice. Victim Support currently has three ASB projects that focus specifically on this aspect of tackling anti-social behaviour: Eastleigh in Hampshire, the London Borough of Barnet, and Dyfed Powys in Wales.

The Eastleigh Restorative Justice Project is funded by the Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner, overseen by a multi-agency project board. Run by a Victim Support Service Delivery Manager and eight volunteers from the community, the model of support is that the volunteers act as facilitators who mediate meetings between those responsible for ASB, and those harmed by their behaviour.

The London Borough of Barnet Neighbourhood Justice Project started in April 2014 and is funded for four years by Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). The aim is to bring communities together through mediation or restorative justice approaches. Frontline workers will pull out relevant bits from the ASB Victim Support toolkit but it is a specialised project and even self-referrals to this project would present complications because of the issues in making an initial approach to the other party in the conflict.

The Dyfed Powys project does not have a dedicated paid worker as the project money was instead used to train up a team of volunteers to give support on anti-social behaviour and mediation. It is a 6 month pilot of the impact of early intervention and they had only worked with four victims at the time of collecting this research.

There is also a Victim Support Joint Civil Witness Service covering the London Boroughs of Camden and Islington. Whilst not providing an overall service for victims of anti-social behaviour before a case goes to court, it does fill an important gap that is worth emphasising.

Currently witnesses in criminal court all have access to Victim Support services if they wish to utilise them, but those going to civil court do not. With the new Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction now a civil offence, this means that many more victims of even quite serious anti-social behaviour such as harassment and threats of violence will not have access to this type of support if their case goes to court to seek this Injunction.

We suggest that Police and Crime Commissioners consider whether there is scope to include greater support, in line with the Victims' Code, to victims where a case is going to civil court. Anti-social behaviour for which an agency is seeking an Injunction could include behaviour that has caused deep distress to the victims, including some of the most vulnerable victims in our society. We believe they would benefit greatly from additional support in going to court, both in understanding the process and in presenting their evidence. If the victim is left on the sidelines and not fully supported, it can hardly be said to be a victim-focused way of approaching anti-social behaviour.

5.4 Restricted Models

It is worth pointing out that a Victim Support ASB project in Kent was excluded from these results because of the highly restrictive nature of the service. Victim Support in Kent provides assistance to victims of anti-social behaviour who are tenants of Amicus Housing in Kent. As such, this is essentially an outsourced Amicus Housing service and falls outside the scope of this research.

6. Variations at all levels

A victim of the same anti-social behaviour in one place could be treated completely differently to a victim suffering exactly the same anti-social behaviour in another place. This seems wrong – do we not all pay the same taxes and have a right to the same protection or service? – and yet it is a reality. This is all part of the decentralised system of government which states that local areas know best how to deal with the anti-social behaviour prevalent in their area.

We believe that the lack of national collation of data risks a failure to identify agencies that are performing poorly in the quality of their response to victims of anti-social behaviour and in the results they achieve, especially for the most vulnerable. There is no standardised way of reporting anti-social behaviour (the police do have this but not all ASB is reported to them), nor standardised way of identifying vulnerable victims and catering to their needs.

Reports and central government initiatives suggest ways to do this, such as the data handling of calls for the police forces,⁵ or the formation of ASBRACs (Anti-Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conferences) but compliance is not enforced. Arguably, there is no single person at the top of the Anti-Social Behaviour ‘pyramid’ to whom a victim could air a complaint. Instead it is the Police and Crime Commissioner for Police issues, the Local Government Ombudsman for Local Authority complaints, the Housing Ombudsman for Housing Association issues. Once the Community Trigger is used, it will be a local multi-agency group.

Given this backdrop, it is hardly surprising that the anti-social behaviour service that Victim Support provides differs widely from place to place, seemingly in every aspect. The majority of Victim Support ASB caseworkers provide an overall support and guidance package for victims. In Leicestershire, however, the support Victim Support is commissioned to give to victims referred to them is strictly emotional with some limited advocacy. They are not allowed to promote the service and have no access to the council system which restricts their effectiveness.

The profile of Victim Support varies greatly, with some ASB services strongly promoted throughout the local area, such as Newcastle, whilst others are not permitted to do this within the terms of their funding, and are instead asked to cater solely to victims referred from the funding agency (usually the council). Most Victims’ Champions will attend the multi-agency meetings (ASBRAC, MARAC, or other such acronym) which tend to be held monthly.

Some Victims’ Champions chair those meetings, such as in Plymouth and Hull. This appears to us to be very positive, as an agency that represents the victim is chairing the multi-agency meeting that considers those victims at higher risk of harm. This is in stark comparison to areas where Victim Support is not involved and such meetings may not even exist, or do so somewhat behind closed doors.

⁵ **Association of Chief Police Officers and the Home Office**, *Focus on the Victim: Summary Report on the ASB Call Handling Trials*, April 2012
www.acpo.police.uk/documents/LPpartnerships/2012/201204-lpp-asb-call-handling.pdf

Case Study 4: Persistent Threats and Intimidation

J and her husband *T* live in a ground floor flat. *J* is housebound and *T* is her main carer. *T* had a stroke which left him with no memory. Their daughter *S* comes once a week to help them out.

J and *T* began experiencing problems with their upstairs neighbour, *L*. They were targeted by *L* with stone throwing and verbal threats. *J* became too fearful to go to bed and she spent sleepless nights sitting in her armchair. Sleeping tablets prescribed by her GP did not help.

Their case was referred to the Victim Support ASB Champion. A home visit and risk assessment undertaken indicated that the couple were at high risk. The caseworker liaised with the lead Housing Officer in order to raise concerns about the couples'



wellbeing. However they also needed home adaptations or rehousing due to *J*'s deteriorating condition. The ASB Champion advocated on their behalf and the housing team agreed to prioritise the couple and find suitable new accommodation.

The Housing Officer disclosed confidential information about the neighbour to the ASB Champion. The ASB Champion requested permission to share this information with *J* and *T* to help relieve their anxiety.

The Housing Officer agreed, and *J* was immediately relieved that action was being taken. *L* was evicted on the date told to the couple in advance. An occupational therapist assessed *J* and *T* and their bathroom was adapted to meet their bathing needs.

J rated the service she had received from the Victims Champion "10 out of 10" and stated that she "would not have known what to do without the support".

Funding is another variable as almost every possibility is covered: joint local authority funding between two different authorities; joint local authority/housing authority; community safety partnership; Police and Crime Commissioner; joint local authority/Police and Crime Commissioner. Victim Support Divisional Managers need to be attentive to the way their particular area works and how the Police and Crime Commissioner plans to commission victim services in their area and bid accordingly. The local structure and remit of ASB projects means it will not be possible to develop a wholly standardised approach across the charity, which must be frustrating and a duplication of work. The likelihood of ever greater variety in the kind of ASB projects and support offered around the country is surely high as local commissioning of victims' services increases.

7. The value of independence

It is worth stressing the value of an independent agency supporting a victim through a process that could involve a number of agencies. Within each agency, the victim could have spoken to a number of people (for example, different police community support officers called out to repeated incidents of anti-social behaviour). The strength of the relationship between the agencies, and indeed between the different individuals involved, is likely to have a bearing on a victim's experience of reporting anti-social behaviour and seeing a resolution to the problem.

Victim Support ASB caseworkers focus first and foremost on the needs of the victim. The victim is their 'client' and they seek to support them, empower them and guide them through the process. In the complexities of many ASB incidents, agencies can lose sight of the victim as they focus in on the offender and what can be done and who should do it. Victims often have no idea that their case has been taken seriously and is being discussed because they are not kept properly and regularly informed. Victim Support staff and volunteers gain an invaluable understanding of how the different agencies, including the courts, operate within their area, and can help victims understand the options available to them and the strengths of the different agencies (and different members of staff within those agencies) when it comes to taking action.

A victim's potential isolation was clearly seen in the report on the Community Trigger pilots which reported that victims interviewed felt that the agencies concerned "were not on their side, were not listening" and that "many of those interviewed said that prior to using the trigger they had not received adequate communication about what was being done".⁶ Some victims even reported they felt almost that they were treated as the offender, or seen as the person causing the problem, rather than the recipient of perpetrator behaviour.

A couple of telling quotes from interviewees illustrate the situation:

As soon as we pressed it [the community trigger] things just really changed for the better. Previously agencies had seemed powerless, but all of a sudden you had someone saying they were going to sort it out for you.

Although I didn't get the full action I wanted, I'm very glad I used the trigger as there have been a number of positive consequences. We were given the specific name of a person to communicate with [which hadn't happened before] and this was very reassuring. The community trigger made it clearer and easier to see what action was taken, it gave us a focal point.⁷

⁶ Home Office, *Empowering Communities, Protecting Victims: Summary report on the community trigger trials*, May 2013, page 26 www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/207468/community-trigger-trials-report-v4.pdf

⁷ Home Office, *Empowering Communities, Protecting Victims: Summary report on the community trigger trials*, May 2013, page 27 www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/207468/community-trigger-trials-report-v4.pdf



It is precisely for the reasons in this latter quote that ASB Help is very positive about the new Community Trigger as it does indicate something potentially very empowering for victims. Our concern is that the most vulnerable of victims will not know about it, nor how or why they should activate it. The pilots did not result in a huge level of Community Triggers being activated. Perhaps those victims who activate it could be referred on to Victim Support as a matter of course to receive emotional support and guidance through the process.

The agencies decide whether the threshold has been met, undertake their case review and make recommendations where appropriate. Each aspect of this process must be communicated to the victim and Victim Support could assist victims in understanding these recommendations and the impact for them. Victim Support is well placed to offer this support with an office covering every local authority area and support by them would really enable those victims who feel they have been ignored to receive as much support as possible and as positive an experience as possible to share with others going forwards.

We understand that there are many in-house ASB teams dedicated to resolving ASB issues (though note this is rather different from teams dedicated to support the victims of anti-social behaviour), particularly amongst registered social landlords (RSLs). However, local authorities have had to cut funding over the past few years and some ASB teams may have needed to shrink or even disband as a result. This has been a decision each local authority has had to take and therefore does not necessarily correlate with the level of anti-social behaviour in the area, but rather with the other demands on their budget. Some victims are therefore losing out on the time dedicated to responding to their needs.

We looked at a random sample of ten local authorities in areas that do not have Victim Support ASB workers to see what kind of evidence there is of the in-house support that they offer. Whilst each local authority had a webpage of contact details for reporting anti-social behaviour they were all rather anonymous with no named person.

This sample also demonstrated the hypothesis that things work differently in each area: one council referred all ASB victims to the police but it was very difficult to find any information about ASB on their website; another council referred people straight on to the community safety partnership; whilst others had their own ASB Team. Is it any wonder victims get confused?

The model of local commissioning enables local issues to be prioritised. It is right, therefore, that provision looks different in different places but we believe it is crucial that direct assistance for victims of ASB is included within the overall package of provision for victims. Independent providers can stand apart from the agencies and provide effective advocacy where victims are struggling with these same agencies and failing to get an adequate response to their problems.

Any provider, commissioned locally, must be able to assist victims in a full complaints procedure against that agency, even if it is their funder. Put another way, their independence must not be allowed to be compromised for ultimately this will be at the expense of the victim.

8. A question of funding

Few would dispute that it is important to support victims of anti-social behaviour. Many would agree and acknowledge that there is a need for a more responsive approach to victims. This is why most Police and Crime Commissioners have put anti-social behaviour as a priority in their Police and Crime Plans.

Under the new Victims' Services Commissioning Framework, PCCs can provide or commission services for victims, witnesses and others affected by anti-social behaviour not directly caused by a criminal offence but the funding issued by the Ministry of Justice cannot be used for this purpose.⁸ Therefore, whilst many PCCs state how important dealing with anti-social behaviour is to them, they must find funding from other places to be able to finance any projects to put their plans into action.

All commitments to improve services for victims of anti-social behaviour must be backed by funding. Whilst a charity like Victim Support is able to provide a great deal of its service through the hard work and commitment of volunteers, there is still a clear need for paid staff to ensure the smooth running of a service for anti-social behaviour victims, as well as bidding for the funding and managing that relationship with the funder and the cost of training volunteers.

Support needs to be proportional to the need and ideally should be tenure neutral, available across the whole police force area, and cover all aspects of anti-social behaviour, not just those referred to, for example, the local authority. Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner showed he was serious about listening to victims by appointing the first local Victims' Commissioner to undertake a project to hear from victims of both crime and anti-social behaviour. The recommendations coming out of this research have led to the plan to launch a Victim and Witness service which will include specialist support to victims of ongoing ASB as well as to vulnerable victims.

Meanwhile, the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner has established a dedicated Victims Bureau to provide tailored support to victims of crime and anti-social behaviour locally and is currently seeking to draw in wider partners beyond the police to provide an enhanced service. Victim Support has been commissioned to provide this service for the next three years, enabling them to bring new victim categories into their standard support network, such as victims of business crime and low level anti-social behaviour. This will require the size of the Victim Support team in Dorset to double. It will be interesting to see how many victims of anti-social behaviour the team supports and we hope it will be well publicised so that even the most isolated hear of this service available to them.

The PCC in Dyfed Powys is taking a different approach to give the extra support so needed for victims of anti-social behaviour. His approach has been to establish an ASB intervention service with a local Housing Association (Gwalia). This will be for all victims of anti-social behaviour, not just tenants of the housing association.

⁸ Ministry of Justice, *Victims' Service Commissioning Framework*, May 2013, page 8.

Case Study 5: Supporting Multiple Elderly Victims

Three elderly women, all residents on the same estate, were referred to Victim Support by the police and the local ASB Housing Unit.

The victims had been terrified and intimidated by partygoers at a neighbouring flat. As well as causing intolerable noise levels, a partygoer had further intimidated one of the victims by climbing onto her balcony and smashing pot plants.

Police spoke with the three victims and identified that one was the sole carer for her husband who was suffering dementia. The other two lived alone and all were extremely frightened. They all explained that this had happened before many times but this was the only time they plucked up the courage to call the police.

The Victim Support ASB caseworker made quick contact with all the victims and assessed their needs. She called a meeting for the police and housing unit and an action plan was quickly drawn up. The police ASB liaison officer visited the victims and took statements. The council fitted fireproof letter boxes as the offender had previously threatened to pour petrol through in retaliation for the victims' actions in calling the police.

The housing department is now working to permanently remove the offender from the property. The caseworker then made an application for a priority housing move for the carer and her husband, and a move is due. The other two victims are now sleeping at night knowing that the perpetrator is not currently on the estate.

Due to the bravery of the women in finally trying to confront their neighbour and the prompt actions of the caseworker, there is now a supportive and proactive coordinated multi-agency response to the problems.



Just from this small sample of PCC projects we can see a huge divergence in the approaches taken and therefore the kind of support and assistance victims of anti-social behaviour can expect to receive.

The PCC model is also not without its critics – the Independent Police Commission, led by the former Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Lord John Stevens, believes it to have been riddled with failings, creating a stand-off with the police service. It also believes that “local community safety partnerships are being undermined by cuts to local government and by the shift of focus and budgets to PCCs”.⁹ It can certainly create confusion for victims not getting anywhere with a particular agency – who should they turn to? The community safety partnership? Their PCC? What about their MP or the Victims’ Commissioner? This is where we hope the Community Trigger will cut through the maze of organisations and get to what is important to victims – that someone somewhere cares, listens to them and explains what action they plan to take.

This report is not saying that Victim Support is the only worthy provider of support for victims of anti-social behaviour. We have written of the value we believe there is in being an independent charity: there are some areas where Victim Support may not have the staff to take on this work, may feel unable to work within the restrictive funding terms a particular project may have, or may not be the best organisation in that area for the particular work commissioned.

For ASB Help, the important principle is that support to ASB victims should be provided. It should be non-discriminatory and easily accessible for those who are currently suffering in silence, feeling helpless and at their wit’s end. We asked each Victim Support Divisional Manager if they knew of any local third sector organisations working with victims of anti-social behaviour. Other than a few examples of charities working specifically in the area of hate crime (considered here as separate from anti-social behaviour), there was a resounding silence to this question. That is not to say that these agencies do not exist, but if they do, they are arguably not publicised well enough to ensure that victims know they are there to support them. In an age of content-overload, getting effective information and publicity about a service seems to be a challenge we all face.

⁹ Report of the Independent Police Commission, *Policing for a Better Britain*, 25 November 2013, page 4.

9. Recommendations

At the outset of this research we knew there would be variations across the country in the service Victim Support can offer to victims of anti-social behaviour. It has been fascinating to see just how varied it can be, not just geographically but in the way the work is undertaken, the focus of that work, how it is funded and what kind of profile it has.

When we first learned of the Victim Support Anti-Social Behaviour Teams we were given to understand by Victim Support employees that there was a network of them across the country. Whilst this may be Victim Support's aim, this is not entirely accurate with huge areas of England and Wales without any Victim Support ASB focus because of a lack of local funding, e.g. East Anglia. We believe this is to the detriment of the general public who, when faced with confusion or frustration on what to do about an anti-social behaviour problem, or struggling with the emotional and physiological stress of suffering persistent anti-social behaviour, can feel isolated and left to suffer in silence.

The structure of local decisions does allow each police force and each local authority to act in accordance with what is right for their region but that can lead to a lack of coordination and correlation between different regions. Where best practice is not shared, there is a huge opportunity cost. Surely it would be a huge waste of public funding to re-invent the wheel countless times to find the right initiatives that work and make a difference to victims. This, after all, is the heart of the recent legislation: to put victims first.

Police and Crime Commissioners are currently undertaking consultations in their areas to find out what the public want and how that might be done in a cost-effective way. We are unsure how much of this information is shared from one PCC to another and would suggest that best practice is shared so that the public in general benefit. It is also unclear whether best practice in working with victims of anti-social behaviour is shared between different local authorities within each Police region or indeed nationally. We hope this is the case as there is huge value to be gained from sharing experiences.

We believe that Victim Support is excellently placed to provide independent help and support for victims of anti-social behaviour. They have offices all over England and Wales and they have the expertise already gained from their work with victims of crime. Research into the anti-social behaviour work that Victim Support does shows their knowledge and experience in relation to ASB with a standardised toolkit, quality training for their workers and high satisfaction rates from victims. The case studies featured here show the positive impact for victims across a range of situations. In some places one full-time case worker has been able to help over 800 victims in one year. Surely that represents excellent value-for-money.

We would suggest that any employment of an independent organisation to provide support to victims of anti-social behaviour (whether Victim Support, another charity or registered social landlord such as in Dyfed Powys) must give due importance to getting to victims pre-reporting. There is still a very high level of ASB incidents that are thought to be unreported – respondents to ASB Help's online survey¹⁰ indicate that this can be where they think it is a waste of time and that they will not be taken seriously. If these victims know there

¹⁰ www.asbhelp.co.uk/survey-2/

is independent support for them, they may be more willing to make contact, to consult with someone outside of the main agencies on the anti-social behaviour they are facing, and gain a better understanding of their rights and options going forwards.

Good publication of services available to victims is all in keeping with the government's victim-centred approach. Our aim is to be an important resource for victims as part of making their voice much louder than it has been to date. The Community Trigger is a new tool that could empower victims who are not satisfied with their local agencies when action should be taken. We hope to help victims be aware of this resource and know how to use it.

We would also suggest that all Community Triggers that are activated should automatically trigger a referral of that victim to Victim Support just as currently happens with serious crime (where Victim Support is the local provider of this service) or with self-referrals. This will help underline the shift to a more victim-focused way of tackling anti-social behaviour where victims are no longer left on the sidelines, confused by what can seem to them to be a lack of action taken, and therefore disengaged with the police and council in their area and disillusioned with the services they offer.

Appendix A:

Questionnaire for Victim Support Divisional Managers and ASB Workers

Questions for Divisional Managers

1. How many ASB teams do you have in your division? Which regions do they cover and what is the number of FTE staff working in them?
2. How is each ASB team funded? When is that funding up for review?
3. What happens in places where there is no ASB team?
4. For the Councils in your division:
 - a. Who are they?
 - b. Which have ASBRACs in place?
5. Are you aware of any other local charities helping victims of anti-social behaviour?
6. What priority does your Police and Crime Commissioner give to anti-social behaviour?
7. Are there any particular initiatives in your area that you are aware of for tackling anti-social behaviour that we might profile on our website?

Questions for ASB workers

1. How many victims of anti-social behaviour has each team worked with in the 12 months April 2013 to March 2014?
2. Do you measure victim satisfaction with the ASB team? If so, what is the satisfaction rate with the service Victim Support offers?
3. For each ASB team:
 - a. How do people know of its existence?
 - b. How are victims referred?
 - c. How high a profile does the team have in the area?
 - d. Do you have specific ASB literature to promote the team?
4. For the ASBRACs:
 - a. How often do they meet?
 - b. How often does a Victim Support representative attend?
 - c. What are the attendance rates from the main agencies like?
 - d. How effective do you think the ASBRAC is?

Appendix B: Glossary

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB): defined in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 as behaviour that has caused or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to any person. Where the anti-social behaviour relates to a person's occupation of residence or is housing-related, anti-social behaviour is defined as behaviour that has caused or is likely to cause nuisance or annoyance.

Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014: new legislation given royal assent in March 2014, streamlining the 19 former provisions to deal with anti-social behaviour down to just six as part of an attempt to create a more victim-focused approach.

Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO): one of the former provisions available to practitioners tackling anti-social behaviour under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. The behaviour had to have caused harassment, alarm or distress and it was processed through the criminal courts thus requiring evidence to support a verdict of 'guilty beyond all reasonable doubt'. The ASBO will be replaced by the new Injunction early in 2015.

ASB Toolkit: an internal document that Victim Support has put together detailing their whole process of identifying and supporting victims of anti-social behaviour. This sets out a standardised approach across all the local Victim Support offices.

Anti-social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference (ASBRAC): a multi-agency meeting recommended by government following the death of Fiona Pilkington and her daughter Francecca to help local authorities and other agencies identify high-risk victims of anti-social behaviour. They are more widely used in some areas of the country than others.

Community Remedy: a measure in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 that allows victims to have a say in the chosen punishment or consequence for a perpetrator of anti-social behaviour where the perpetrator acknowledges their wrong and going through court is not felt to be the most appropriate measure. Victims will chose from a list of different options in conjunction with the agencies involved.

Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs): are made up of representatives from the police, local authorities, fire and rescue authorities, probation service, health and other relevant agencies who all work together to protect their local communities from crime and anti-social behaviour, and to help people feel safer.

Community Trigger: a measure in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 designed to help victims who feel they are not getting a satisfactory response when reporting anti-social behaviour. Victims can request ('trigger') a mandatory case review of their situation if they have reported anti-social incidents at least three times in the past six months to any responsible agency without a satisfactory response. The case review will be multi-agency and the victim must be kept informed of its recommendations made to the agencies involved.

Hate Crime: defined as any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic which can include disability, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation or transgender identity.

Injunction: an important new tool introduced in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 designed to make it quicker for agencies to take action and bring respite to victims. An Injunction against a perpetrator of anti-social behaviour can be applied for by a number of different agencies against perpetrators aged 10 years and over by applying to the civil court. As a civil offence evidence need only support a verdict of ‘guilty on the balance of probabilities’.

Ombudsman: independent investigator who is appointed by government and is charged with representing the public by investigating and addressing complaints of maladministration or a violation of rights.

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs): charged with securing efficient and effective policing of each police area in England and Wales. The first Police and Crime Commissioners were elected in November 2012 and serve for a four year term. Their role is to be the voice of the people and hold the police to account.

Restorative Justice: a form of punishment that does not go through the courts (civil or criminal) but seeks to help an offender understand the wrong they have done and seek to make amends. It is an approach that seeks to focus on the needs of the victims and the offenders, and the involved local community.

Victims’ Code: a code of practice governing services to be provided in England and Wales to victims of criminal conduct which occurred in England and Wales. Anti-social behaviour that is treated as a civil offence falls outside the scope of the Victims’ Code.

Victims’ Hubs: a central place where victims can come and receive information, support and advice. Use of the word ‘Hub’ gives the idea that it will be the one place victims need to come to.

Victims’ Services Commissioning Framework: a document that provides information and advice for Police and Crime Commissioners as commissioner of services for victims of crime. This local commissioning replaces the previous model where the majority of services for victims were provided at a national level by government.

Vulnerable victims: under the Victims’ Code, a vulnerable victim is anyone under the age of 17 at the time of the offence, anyone who is suffering from mental disorder, those with a significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning, or those with a physical disability.



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