

<b>For Information</b>	
<b>Public</b>	
<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Strategic Resources and Performance Meeting</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> September 2018</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>The Chief Constable</b>
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<b>Agenda Item:</b>	<b>3</b>

## **An Update on our Compliance with the Victim's Code**

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the meeting regarding developments over the past 12 months on the implementation by Nottinghamshire Police of the Victim's Code of Practice (VCOP) and monitoring compliance.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Strategic Resources and Performance (SR&P) meeting note the report.

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

- 3.1 To ensure that the Police and Crime Commissioner is updated on the progress and developments relating to the Force's compliance with the VCOP.

### **4. Summary of Key Points**

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

4.1.1 Further development of Niche has fully integrated VCOP into the system and the implementation of webforms now makes it simpler for officers to understand, record and use Niche to ensure compliance with the requirements of VCOP.

4.1.2 Where VCOP is applicable, the webform is mandated for officers to complete and seek the appropriate consent and signposting of support services available to victims and witnesses.

4.1.3 During 2017, a significant development was made to working practices to ensure that victims / witnesses who had previously declined support, but at a later time accepted support, could be recorded within Niche, enabling an automated referral to Victim CARE, rather than a manual referral. This ensures compliance with VCOP time frames and both improved data accuracy and working practices for front line officers and the Witness Care Unit.

## **4.2 Training**

4.2.1 All new officers joining Nottinghamshire Police receive mandatory training on VCOP, provided by the East Midlands Collaborative Human Resources Service Learning and Development (EMCHRS L&D).

4.2.2 During early 2017, all frontline staff, including detectives and officers within the Contact Resolution Team (CRT) received training. The aim of the training was to raise awareness and to encourage officers to see VCOP as a fundamental requirement of their ongoing management of victims and witnesses.

4.2.3 The further developments of recording VCOP as detailed in 4.1 have been communicated to all staff by intranet bulletins, updates and published reference guides.

4.2.4 Analytical work around compliance with VCOP is at 4.5 and 4.6.

## **4.3 Victims Information Package**

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

4.3.2 The VIP are accessible to the public via Nottinghamshire Police Internet and internally are available on the Nottinghamshire Police Intranet 'Valuing Victims'.

4.3.3 Hard copies can be accessed from Police Stations across the Force Area.

4.3.4 Work is currently on going by CINTRA (translation services) to translate the VIP into the six languages (other than English) which are most prevalent in Nottinghamshire.

## **4.4 Victim Right to Review**

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

4.4.2 To support this change in administration, guidance has been developed, published, communicated via intranet bulletins and stored on the Nottinghamshire Police Intranet.

4.4.3 The administration of the Victim Right to Review has now been centralised within Contact Management and all previous Cyclops and manual records have been back record converted onto Niche to provide accuracy of data and recording.

4.4.4 This has provided a centralised process and an improved consistent approach.

## **4.5 Compliance and Audits**

4.5.1 Monitoring of VCOP compliance has developed during 2017/2018, using the three following approaches:

- a) Daily Performance Record;
- b) Management Information Monthly/Annual VCOP Data Compliance; and
- c) Commissioned Audit on VCOP Compliance, with focus to victim/witness update compliance.

### **a) Daily Performance Record**

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

- i) VCOP compliance when not mandatorily completed as required; and
- ii) Victim Updates outstanding over 21 days.

As per VCOP, a victim / witness can specify how frequently they would like to be updated. This can be recorded on Niche and tasks are automatically generated to remind officers of updates required. Nottinghamshire Police are unable to transfer this onto Management Information Performance Dashboards, thus the Performance Dashboard shows all outstanding victim updates which have not been completed for 21 days, whether the victim has requested to be updated more or less frequently than 21 days.

### **b) Management Information Monthly/Annual VCOP Data Compliance**

Monthly and annual data is now accessible which includes:

- a) Number of VCOPs completed
- b) VCOPs 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

As a result, there has been an improvement between 2016 and 2017:

	2016	2017
Crimes Requiring VCOP	67466	81679
VCOPs Completed	59637	79532
VCOPs completion compliance	88.4%	97.4%

***Offering of a Victim CARE referral:***

There was 92.3% compliance in 2017 however, the number of victims who agreed to be referred has slightly decreased from 17.8% in 2016 to 16% in 2017.

There seems to be a disparity between the people agreeing to be referred to Victim CARE. Further work needs to be undertaken to understand why consent has not been granted in order to refer the victim / witness to Victim CARE. This work will be undertaken by Chief Inspector Woolley in conjunction with Management Information to understand this in detail.

Finally the audit has shown that over 55% of all victim/witnesses prefer to be updated on a monthly (28 day) basis.

**c) Commissioned Audit on VCOP Compliance, with focus on victim/witness update compliance.**

In 2018, an audit was commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Nottinghamshire Police to reality check officer compliance against VCOP requirements. This audit was completed by Nottinghamshire Police Information Management Team and required the manual checking of occurrences against VCOP requirements to measure compliance.

The data source for this audit was crimes recorded in November 2017, December 2017 and January 2018, which had already been subject to Market Research surveys being completed. This sample was chosen to see if there would be any correlation between VCOP compliance and satisfaction surveys undertaken by the Market Research team.

The sample size was 105 crimes, consisting only of priority crimes Domestic abuse/violence and Hate crimes, which included:

75 Domestic abuse/violence crimes  
30 Hate Crimes

Within the audit, nine (9) tests were undertaken which included and highlighted:

***1) Has the victim been notified within 5 working days if the crime finalised at source?***

In 100% of crimes which had been resolved at source/point of call the victim had been updated that the crime had been finalised.

***2) Has the victim been supplied with a Victim Information Package?***

48 out of 105 crimes sampled were provided with a Victim Information Package. However, of those crimes not supplied a Victim Information Package, it is unknown how many were declined by the victim/witness due to Niche recording.

It is recommended within the report to review Niche data recording to provide an option of 'victim offered, but declined'. Discussions have commenced with the Niche team to amend this.

It is recommended to align Niche wording and Victim Survey questions to improve qualitative data. Early discussions have commenced to scope the viability of these amendments.

**3) *Has the Victim been supplied with a Victim Information Package within 5 working days?***

Where the victim had been supplied with a Victim Information Package, 46 out of 48 (98%) had been supplied within the time frame.

**4) *Has Consent been provided by the victim for their details to be shared with Victim Care?***

In relation to Domestic abuse/violence crimes, over 53% of victims/witnesses wanted to be referred to Victim CARE, however this was significantly lower for Hate Crimes with only 20% agreeing. As a result of this, work is being progressed to increase referrals, including internal communications to raise awareness and stress the importance of offering support and explaining the benefits. It is proposed to extend VCOP requirements to Hate Incidents to ensure all victims of Hate crime AND Incidents have access to Victim CARE support.

Advice has been sought from the Force Data Protection Officer and OPCC to ensure the wording used for referring a victim / witness is compliant.

**5) *If a victim has accepted a referral to Victim Services, were details provided within 2 days of the crime report?***

This is an automated process and all details are provided within the time frame.

**6) *If the suspect is not arrested has the victim been kept up to date - at least once a month, until the end of the investigation?***

72% of domestic abuse and 71% of hate crime victims/witnesses were updated at least once every 28 days. It should be noted, that victims/witnesses can specify to be updated less frequently than 28 days, however, for the purpose of the audit, 28 days was used to establish if victims/witnesses were being update at least once a month.

**7) *Were victim updates completed in line with the victim's request?***

On average, in 60% of domestic abuse and Hate crimes, the victim had been updated by the officer in accordance to the victim/witnesses request for updates.

Victims / witnesses who requested an update every 7 days were not always updated within this time frame. Only a third were updated by the officer within the 7 days. There are potential reasons for this, such as officer shifts, commitments,

victim / witness availability, etc and consideration needs to be given to managing victims expectations where they have asked for weekly updates, however, there is likely to be no new information available within that timeframe.

It is recommended that refreshed VCOP recording guidance be communicated to officers. This is being progressed and the findings will be shared with Public Protection as part of wider work in relation to domestic abuse.

**8) *If a suspect has been arrested, has the victim been notified within 1 working day?***

Over 71% of domestic abuse victims and 60% of hate crime victims were updated within the timeframe. Potential reasons for non-compliance could be officer commitments, availability and victim availability. The findings have been shared with the relevant leads and a communication to all officers regarding VCOP compliance will be distributed.

**9) *Has the victim been informed of how the investigation has been finalised?***

On average, 65% of victims / witnesses were shown as being informed of the finalisation of the investigation within Niche. A communication will be sent to all supervisors to ensure all officers and staff have informed the victim / witness of the finalisation of the crime prior to filing the investigation.

NB.

The audit reviewed compliance with VCOP requirements, and for example did not note whether an update had been completed outside of the timeframes (i.e. where a suspect had been arrested, the victim was updated after 2 days, thus this was recorded as non-compliant).

In summary, the audit showed very good compliance in many areas, however there are areas for development in relation to keeping victims / witnesses updated who request more frequent updates and ensuring all victims / witnesses are informed of the finalisation of the investigation.

All the recommendations within the audit have been accepted by the Information Management Board and actions identified to ensure these are addressed.

## **4.6 Satisfaction and Audit**

4.6.1 The above OPCC audit was cross referenced to the satisfaction data provided for each occurrence which had been reviewed as part of the audit.

4.6.2 It might be expected that where there is non-compliance in relation to VCOP, that it would be reflected in the results from the Victim Satisfaction Surveys. However, the results from the audit have shown that this is not the case and there is no discernible correlation between VCOP compliance and feedback from the victims

in the Victim Satisfaction Surveys. A victim's perception of the overall level of quality of service received is not necessarily linked to the quality of information recorded on Niche in relation to Victim Contact.

4.6.3 It is recommended at section 4.5 under the 'offering of a victim care referral' (question 2) for the wording between Niche and Victim Satisfaction surveys to be aligned to provide more qualitative data.

4.6.4 A number of options have been considered to record Victim Satisfaction and compliance with VCOP requirements. Due to the number of variables, such as technical difficulties and false surveys being completed, these have not been progressed at this time, however, it has been agreed with Information Management to add the VCOP Audit into an annual schedule, whereby, Nottinghamshire Police may be able to review the scope of the sample size and crime types to make a wider comparison of compliance and victim satisfaction levels.

4.6.5 It should be noted that from 2016 onwards, the Home Office made significant changes to the victim satisfaction framework, where the previous mandatory requirement changed from engaging across a range of crime types to engaging with survivors of domestic abuse only.

4.6.6 As a result, this has significantly influenced Nottinghamshire Police's decision on the chosen sample and size for the most recent audit.

## **4.7 Victim CARE**

4.7.1 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.

4.7.2 Due to changes in working practices, all police referrals (including those from the Witness Care Unit) are automated and sent electronically within 24 hours of consent being given. This is reflected in the 100% compliance in this area in the recent audit.

4.7.3 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.

## **4.8 Developments - Hate Crime and Hate Incidents**

4.8.1 It has been decided due to the feedback received from victims of hate crime, to amend Nottinghamshire Police working practices to extend VCOP and referrals to Victim CARE for victims / witnesses of Hate incidents (which do not statutorily require VCOP to be offered).

4.8.2 With regional agreement, Niche, as used by Nottinghamshire Police, has been amended to make VCOP a mandatory requirement for Hate Incidents. Officers will be required to offer VCOP at the point of recording the incident on Niche. It is anticipated that this will increase the number of referrals to Victim CARE for Hate incidents and Hate Crime overall.

#### **4.9 New Lead**

4.9.1 The lead for Victims and Witnesses, of which VCOP is part of, will identify a new / continuing lead for the Victims' Code.

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

5.1 Victim Information Packs are in the process of being translated into the identified top six (6) languages Nottinghamshire Police used. There will be a financial cost of the initial translations.

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

6.1 No Human Resources implications identified.

### **7. Equality Implications**

7.1 There are no equality implications arising from this update report.

### **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 Amendments to the Victim Code were made in October 2015 and have been absorbed into the work in force.

### **11. Details of outcome of consultation**

11.1 There has been no consultation in relation to this report, which is an update to the SR&P only.

### **12. Appendices**

12.1 There are no appendices attached to this report.