

<b>For Information</b>	
<b>Public</b>	
<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Strategic Resources and Performance Meeting</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> March 2021</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Thematic Scrutiny – Compliance Victims Code</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Chief Inspector James Woolley</b>
<b>E-mail:</b>	<b>James.woolley@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk</b>
<b>Other Contacts:</b>	<b>Detective Chief Superintendent Hooks</b>
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	<b>4</b>

\*If Non Public, please state under which category number from the guidance in the space provided.

## **Performance and Compliance with Victims Code**

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

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

### **2. Recommendations**

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

### **3. Reasons for Recommendations**

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

### **4. Summary of Key Points (this should include background information and options appraisal if applicable)**

#### **4.1 Niche – System and Process**

- 4.1.1 Niche has fully integrated VCOP into the system and the use of webforms makes it simpler for officers to understand, record and use Niche to ensure compliance with the requirements of VCOP. This has enabled officers to complete VCOP requirements and referrals utilising electronic mobile devices more efficiently and transparently in the presence of victims / witnesses.
- 4.1.2 Where VCOP is applicable, the webform is mandatory for officers to complete and seek the appropriate consent and signposting of support services available to victims and witnesses.
- 4.1.3 All Victim CARE referrals made via the Police are recorded within Niche and automated to Victim CARE within 24hrs of being recorded.

- 4.1.4 It is standard within Niche to provide victims / witnesses of hate incidents the mandated offer of Victim Care services via webforms. This exceeds the requirements of the Victim Code.
- 4.1.5 As a result of amendments and improvements to Niche webforms and mandating of requirements, Nottinghamshire Police is better able to capture data in relation to the offer and acceptance of Victim Information Packs (VIPs), Victims preferred means of contact, victim updates and finalisation updates. This provides more accurate compliance data in relation to the Victim Code and areas for continued development.
- 4.1.6 Nottinghamshire Police continues to develop Niche and in 2020 developed automated text messaging, building upon the automated email functionality. Officers / staff at the point of recording an occurrence can automatically send the victim / witness the officer contact details, occurrence reference and signposting to support services when recording an occurrence.
- 4.1.7 Following feedback cross referencing Victim Satisfaction data and Niche data, Niche OELS have been expanded upon to ensure clearer communication with victim / witness is recorded, along with review and assessment of the Victims Needs requirements.
- 4.1.8 In 2021, further development is in progress with hyperlinks being developed within Niche to ensure officers / staff have direct access to Victim Needs considerations and aide memoires to support.
- 4.1.9 Nottinghamshire Police continue to work on a regional and national level with other Police Forces to review and improve Niche to provide better performance, in terms of use and requirements and its ability to provide Management Information
- 4.1.10 Nottinghamshire Police In-house Information Services (IS) Department developed an App for front line officers / staff to use. The App provides an up to date list of an officers victims updates required and in order required. Officers / Staff can use the App to directly update victims and witnesses via their preferred means of contact and the App will update facilitate the direct update of Niche.

## **4.2. Training**

- 4.2.1 All new officers joining Nottinghamshire Police continue to receive mandatory training on the Victim Code provided by Learning and Development.
- 4.2.2 Due to the impending launch of the new Victim Code, with a go live date of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, the following actions have been undertaken in preparation.
- Regional Forces consulted on National Guidance provided to ensure consistency.

- All training provided to new officers / staff has been reviewed and new training packages completed and already in use.
- Training to current officers / staff, will be provided by:
  - Weekly In The Know Bulletins to all staff through February 2021
  - Senior Leadership Team (SLT) VLOG/BLOG scheduled for end of February 2021
  - Victims Code Ncalt package to be mandated, with roll out 1<sup>st</sup> March
  - All Local Area Officers including CID/PP will receive a training input in the summer led by SLT, supported by Victim Care
  - Force Intranet Site updated and simplified
  - Force website updated to communicate changes to the public

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

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

### **4.3 Victims Information Package**

4.3.1 A new Victim Information Pack will be available from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to incorporate the new Victim Code requirements.

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

4.3.3 The VIP's are accessible to the public via the Nottinghamshire Police Internet and internally are available on the Nottinghamshire Police Intranet 'Victim Code of Practice' site. Access on the internet can be found at [www.nottinghamshire.police](http://www.nottinghamshire.police) and search Victim Information Pack.

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

### **4.4 Victim Right to Review**

4.4.1 The Victim Right to Review is instigated when the police make a decision not to prosecute a suspect in an investigation. This scheme offers victims of crime a system of review without recourse to court proceedings. The scheme ensures a level of consistency which ensures the process is clear, accessible and fair for all victims.

4.4.2 The administration of the Victim Right to Review process is managed entirely within Niche, with automated workflows incorporating timeframes for officers to adhere to.

- 4.4.3 To support this, guidance is available and communicated via intranet bulletins and stored on the Nottinghamshire Police Intranet.
- 4.4.4 The administration of the Victim Right to Review is centralised and embedded within Contact Management and all previous records have been back record converted onto Niche to provide accuracy of data and recording. This has provided a centralised process and an improved consistent approach.
- 4.4.5 The public can access information on the Victim Right to Review process from the Nottinghamshire Police website.

#### **4.5 Compliance and Audits**

4.5.1 The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has provided all Police Forces with guidance in relation to completing Victim Code Audits. The guidance provided the following:

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

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

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

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

The Nottinghamshire Police Audit, was completed in October 2020 sampling 168 occurrences from Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of 2020/2021. The Audit included 13 tests of compliance with the Victim Code, including those suggested by the MoJ.

The sample occurrences used are:

- Vehicle crime
- Burglary dwelling
- Violent crime (including weapon enabled violence)
- Domestic Violence
- Hate crime
- Sexual Offences (non-recent/historic)
- Sexual Offences (recent reports)

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

The Victim Code Audit highlighted the following, when compared to Quarter 2 – Quarter 4 of 2019/2020 audit:

- 98% Compliance with Victim Code requirement and evidence of Victim's needs assessment completed. Improvement of 5% based on previous audit
- 100% Compliance of victims assessed being referred to Victim CARE services within 48 hours. Improvement of 10% based on previous audit
- 76% Compliance of all victim updates being completed within 21 days, unless otherwise specified by the victim. Improvement of 15% based on previous audit
- 91% Compliance that victims were clearly updated of the finalization of their investigation. Improvement of 19% based on previous audit.
- 72% compliance of the victim being offered to make a Victim Personal Statement. Improvement of 25% based on previous audit.

As a result of the Audit, an area for continued development is ensuring victims and witnesses are provided with written acknowledgement of the occurrence number, Officer details and information on support available. To improve performance Niche has been updated with automated emails/texts messaging functionality as detailed in 4.1.6.

#### 4.5.2 Team Performance Packs

In 2020 Nottinghamshire Police introduced team performance packs targeted at Departmental/Team Level. This included Victims Code Compliance and requirements. The Team Performance Packs are supported with individual data via the Daily Performance Report (DPR).

#### 4.5.3 Daily Performance Report (DPR)

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

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

Work is currently being undertaken to develop DPR data and searches to enable further break down of Victims Code compliance into crime/victim types to facilitate further understanding and improvements.

#### 4.5.3 Management Information Monthly/Annual Victim Code Compliance Data

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

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

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Crimes Requiring VCOP	67466	81679	88831	90520	74710
VCOPs Completed	59637	79532	88298	81260	70326
VCOPs completion compliance	88%	97%	94%	90%	95%

Due to the COVID pandemic it is clear to see the impact of reduced crime recorded. Nottinghamshire Police continues to strive to comply with National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS), whereby identifiable crimes are recorded on Niche within 24hrs of receipt of call for service, and ensuring victims and witnesses continue to receive compliance with Victim s Code requirements.

Working Practices for multiple victims / occurrences were introduced for 2020, which will have supported Nottinghamshire Police objectives in complying with the Victim Code requirements.

Victims Code Audits are scheduled every 6 months and work is ongoing with regional Forces and Insight Teams to ensure learning and development continues.

#### 4.5.4 OPCC Audit Report - Mazars

In September 2020 an audit commissioned by the PCC's office was undertaken by Mazars, reviewing Nottinghamshire's Polices adequacy, effectiveness and internal controls in relation to the Victims Code.

The Overall outcome was Satisfactory.

A previous audit undertaken by Mazars identified 10 areas for improvement. At the time of the audit 7 areas for improvement had seen satisfactory improvement. The outstanding areas for improvement have now been completed.

Further recommendations were made by Mazars audit, and work is being undertaken and monitored through the Victims and Witnesses Assurance Group.

#### 4.6 **Victim CARE**

- 4.6.1 Victim CARE referrals are automated on a daily basis through Management Information. Regular meetings have taken place between Nottinghamshire Police and Victim CARE to ensure timely and appropriate information sharing.
- 4.6.2 All police referrals (including those from the Witness Care Unit) are automated and sent electronically within 24 hours of consent being given.
- 4.6.3 In relation to terrorism, Nottinghamshire Police Special Branch and Victim CARE have a standardised process to identify and refer those victims / witnesses impacted by acts of terrorism who reside in the county, for which Victim CARE have specialist case workers to provide appropriate support and signposting.
- 4.6.4 Joint training utilising Police and Victim CARE staff has previously been delivered, further joint training is scheduled to take place summer 2021 for all front line officers via training days.
- 4.6.5 Nottinghamshire Police and Victim CARE have developed an APP for officers to use on mobile electronic devices. This can be used as an aide memoire for officers and allows Officers to obtain and share Victim CARE support information directly with victims / witnesses. This has now been applied to all front line officers' mobile devices.

#### **5. Financial Implications and Budget Provision**

- 5.1 None

#### **6. Human Resources Implications**

- 6.1 No Human Resources implications identified.

#### **7. Equality Implications**

- 7.1 None identified.

#### **8. Risk Management**

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

#### **9. Policy Implications and links to the Police and Crime Plan Priorities**

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

#### **10. Changes in Legislation or other Legal Considerations**

- 10.1 New Victims Code due to go live 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. Refer to 4.2 for further details.

**11. Details of outcome of consultation**

11.1 Not applicable.

**12. Appendices**

12.1 None.

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

13. Not applicable.

NB

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