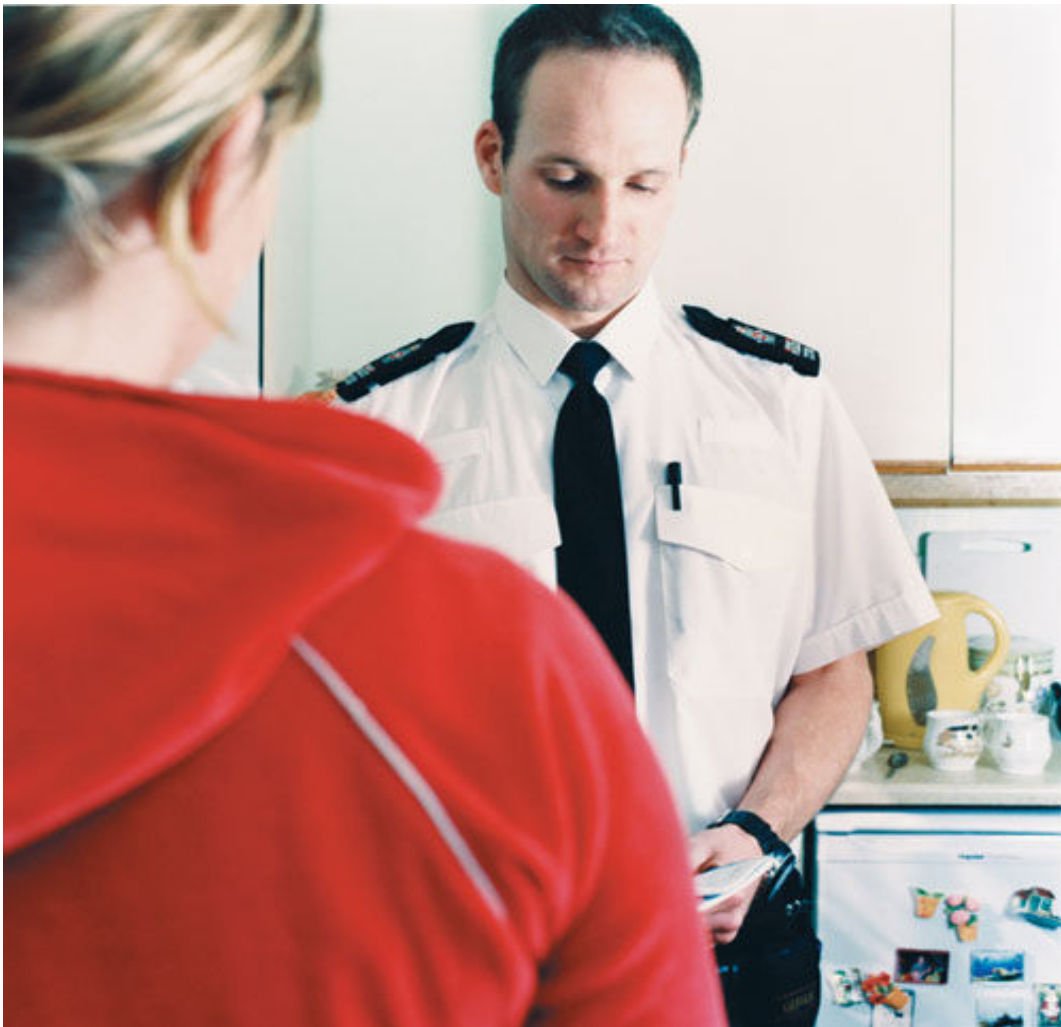


Scrutiny Review – Support to Victims of Crime



A REVIEW BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MARCH 2010

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Chair's Foreword:

Being a victim of crime is often a traumatic and frightening experience. Many people who are victims are also vulnerable and less able to cope but it is something that can nevertheless happen to anyone. Many crimes are not reported, particularly amongst young people. It is likely that one of the reasons for this are that victims feel frightened and unsure of what might happen to them if they come forward. It is crucial that people report crime and are prepared to act as witnesses as without their assistance it is very difficult to do anything about it. The knowledge that people are prepared to make a stand can also deter criminals as it reduces their chances of escaping prosecution.

The act of coming forward clearly benefits the community and such people should therefore be given all the help that they need. It is very welcome that support for victims and witnesses has improved in recent years but much of it is reliant on short term funding and the assistance of selfless volunteers, who do an excellent job for little or no reward. Victims and witnesses need to be feel confident that they will be supported if they come forward and greater stability in the arrangements to assist them as well as clarity on what is available would assist this. The review received evidence that there is currently a wide range of services now available and a lot of excellent work being undertaken. Better co-ordination will enable the benefits of these services to be maximised and improve further support to victims.

The findings of our review mirror very closely those of the joint criminal justice inspectorates' review into victim and witness experiences in criminal justice system, which was published in May 2009. This included a survey of victims and witnesses which I participated in. I therefore particularly look forward to seeing its recommendations put into action locally as well as those of the review, which should complement them.

Whilst the review covered a wide range of issues, it concentrated mainly on direct support to victims after a crime has taken place and in the criminal justice process as this would seem to be the highest priority. It was only able to briefly cover the issues of increasing the reporting of crime and of restorative justice and further work may be required on these particular issues.

On behalf of the Panel, I would like to thank all the people who came along and gave evidence or provided information for the review.



Councillor Ron Aitken
Chair of the Review Panel

Executive Summary

The Panel was pleased to note that there are now a wide range of services that provide support for victims and witnesses within the borough. It is clear that the quality of support has improved in recent years, with a far greater emphasis being placed on the needs of victims due to a succession of government initiatives. However, the number of different agencies and organisations that can potentially be involved now can be a source of confusion for victims. In addition, a significant amount of the work undertaken locally is either reliant on sources of funding that are vulnerable or the goodwill of unpaid volunteers.

The Panel received evidence from a number of individuals that there was a need for better overall co-ordination of services and the establishment of clear governance structures and strategic ownership of the issue would assist in addressing this. Once established, this should provide the opportunity to look review the full range of current provision and address any areas of overlap and duplication as well as developing a joint local plan for improving services.

Lead responsibility for taking the lead on victim and witness issues lies with the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), rather than the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP). Whilst many of the agencies on the CDRP are also on the LCJB, there are some key ones that are not formally represented. There are also a number of areas of overlapping responsibilities as well as some where there is an inter dependency. The Home Office encourages closer collaboration between LCJBs and CDRPs and the Panel feels that this should be fully explored.

The Panel was concerned that information on witnesses, including ones who are vulnerable and intimidated, does not appear to always be being passed onto Witness Service volunteers as well as professionals at the Magistrates Court. This can mean witnesses sometimes arriving without support agencies and the Court having prior notice of their needs. It is unclear whether this is merely due to a failure to pass on information or needs analyses not being undertaken. The Panel is of the view that such instances should be brought quickly to the attention of relevant officers at the Witness Care Unit (WCU) so that the reason can be identified. The number and cause of such instances should also be monitored so that it can be determined if these are just isolated incidents or not. The Panel noted that the same problems have not occurred at the Crown Court, which deals with the more serious crimes.

The Panel were concerned that the Witness Service appear to be currently located in accommodation at the Magistrates Court that does not meet their needs. In particular, it noted that volunteers can currently find it difficult to consult with witnesses in such surroundings and it therefore feels that partners should explore alternative options which provide surroundings more conducive to the nature of their work.

The Panel noted that some Victim Support volunteers can be traumatised by the work that they undertake, particularly those dealing with the more serious crimes. There is currently no provision for therapeutic support for them. Victim Support monitor and support their volunteers but cannot offer access to emotional support. Exposure to trauma can potentially lead to volunteers being unable to continue their valuable work. In addition, their long term welfare also needs to be considered. The Panel therefore feels that partners should explore the possibility of the provision of appropriate psychological support if and when required for volunteers.

The Panel welcomed the fact that there is now a victim support worker in the ASBAT but funding for this is time limited. Long term decisions need to be taken about the future development and sustainability of the ASBAT as the service is currently almost totally reliant on time limited grants.

The Panel noted that there may be a perception that domestic violence services are only for women. However, statistics show that there are an increasing number of male victims. It feels that they may be deterred from coming forward and seeking help by the fact that services are almost entirely staffed by women. The Panel therefore feels that domestic violence services should seek to reflect the percentage of victims who are male in their staffing structure.

Only a minority of crimes are reported to the Police and this is particularly true of younger people. The Panel welcomes the proposal to develop a project to work with young people to increase their awareness of support services for victims and, through this, encourage more of them to report crime.

The findings of this scrutiny review closely mirror those of the joint thematic review of victim and witness experiences in the criminal justice system, which was undertaken by criminal justice inspectorates and published in May 2009. An action plan in response to this has still to be developed by the local group of the LCJB. It is recommended that action arising from the scrutiny review be incorporated into this and that the plan be developed in consultation with the CDRP.

Recommendations

1. That SCEB collaborates with the LCJB group for Haringey to establish clearer strategic ownership and governance structures for the support of victims and witnesses and that closer working arrangements be developed between the two bodies on this and other areas where there is a shared interest and responsibility .(SCEB) (paragraph 3.10)
2. That the SCEB works with the local LCJB group to assist it in the development of a joint area strategy and improvement plan for the borough, as required in response to the Joint Thematic Review, and that this considers fully the overall co-ordination of services and any areas of duplication, overlap and inconsistency in services. (SCEB) (paragraph 3.10)
3. That the installation of CCTV in the vicinity of the Magistrates Court in order to deter disorder be considered when decisions are being made by the Council and its partners on the future installation of cameras. (SCEB) (paragraph 4.17)
4. That the Police Service and the CPS be requested to establish, in consultation with the Witness Service, a system for ensuring that a relevant senior WCU officer is notified immediately of any instances of the details of witnesses requiring support not being passed onto the Witness Service and especially vulnerable or intimidated witnesses and that the number of such cases and their cause be monitored. (Police/CPS) (paragraph 4.21)
5. That local strategic partners raise this issue of the accommodation needs of the Witness Service at Highgate Court House with the LCJB and jointly explore whether improved arrangements can be made. (SCEB). (paragraph 4.23)

6. That, as part of wider measures to increase awareness of the services offered by Victim Support, the Police Service be requested to reinforce the need for police personnel and, in particular, front line officers, to determine whether victims of crime wish to be referred. (Police) (paragraph 4.32)
7. That a visit to Victim Support be included as part of the training provided to probationary police officers within the borough. (Police) (paragraph 4.32)
8. That strategic partners, in liaison with Victim Support, consider the provision of access, when required, to appropriate psychological support for Victim Support volunteers. (SCEB) (paragraph 4.37)
9. That the Police Service, in consultation with Victim Support, be requested to develop a system for obtaining regular feedback from Victim Support volunteers on any relevant issues that may have arisen in their work with victims. (Police) (paragraph 4.39)
10. That the proposal to commission a review of support services for young people and, in particular, increasing their awareness of Victim Support services and encouraging the reporting of crime by them, be supported. (SCEB/C&YPS) (paragraph 5.2)
11. That the YOS be requested to follow up all letters to victims regarding restorative justice processes in order to explain the process fully and encourage a greater level of participation. (Asst. CE PPP&C) (paragraph 5.8)
12. That the Council and its partners consider the future funding arrangements and strategic role of the ASBAT with a view to establishing a sustainable service model, including access to support for victims. (SCEB) (paragraph 5.16)
13. That statistical information on the nature of abuse suffered by clients be routinely collected by Hearthstone. (Asst. CE PPP&C) (paragraph 5.21)
14. That the Council's Domestic Violence Co-ordinator be requested, in liaison with the Hearthstone Centre and Victim Support, to compile detailed statistics on the prevalence of domestic violence affecting men and that a target that is consistent with this be set for the employment of men in relevant domestic violence services. (Asst. CE PPP&C) (paragraph 5.26)
15. That the role undertaken by the IDVAs be reviewed with a view to establishing a more sustainable means of providing the support that they currently provide and addressing any overlap that there might be with other support services. (Asst. CE PPP&C) (paragraph 5.29)

1. Background

1.1 The review was commissioned as providing support and protection to victims has been identified as a local priority by the Haringey Strategic Partnership under the “Safer for All” agreed outcome. It also relates directly to two LAA targets. These are:

- LO123a (local target): Number of 1:1 appointments with young people undertaken by Victim Support. The target for this is 36 for 2008/9; and
- LO125 (local target): Repeat victimisation of domestic violence. The target for this is 176 per quarter. The last recorded quarterly figure was 273.

1.2 The review looked at the totality of support for victims of crime from its initial reporting and through the judicial process. It aimed to obtain an understanding, from the victim’s point of view, of how easy it is to access support, its effectiveness and where improvements could be made.

1.3 The terms of reference of the review were as follows:

“To consider the range, accessibility, quality and co-ordination of support provided by local partners to victims of crime and make recommendations to the responsible agencies on how this might be improved”

1.4 As part of its work, the Panel considered:

- Co-ordination of services
- How the views of users are sought and responded to
- Value for money

1.5 The review undertook its work through the following:

- Interviewing key stakeholders to obtain their views. This included representatives from the Police Service, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the Court Service and Victim Support.
- Obtaining the views of people who work directly with victims and witnesses to obtain a service user perspective.
- Considering relevant documentary and research evidence, including information on the cost and funding arrangements for services provided
- Looking at best practice elsewhere
- Providing an element of external challenge

1.6 The membership of the review panel was as follows:

Cllrs Aitken (Chair), Davies, Egan and Patel.

2. Introduction

Definition

- 2.1 Victims of crime can be defined as people who have suffered harm through criminal acts. They are often also witnesses to crime. The harm suffered can be either physical or psychological and includes emotional suffering, grief and economic loss. It also includes people who have suffered harm as a result of the death of a person upon whom they are financially or psychologically dependant and/or to whom they are closely related.
- 2.2 The effects of being a victim of crime may not necessarily be proportionate to the seriousness of the crime. It may also affect others such as partners, relatives, parents and siblings. In some cases, it may have long term effects such as depression, anxiety-related illnesses and post traumatic stress disorder.

Government Policy

- 2.3 Improving the experience of victims and witnesses has been a long term government priority for the criminal justice system and a range of initiatives have been introduced. These include:
 - Special measures: The Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 provides a range of measures to help vulnerable or intimidated witnesses in giving evidence in criminal trials, such as allowing them to give evidence through a video link or be assisted by an intermediary.
 - Victim Personal Statements (VPS); This was introduced in 2001 and provides an opportunity for victims to make a personal statement on the impact that a crime has had on them and their family.
 - Direct Communication with Victims Scheme: This commits the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to provide an explanation to victims when a charge is dropped or substantially reduced or increased in gravity.
 - No Witness No Justice (NWNJ); This initiative was launched in 2003/4 and established a number of minimum requirements for the support of witnesses. It led to the introduction of witness care units (WCUs), who are responsible for providing support and information to victims and witnesses and jointly managed and staffed by the police and CPS.

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

- 2.4 Probably the most significant initiative has been the introduction of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in 2006, which sets out minimum levels of service to victims and imposes obligations on organisations involved in the criminal justice system. It included an enhanced level of service for victims deemed vulnerable and/or intimidated and established the right of victims to support, privacy, physical, emotional and financial recovery and protection from offenders.
- 2.5 The code sets out the services that people should expect to receive and requires agencies to provide details of the minimum standards of service that they provide. Key requirements included the need for all victims to be offered support, enhanced support for all vulnerable or intimidated victims, rights to information about the crime

and flexibility to opt in or out of services. In cases where the alleged perpetrator of a crime is under the age of eighteen, the Police are required to pass the victim's contact details to the Youth Offending team unless the victim asks them not to. The code provides victims with the right to challenge criminal justice agencies if they feel that they are not receiving good enough service and complaints can ultimately be taken up by the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

Further Initiatives

2.6 Since the introduction of the code, two further initiatives have been introduced:

- **Quality of Service Commitment:** From November 2006, all police forces have been required to meet new service standards, including keeping victims informed of progress.
- **The Witness Charter;** This sets out core standards of service that all witnesses should receive from criminal justice agencies if they are asked to give evidence for the prosecution or the defence in a criminal court. The standards of service set out in the Witness Charter apply to all witnesses regardless of whether they may also be the victim. If they are a victim as well, they also have the rights set out in the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.

Anti Social Behaviour

2.7 As applications for anti social behaviour orders (ASBOs) come under the civil courts, the support mechanisms for victims that exist for criminal cases have not until now been accessible. However, the government has recently announced measures to address this through providing access for victims to the Witness Service. In addition, a network of 85 victims and witness champions is to be set up in priority areas across the country. This aims to deliver practical help for victims and witnesses as well as ensuring more victims of anti social behaviour receive support.

Accountability

2.8 Increasing the satisfaction of victims and witnesses is the overall responsibility of local criminal justice boards (LCJBs), who are responsible for the delivery of a range of national targets in respect of them. There are 42 LCJBs in England and Wales and they are generally based on police force and criminal justice areas. Their membership comprises of the Police Service, Crown Prosecution Service, Court Service, Youth Offending Teams, prisons and probation. There is a LCJB for London, which deals with strategic issues, and a local group covering Haringey, which is chaired by the Borough Commander for the Police and intended to focus on operational matters.

Improvements

2.9 The London LCJB has a specific target for increasing the satisfaction levels of victims and witnesses. The target for 2009-10 is to increase the percentage of victims and witnesses that are satisfied with overall contact with the criminal justice system to 83%. The latest recorded figure for Haringey (March 2009) is currently 83%, which is above the London average of 81%.

- 2.10 A joint thematic review on the effectiveness of support to victims and witnesses was published in May 2009 by Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Court Administration and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Court Administration. It looked at whether the improved support mechanisms were improving the confidence of victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system and included a survey of their views.
- 2.11 The report found that there had been an improvement in satisfaction levels with the criminal justice system, which it felt demonstrated the positive impact of WCUs. The report also identified a number of areas where there was scope for further improvement:
- There was a need for oversight by LCJBs of arrangements to ensure that local services provided to victims and witnesses were further developed and improved. It recommended that LCJBs should take ownership for victim and witness issues and ensure that joint area strategy and improvement plans were developed and communicated effectively. These needed to be supported by effective governance and performance management arrangements.
 - There needed to be better understanding amongst front line police officers of which special measures were available to support vulnerable and intimidated witnesses. There were also weaknesses identified in the arrangements for the timely identification of the need for special measures and Police forces needed to ensure that front line police officers were able to identify vulnerable and intimidated victims and witnesses.
 - There needed to be wider understanding of Victim Personal Statements (VPS) amongst front line police officers and prosecutors.
 - The needs of victims and witnesses were not always assessed as fully as they should be.
 - Police forces needed to ensure that police personnel were fully aware of the services provided by Victim Support and that they fitted in with services provided by other support organisations.
 - Waiting times at court continued to be too long for a large proportion of witnesses.
- 2.12 The review noted that some witnesses still had concerns about their safety despite improvements that have been made. It was also of the view that WCU's had some way to go before they were able to meet all the minimum requirements set out for them and to do so on a consistent basis.

3. Strategic Issues

Overview

- 3.1 The Panel received a strategic overview of local services and how they are co-ordinated, funded and provided from Claire Kowalska, the Community Safety Strategic Manager. It noted that some residents are more likely to become victims than others. Those living in the east of the Borough, who are also more likely to be from a black and minority ethnic community, have a greater risk of becoming a victim. Whilst there is a roughly equal split between male and female victims of burglary, men are more likely to be victims of robbery whilst women are more likely to be victims of domestic violence.
- 3.2 Many victims missed out on services for a variety of reasons, including under reporting of crime and funding issues. Data showed that that only approximately 30% of adult victims of crime reported the crime to the police. It was also known that the figure for young victims was even lower. Under reporting by young victims of crime was highlighted three years ago as a concern in initial discussions about Haringey's Local Area Agreement and agreed as a local priority. It remains an ongoing problem. It had been established that there is a significant gap in awareness of Victim Support services and that this is particularly true of younger people.

Co-ordination

- 3.3 The Panel noted that there is a very wide range of services that provide support for victims and witnesses. It received evidence from a number of witnesses that there was a need for better co-ordination of services. In particular, the Panel heard from volunteers who work directly with victims that the large number of different agencies and organisations that can potentially be in contact with them can be a considerable source of confusion. This is aggravated by the similarity in names of certain of the bodies involved e.g. the Witness Care Unit and the Witness Service. In addition, there appears to be some areas of overlap. The majority of this has occurred as a consequence of successive government initiatives to improve support.
- 3.4 To compound this, there are different arrangements for support depending on the nature of what the individual has been a victim of. For example, there are differences between the support that would be available to a victim of an assault, a victim of domestic violence and a victim of anti social behaviour. The level of support should be governed by the seriousness of what has occurred in order to ensure that those most in need get the most support but this may not necessarily always be the case.
- 3.5 There are currently a number of different local strategic partnership groups who have some role in relation to victims and witnesses. However, the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) and its local group for Haringey have overall responsibility area and therefore should be the most significant body. In particular, the local LCJB group is responsible for addressing the recommendations of the joint thematic review, including taking strategic ownership of victim and witness issues.
- 3.6 Although the LCJB may formally have the leading role in relation to support for victims and witnesses, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) also

has a specific interest in the issue. Improved performance in this area will support a number of key local strategic targets, such as numbers of young people re-convicted, school performance, exclusions, health inequalities and crime reduction.

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3.7 In Haringey, the role of the CDRP is undertaken by the Safer Communities Executive Board (SCEB). The Panel noted that there is considerable overlap in membership between the local LCJB and SCEB. However, there are also some key stakeholders who are not formally represented on the LCJB. These include the local authority which has;

- A key strategic role in relation to the local strategic partnership (HSP) and domestic violence services such as Hearthstone.
- Overall responsibility for Area Based Grant, which provides funding for significant local services that support victims such as Victim Support.

3.8 Unlike the LCJB, SCEB is linked directly into the Haringey Strategic Partnership (HSP) and its supporting infrastructure. In addition, whilst SCEB has the Community Safety team to support its work, the same support is not available for local LCJB group. The LCJB would therefore appear to be in the position of having overall responsibility over victim and witness issues but limited to the strategic resources at its disposal to facilitate improvements.

3.9 Support for victims and witnesses is one of a number of policy areas where there are overlapping responsibilities between LCJBs and CDRPs. Whilst there are separate responsibilities in relation to supporting victims and witnesses, there is also a shared interest and interdependency in this and on other issues. The local group of the LCJB does not, as yet, have direct links with SCEB. The Home Office encourages closer collaboration between LCJBs and CDRPs and the Panel feels that this something that should be fully explored. One key area where the Panel believes that collaboration would be of particular benefit is on the response to the joint thematic review that is being undertaken by the local LCJB group as this is a clear area where there is a shared interest.

3.10 The Panel is of the view that the establishment of a clearer governance structure as well as strategic ownership of the issue would facilitate better co-ordination of services. Once established, this should provide the opportunity to look strategically at current provision and address any areas of overlap and duplication as well as developing a joint local plan for improving services.

Recommendations:

- **That SCEB collaborates with the LCJB group for Haringey to establish clearer strategic ownership and governance structures for the support of victims and witnesses and that closer working arrangements be developed on this and other areas where there is a shared interest and responsibility (SCEB).**
- **That the SCEB works with the local LCJB for Haringey to assist it in the development of a joint area strategy and improvement plan for the borough, as required in response to the Joint Thematic Review, and that this considers fully the overall co-ordination of services and any areas of duplication, overlap and**

inconsistency in services.

4. Support for Victims and Witnesses

Introduction

- 4.1 The Victims' Code and the Witness Charter lay out a number of specific obligations for individual agencies.
- 4.2 The obligations of the Police Service include:
- The need to inform all victims about Victim Support and offered their services
 - Taking all reasonable steps to identify vulnerable or intimidated victims and explaining the provision of the special measures that are available to support them if they are called as a witness
 - Advising victims of whether or not there will be an investigation into the crime
 - Keeping victims updated on the progress of ongoing investigations and their outcome, including whether action is being taken against any suspect
 - Assigning family liaison officers to relatives in cases where a victim has died as a result of a crime
- 4.3 Once an individual has been charged, the WCU is the single point of contact for witnesses and co-ordinates all aspects of their care. It has a number of important obligations in keeping witnesses informed about the progress of the judicial process. Perhaps their most important role is to undertake a full needs assessment with all victims when a not guilty plea has been entered. This follows on from the initial needs assessment conducted by police officers. A witness may opt out of a needs assessment if they wish. The minimum requirements state that the needs assessment should address a range of issues, including identification of any vulnerable or intimidated witnesses, any need for special measures, whether a victim personal statement has been taken, transport issues, childcare issues, the need for a pre-court visit, referral to support agencies and any employment concerns regarding attendance.
- 4.4 In the most serious cases, specialist officers are appointed. This applies in cases of homicide, serious sexual assault and child abuse cases. Where such appointments are made, the specialist officer will take direct responsibility for victim and witness contact rather than the WCU.
- 4.5 The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is responsible for the decision on whether to charge in the more serious cases, as well as deciding what charge is to be brought. The CPS prosecutor is also required to consider, at an early stage, whether any of witnesses have specific needs and may require the use of special measures. Court staff have responsibilities for supporting witnesses and ensuring that they are given any assistance that they might need during trials. This includes defence witnesses when identified. The main support that is available to victims and witnesses at court is provided by the Witness Service, who provide support to witnesses at court during the course of a trial. The Witness Service is run by Victim Support and paid for via the criminal justice system.

- 4.6 The Probation Service have responsibilities in relation to the victims of offenders sentenced to 12 months or more if imprisonment for a sexual or violent offence. They are required to take all reasonable steps to establish whether a victim wishes to make representations about licence conditions or supervision arrangements the offender should be subject to on release. In addition, they must pass on any relevant information to the victim regarding conditions that the offender will be subject to in the event of release.

The Police Service

- 4.7 The Panel received evidence from Chief Inspector Pete Dickson from Haringey Police. He reported that, he led an integrated prosecution team (IPT) for the borough. IPTs involve the police and CPS teams working together to manage an integrated single file and administrative process. As well as reducing duplication and improving performance, IPTs are also intended to ensure better services for victims and witnesses by improving liaison between the police Witness Care Unit and the CPS.
- 4.8 The IPT takes over once an individual has been charged. Before this stage, it is the responsibility of the Detective Inspector to liaise with witnesses. A range of support is provided including crime prevention advice, specialist assistance and support via Victim Support Haringey. A wide range of practical assistance can also be provided, such as transport to court, taxis, childcare, hotels and even flights. It is available right through the criminal justice process and can continue afterwards.
- 4.9 The Victims Charter set time limits for keeping people informed of progress with cases and the service strives to comply with these. Victims are informed within 24 hours if an arrest is made. There are also particular timescales for informing victims if an individual is charged or pleads guilty. Efforts are made to arrange court dates that are convenient to victims and witnesses, who are informed as soon as one is set. It was sometimes the case that the IPT did not become aware that a witness was required until a comparatively late stage. The service has a good record on getting witnesses to court – only two to three backed out, on average, every month.
- 4.10 They seek to develop an ongoing relationship with victims and witnesses. One particular purpose of this is to determine whether witnesses are becoming nervous. In such circumstances, they can be put in touch with the Witness Service and special measures can be considered.
- 4.11 The Panel noted that merely attending court is a hugely important step as it is a common defence tactic to see if the prosecution are able to get their witnesses to court. This is especially common in domestic violence cases. If the defendant sees evidence that the witness has the courage to go to court, they often change their plea. However, by pleading guilty at a late stage they lose the opportunity to gain the maximum discount on their sentence.

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

- 4.12 The Panel received evidence from Hywel Ebsworth from the CPS. The earliest opportunity the CPS has to consider victim and witness issues is when the Police request either an early consultation for advice, which is more common in serious or complex cases, or when the Police bring a case to the CPS for a charging decision. A decision is made after reviewing the evidence and considering whether the public

interest would be served. A lesser test is applied if the case is so serious that the offender is in custody. The time that it takes to reach a decision depends on the complexity of the case. The decision is made by the prosecutor together with the investigating officer. If it is decided that there should be a prosecution, the CPS prosecutor gives authority to the Police to charge the defendant, following which the defendant is required to attend court. The decision is required to be communicated to victims/witnesses within 24 hours.

- 4.13 In the first instance, Police officers should establish whether a witness is vulnerable or intimidated. If they are, an application can be made to the court for special measures. The support process is intended to be “victim led” – they have to be asked what support they would like and the decision is theirs to take from a position of knowledge. People varied in how they respond to being a witness. Some people start off as being resilient but then become more nervous.

The Court Service

- 4.14 The Panel received evidence from Stephen Carroll from Highgate Court. It was noted 98% of cases were dealt with in magistrates courts. Of these, 73% resulted in a guilty plea. He reported that the magistrates court currently has 150 magistrates that it worked with and the Courts Service was responsible for the legal advice that they were given. It did not directly assist victims and witnesses but responded to what they were asked to do by other agencies.
- 4.15 The longest that magistrates courts cases last is a day. Waiting times are currently within LCJB targets and there have been no issues of people being dissatisfied with the length of time that they have had to wait. All magistrates are trained in case management and if it is inevitable that a case will not proceed, efforts are made to ensure that witnesses are alerted so that they do not have to attend court. Weekly case management meetings are held and strenuous efforts are made to avoid ineffective trials. The situation at Crown Court is different as they often have “floaters” – cases that had not been allocated to a specific court but were instead waiting until one became free. Crown court time is hugely expensive and therefore the use of courts has to be maximised.
- 4.16 There are separate entrances to the Magistrates Court for defendants and witnesses and security within the court building. If it is not felt that this is sufficient, the Court can inform the Police, whose presence can act as a deterrent. This is particularly useful when the Youth Court is sitting and gang members are being tried. The local Safer Neighbourhood Team has adjusted their hours to ensure a presence when the court is sitting and there is regular liaison with the police, including risk assessment.
- 4.17 The Court House wishes to improve the CCTV in operation at the Court and their estates service is currently addressing this. However, there currently is no CCTV outside the court. Additional CCTV around the vicinity of the Court House, that was linked into the local authority system, would help to deter disorder in the vicinity of the Court House and assist in ensuring that any problems were responded to quickly. The view of the Council’s Urban Environment Service was that cameras could probably be installed at or near to the location, subject to a satisfactory site visit being undertaken. The average cost of a CCTV camera, including installation, is £25,000 per camera whilst maintenance and line rental per camera is approximately £2,500 per annum. Funding for this would need to be identified but

the Panel is of the view that this should be given serious consideration when decisions are being made on the future installation of cameras.

Recommendation:

That the installation of CCTV in the vicinity of the Magistrates Court in order to deter disorder be considered when decisions are being made by the Council and its partners on the future installation of cameras.

The Witness Service

- 4.18 The Panel received evidence from a group of volunteers from the Witness Service on their work. The volunteers considered that the service from the Witness Care Unit (WCU) was variable in nature. One issue of note was that the WCU did not always provide the information that Witness Service volunteers required, leaving them with little or no information on victims and witnesses that were attending the Magistrates Court and, in particular, whether they were vulnerable or intimidated. This could include domestic violence cases. In such circumstances, it was possible that there would not be the capacity to assist them. Although the service received the list of witnesses to attend court (LWAC) documentation, this did not provide all the necessary details, such as the charge. The Panel also received evidence from the Courts Service that professionals did not always know before a trial if witnesses are vulnerable. However, it noted that the CPS could still make an application for special measures even at a comparatively late stage, although the defence has to be given notice and can object.
- 4.19 It was also noted that sometimes the Witness Service was not informed when cases were dropped. Such occurrences could cause embarrassment and de-motivate volunteers. If the Witness Service was made aware of all the necessary information in good time, they could contact witnesses in advance. However, the same problems did not exist at the Crown Court. There had been a number of meetings between volunteers and the WCU where concerns had been raised. Performance had improved but there was still some way to go. One particular problem was the high turnover of staff at the WCU.
- 4.20 The Panel is concerned that the Witness Service does not appear to always be receiving relevant information regarding witnesses attending the Magistrates Court in a timely manner as this can affect their ability to support them effectively. The Panel is particularly concerned that this appears to include vulnerable and intimidated witnesses.
- 4.21 It is unclear whether such instances are due to a failure to pass information on or the necessary needs assessments not being made and is of the view that further information is needed. Such instances should be regarded as a serious matter and flagged up with the WCU so the reason can be determined and appropriate action taken. In addition, the number of such cases and their cause should be monitored in order to assess whether these are isolated incidents or part of a longer term pattern.

Recommendation:

That the Police Service and the CPS be requested to establish, in consultation

with the Witness Service, a system for ensuring that a relevant senior WCU officer is notified immediately of any instances of the details of witnesses requiring support not being passed onto the Witness Service and especially vulnerable or intimidated witnesses and that the number of such cases and their cause be monitored.

4.22 The Panel noted the view of Witness Service volunteers that their accommodation at Highgate Magistrates Court was inadequate. They were currently located at the foot of a stairwell, in a corridor. They felt that it was difficult to have a meaningful conversation in such surroundings, as well as being cold. They had previously had good accommodation at the court but the lease had run out and they were currently located adjacent to a large unoccupied office.

4.23 The Panel is concerned that the Witness Service appear to currently be located in accommodation at the Magistrates Court that does not meet the needs of the service. As the funding for accommodation for the Witness Services comes via the criminal justice system, it is recommended that local strategic partners raise this issue with the LCJB and explore whether improved arrangements can be made.

Recommendation:

That local strategic partners raise this issue of the accommodation needs of the Witness Service at Highgate Court House with the LCJB and jointly explore whether improved arrangements can be made.

Victim Support

4.24 Victim Support Haringey provides support for victims and witnesses within the borough and is part of Victim Support's London region. It is part of a national charity that provides free and confidential help to victims and witnesses of crime in England and Wales. They can also provide help to family, friends and anyone else affected. The support provided includes information, emotional support and practical help. It is not necessary to report a crime to the Police in order to receive help and support can be given at any time, irrespective of when the crime occurred.

4.25 Victim Support works closely with the police, courts and other parts of the criminal justice system. They have a network of local offices across England and Wales which are managed by a national centre in London. The Police provide the service with the contact details of victims after a crime is reported. Victims are then contacted by the service, normally within 48 hours. The service can also be contacted directly by victims.

4.26 Victim Support is a key local strategic partner and received £72,000 this financial year from area based grant, including £38,700 from the Children's and Young People's Service. In addition, it receives funding from its central organisation. Local funding is vulnerable and uncertain and the service is very reliant on volunteers.

4.27 The Panel received evidence from Tessa Newton from Victim Support, who outlined the services that Victim Support Haringey provides. Support provided covers both practical issues and emotional support. In addition, they can also provide advocacy

and liaison. There is now also a specific anti social behaviour support worker, which has been funded as part of the Justice Seen, Justice Done scheme.

- 4.28 Most of Victim Support's work is undertaken by unpaid volunteers and their ability to provide a service can be limited by their availability. For example, during the autumn half term, only one third of the volunteers were available, which restricted services. Accommodation at Victim Support's offices in Commerce Road could also be improved as it only has two interview rooms which everyone, including staff, had to use for meetings.
- 4.29 Volunteers require six months experience of case work before they are able to take on more serious crimes. There is also quite a high turn over of volunteers. The net result of this is that volunteers who are qualified to deal with particular sorts of crime – especially the more serious offences – can get booked up very quickly and victims may have to wait. However, some other victims can be offered appointments quickly, such as those who have suffered actual bodily harm (ABH). They do not turn clients away, although some people may have to wait longer than is ideal.
- 4.30 Referrals have grown – 90% of these are from the Police. There is a mix of people who are referred. The majority of domestic violence victims are women but there are an increasing number of men. A high percentage of ABH and grievous bodily harm (GBH) victims are men. Clients are frequently frightened and a lot of personal alarms are therefore given out. Around 20% of victims wish to withdraw their case and young people were particularly likely to ask for withdrawal.
- 4.31 It was noted that a large number of referrals from the police are classified as “non crime” which they are unable to deal with. Mr Dickson, from the Police, stated that this was due to the initial investigating officer classifying the incident as a crime but it later being re-classified, after investigation, as “no crime”. If victims are to be referred in a timely manner, this will have to be before investigations are concluded and it is therefore inevitable that re-classification will take place in some cases
- 4.32 It was noted that initial referrals are dealt with centrally by Victim Support, who make three attempts to contact people. Cases are then referred onwards to the local branch. The service can be opted out of if a victim wishes and front line police officers are required to ask people if they wish to be referred but Ms Newton suspected that this did not always happen. In such cases, it was likely that the police officer would refer anyway. Mr Dickson felt that front line officers needed to be educated about the need to ask people if they wished to be referred and that this could be included in officer development. However, the Police first needed to be appraised of such issues so that they could address them. The Panel notes the recommendation of the joint thematic review that measures are taken to ensure that police personnel are aware of Victim Support and its services and is of the view that this issue should be addressed as part of this process. The Panel also feels that better awareness amongst front line Police officers of Victim Support as well as improved communication with the service could be promoted by including a visit to their offices as part of the training for probationary police officers within the Borough.

Recommendation:

- **That, as part of wider measures to increase awareness of the services offered by Victim Support, the Police Service be requested to reinforce the need for police personnel and, in particular, front line officers, to determine whether**

victims of crime wish to be referred.

- **That a visit to Victim Support be included as part of the training provided to probationary police officers within the borough.**

Views of Victim Support Volunteers

- 4.33 The Panel received evidence from a group of volunteers from Victim Support in order to obtain their views on services as well as an indication of the views of victims. The Panel had wanted to obtain the views of victims directly but, after consultation with Victim Support, it was felt that would not be not be feasible as it was unlikely that it would be possible to identify many victims prepared to share their experiences with the Panel in the time available. However, the joint thematic review included a survey of victims and witnesses. In addition, it may be possible for local partners to commission a detailed survey in due course as a monitoring the improvement of services.
- 4.34 The Panel noted that all volunteers receive comprehensive training. The hours that people put in vary enormously, from a few hours per month to several days per week. There are a number of younger volunteers, including some law students. However, many are passing through and unlikely to stay and it is felt that sometimes people merely get involved as it will look good on their CV. It was noted that there is now a contract for volunteers that requires them to assist for a minimum of 18 months.
- 4.35 The Panel noted that when Victim Support volunteers first meet with victims, they begin by establishing what sort of assistance they need and whether they require referral to other services. Practical and emotional support could be provided but volunteers were not trained counsellors. It was felt that they needed access to taking therapies so that they could refer people onwards when appropriate. Although they only saw a comparatively small percentage of victims, many were very needy and becoming the victim of a crime could sometimes be the final straw for them. They could advise victims to go to their doctor if it was felt that they needed to be referred for counselling but there is a long waiting list for this.
- 4.36 The Panel noted that some volunteers specialise in more serious crimes such as murder, manslaughter and serious sexual offences. Dealing with cases such as this can emotionally affect them. There is supervision of volunteers in order to ensure that they are coping and Victim Support was strengthening this system as part of its reorganisation. However, there is no direct access to counselling or specialist assistance.
- 4.37 Exposure to trauma can potentially lead to volunteers being unable to continue their work. In addition, their long term welfare also needs to be considered. The Panel therefore feels that partners should raise this issue with Victim Support and explore the possibility of the provision of appropriate specialist support if and when required by local volunteers. One option could be for this to be provided via the occupational health services of relevant partners.

Recommendation:

That strategic partners, in liaison with Victim Support, consider the provision of

access, when required, to appropriate psychological support for Victim Support volunteers.

4.38 The volunteers were of the view that liaison between the Police and victims could be improved, although matters had improved since the establishment of the Victim Focus Desk. It could also be difficult at times to get hold of relevant officers due to their shift patterns or them being out and about. However, it was recognised that they had considerable demands on their time.

4.39 They felt that there was a great level of variation in the quality of interactions between front line police officers and victims. It was recognised, however, that Police officers had very difficult jobs. If victims were not happy with the way that they had been treated by the Police, they were normally advised by volunteers to speak to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). However, at least one victim had been given forms by the CAB to lodge a complaint with the Independent Police Complaints Commission, which appeared to be a disproportionate response. The Panel is of the view that it would be far more preferable if any issues could be resolved at an early stage. In particular, regular informal meetings between volunteers and the Police would assist in improving communications and highlighting any issues.

Recommendation:

That the Police Service, in consultation with Victim Support, be requested to develop a system for obtaining regular feedback from Victim Support volunteers on any relevant issues that may have arisen in their work with victims.

5. Specialised Support

Introduction

- 5.1 In addition to mainstream services that provide support for victims, there are also other services who have a role with particular types of victims or crimes. The Panel received evidence on work that is undertaken with young people and victims of domestic violence and anti social behaviour.

Young People

- 5.2 As mentioned previously, under reporting by young victims of crime has been highlighted as a local priority. The Panel noted that, in particular, a significant gap has been identified in awareness of Victim Support services among young people. Young people are also more likely to ask to withdraw their case. Victim Support was contracted in 2009/10 to raise awareness of their services amongst young people and run workshops in schools through a dedicated outreach worker. They had recruited two part time workers but the project had only been partially successful due, in part, to the lack of commitment to a full years funding from C&YPS. The uncertainty had led to recruitment and recruitment difficulties. In addition, the project would have benefited from better access to appropriate professionals and a more integrated approach. The Panel heard evidence from C&YPS that it is proposed to commission a review on the how to better progress this area of work. It will review the delivery of services to young victims and best value. In particular, it will look at how the service can best relate to young people. Criteria for the new service will then be jointly developed. A joined up approach across the Youth Offending Service, C&YPS and Victim Support is being aimed for.

Recommendation:

That the proposal to commission a review of support services for young people and, in particular, increasing their awareness of Victim Support services and encouraging the reporting of crime by them, be supported.

- 5.3 The Panel received evidence on the role of the Youth Offending Service (YOS). It routinely contacts the victims of the young people who are on court orders under their supervision. This is to enable victims to have access to reparation or other restorative justice initiatives. A letter is sent to victims advising of restorative justice processes and that they will be contacted to determine whether they wish to participate in this. The letter puts the onus on the victim to contact the YOS to pursue the issue, although the letter should be followed up with a phone call or home visit. However, it was noted that this has not happened with all cases due to staffing levels. This has perhaps been reflected in a lower number of victims participating.
- 5.4 In the past year, there were 123 victim contact requests. Letters went out to all victims and, where the victims were identified as young victims (i.e. 16 and under), a letter was sent to their parents. 5 people attended panels who were either victims or parents of victims. They all informed the service that they were satisfied with the process. The victims who opted not to participate in panel meetings advised the service that they were satisfied with the restorative justice processes they had been

offered.

5.5 Restorative justice can either be:

- Attendance at a referral order panel, where the victim is able to state the impact of the offence on them and their wider family and also have an opportunity to ask questions of the offender; or
- The victim can submit a written statement stating how the offence has impacted on them and or their wider family.

5.6 In addition to the above, the YOS run a three session victim awareness programme with young people that are assessed as suitable for group work programmes. The sessions cover;

- What a victim is i.e. different types of victims, different types of crime, how to report information anonymously on crimes committed.
- How different crimes have affected people, looking in particular at knife crime and the impact on victims and victims families of knife crime.

5.7 The Panel noted that the YOS are not currently working in partnership with Victim Support or any other agencies on engagement with young people, although meetings have been planned around conducting joint pieces of work. However, it notes the previously mentioned proposal to commission a review of support services for young people and, in particular, increasing their awareness of Victim Support services.

5.8 The Panel is concerned at the very low numbers of victims participating in restorative justice processes and is of the view that a more proactive approach, which involves all letters to victims being followed up as well as encouragement to them to participate, may assist in increasing the numbers taking part. In addition, it would provide the opportunity to provide reassurance if victims have any particular concerns about participating.

Recommendation:

That the YOS be requested to follow up all letters to victims regarding restorative justice processes in order to explain the process fully and encourage a greater level of participation.

Anti Social Behaviour Team

5.9 Due to the fact that the majority of anti social behaviour is sub-criminal in nature, there is currently no specific statutory requirement on agencies to support victims of it. However, assistance and support is provided as their involvement is normally essential if any action is to be taken.

5.10 The Panel received evidence from Mike Bagnall from the Anti Social Behaviour team (ASBAT). It encourages victims to report anti social behaviour. Although the service is widely publicised, some residents are unaware of its existence and how to report incidents and work is being undertaken with the Council's communications

service to further publicise it. The service is proactive and visits areas where they know that there have been problems but no reports have been received in order to encourage people to come forward. The service has a dedicated anti social behaviour telephone line and was one of the first in the country to have one.

- 5.11 It was noted that there are significant issues relating to young people. The team has links with 33 primary schools and 8 secondary schools and has provided training for teachers. However, ASB reports received from young people and schools are very low in number. It was hard to know why so few referrals were received. It was felt that many young people accepted being victimised through, for instance, robbery of mobile phones as normal.
- 5.12 Where legal action is taken, ASBAT officers do their best to support victims but have limited time. As much of the legal action that the ASBAT is involved in goes through the civil courts, there is not the same support available as there is for criminal cases. Approaches have been made to the Crown Court and the Magistrates Court about assistance with support and accessing the services of Witness Support and they have been happy to accommodate them. However, the County Court has been unable to provide the same service.
- 5.13 As part of the Justice Seen, Justice Done scheme, grant funding has been obtained from the Home Office for a witness support officer for the ASBAT. An appointment to this post has already been made. The post holder will deal exclusively with support for ASB victims and witnesses. This will include arranging pre trial visits to court and attendance at court with victims and witnesses on dates of hearings. The postholder is employed by Victim Support but located within the ASBAT. Funding is only in place until 2011.
- 5.14 If reports of anti social behaviour are individual or “one to one” issues, full details of witnesses are required. Sometimes alleged victims have subsequently been found to be perpetrators. If the issue is more general, the ASBAT team can take the initiative and seek further evidence through leafleting and knocking on doors. However, if people were not willing to take a stand, not much can be done. Efforts are made to reassure victims but no absolute guarantee of safety can be or are given.
- 5.15 The service had been provided with one additional officer from this financial year and this had made a big difference, particularly as it was Council funded. The service now has 8 ASB officers plus a CCTV officer. The vast majority of the service is funded by grants. These have not increased since 2002, which means that the service is under increasing financial pressure. The total running costs of the service was approximately £700,000 and, of this, only one post was funded by the Council. Resources for community engagement work, for which there was currently no budget, would be welcome. In addition, it is potentially unsafe for the CCTV officer to work alone and assistance for the post would therefore be very welcome.
- 5.16 The Panel welcomes the fact that there is now a victim support worker in the ASBAT but notes that funding for this is time limited. This is also the case with the ASBAT as a whole, which is currently almost entirely funded by grants. The Panel is of the view that decisions need to be taken about the long term future and sustainability of the ASBAT in order to provide stability and address the uncertainty that currently exists concerning its development. It notes that fact that addressing anti social behaviour has been identified as a specific LAA target as well as a local priority and

is therefore of the view that the resourcing of the service should reflect this.

Recommendation:

That the Council and its partners consider the future funding arrangements and strategic role of the ASBAT with a view to establishing a sustainable service model, including access to support for victims.

Domestic Violence

- 5.17 The Hearthstone Centre provides a service to victims of domestic violence within the borough. It provides them with access to a range of support with the aim on ensuring that as much as possible is accessible in one place. Hearthstone works in partnership with a range of agencies including the police service, probation and the PCT. Assistance from housing officers, Victim Support volunteers, Police community safety officers and staff from the Council's equalities and diversity unit is available. Advice on legal and health services can also be provided. In addition to this, Hearthstone also provides therapeutic solutions.
- 5.18 The Panel received evidence from Penny Rutter, the Hearthstone manager, who reported that Hearthstone was staffed by a small team of five plus a person who worked on the Sanctuary project, which provides enhanced security for victims who were considered to be at risk. In addition, there are two independent domestic violence advocate (IDVAs) who are seconded to work with them.
- 5.19 Hearthstone aims to provide a one stop service for victims of domestic violence. The Centre has recently been refurbished and demand has been growing ever since it re-opened. Current usage is approximately 400 people for the quarter and 1600-1900 for the year, with demand expected to increase to 2,000 by the end of the year. There is over representation of people from black and ethnic minority communities amongst clients of the service. In particular, there are a high number of African Caribbean, Black African, Turkish and, increasingly, white other European clients. It was noted that the breakdown was very similar to that of people presenting as homeless.
- 5.20 The service receives funding from a wide range of sources including £50,000 from Supporting People plus contributions from the Council, GoL and Ministry of Justice. Services are publicised through a range of activities. Two publications have been produced and a lot of work undertaken in building links with hard to reach groups. Presentations have been given to a wide range of groups including community centres and mosques. They have also held three annual major events, including a bus trip around the borough, with leafleting and information on services. However, the majority of publicity is by word of mouth.
- 5.21 The panel noted that 50% of people self refer. Referrals also came from the police. Physical violence was the main driver for referrals and the bulk of cases had some physical component although there currently no specific statistics kept on this. The Panel is of the view that statistical information regarding the nature of abuse would assist the service in developing its services and would therefore recommend that appropriate statistics are kept.

Recommendation:

That statistical information on the nature of abuse suffered by clients be routinely collected by Hearthstone.

- 5.22 Clients very often have concerns about their safety but the priority is to not shift them around and the Sanctuary scheme assists with this. A risk assessment was undertaken on the likelihood of injury or physical harm. Particular efforts are undertaken to protect children and the service has a very good relationship with Homes for Haringey, with whom there are established protocols and procedures. If perpetrators are made homeless, this can encourage them to attempt to return to the family home.
- 5.23 Clients are frequently scared of going to court. However, there is now a specific domestic violence court for the borough. These aim to make the victim feel as safe as possible, bringing domestic violence perpetrators to court more quickly and ensuring that all staff working within the court, including the magistrates, have had dedicated training and knowledge of the subject.
- 5.24 Hearthstone caters for men as well as women but it is difficult to persuade male victims to come forward. The Panel noted evidence from Victim Support that, whilst the majority of domestic violence referrals that it received were from women, an increasing number of men were being referred. This had amounted to approximately 20% of their domestic violence referrals in the first quarter of 2009. The Panel noted that these victims tended not to go to Hearthstone and that there are currently no male workers based at the Centre. However, any men presenting at the Centre can ask for a male support worker to be brought in from outside. It was also noted that Victim Support have low numbers of male volunteers.
- 5.25 The Panel is of the view that more robust data on the local prevalence of domestic violence amongst men should be produced and recommends that the Council's Domestic Violence Co-ordinator works with Hearthstone and Victim Support to obtain a more accurate picture.
- 5.26 In addition, it feels that there may currently be a perception that Hearthstone is only for women and that this may be why male victims are not using the service in the numbers that would be expected by such statistics that are available. This perception may be compounded by the lack of male staff at the centre. The Panel therefore feels that the domestic violence services should set a target for the employment of male staff that better reflects the percentage of domestic violence victims who are male.

Recommendation:

That the Council's Domestic Violence Co-ordinator be requested, in liaison with the Hearthstone Centre and Victim Support, to compile detailed statistics on the prevalence of domestic violence affecting men and that a target that is consistent with this be set for the employment of men in relevant domestic violence services.

- 5.27 In respect of IDVAs, the Panel noted that evaluations carried out in 2004 of the two pilot specialist domestic violence courts in Croydon and Caerphilly identified their

useful role. They have become an established tool in tackling domestic violence in Haringey in recent years. The approach of providing proactive independent support, risk assessment and safety planning as well as effective partnership working within a multi-agency setting has been shown to decrease victimisation, increase notification of children at risk, and reduce the number of victims unwilling to support a prosecution.

- 5.28 In 2006/07 the Home Office made funding available to develop IDVA services in the 64 Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) areas. This part-funding of the IDVA services in the SDVC areas will continue. One full time IDVA post has been funded jointly by the Police and the Council's Equalities and Diversity Team. The funding is part of the domestic violence budget and additional funding was also made available from LAA Budget. In addition, the Council has received further funding from Government of London office for a second part time IDVA post. Long term funding needs to be agreed and agencies are currently considering how this might be provided.
- 5.29 Both the Police Service and the CPS felt that the IDVAs fulfilled an effective role but Witness Service volunteers felt that they could potentially duplicate work already being undertaken elsewhere by other organisations and added further to the confusion caused by the plethora of individuals and organisations that can be involved in providing support. The Panel is of the view that the role undertaken by the IDVAs should be reviewed with a view to establishing a more sustainable means of providing the support currently provided by them. This should refer specifically to the range of other support for victims that is currently available in order to reduce the potential for any overlap.

Recommendation:

That the role undertaken by the IDVAs be reviewed with a view to establishing a more sustainable means of providing the support that they currently provide and addressing any overlap that there might be with other support services.

Appendix A

Participants in the Review

Claire Kowalska - Community Safety Strategic Manager, Haringey Council

Tessa Newton - Borough Manager, Victim Support Haringey

Penny Rutter - Hearthstone Manager, Hearthstone Domestic Violence Advice & Support Centre

Stephen Carroll - Deputy Justices' Clerk, Haringey and Enfield Magistrates' Courts

Hywel Ebsworth - Borough Community Prosecution Co-ordinator for Haringey, Crown Prosecution Service

Chief Inspector Pete Dickson - Metropolitan Police Haringey

Alison Rennalls - Team Manager, Haringey Youth Offending Service

Mike Bagnall – Anti Social Behaviour Manager, Haringey Council

Luciana Frederick - Service Manager Commissioning and Contracts Team, C&YPS, Haringey Council

Volunteers from Victim Support and the Witness Service

Appendix B

Documents referred to in the preparation of this review

The Witness Charter; Standards of Care for Witnesses in the Criminal Justice System – Criminal Justice System (August 2007)

The Witness Charter; Our Promise to You - Criminal Justice System

The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime - Criminal Justice System

CDRPs (CSPs) and LCJBs: How to Work Together - Criminal Justice System

No Witness, No Justice (NMNJ) Pilot Evaluation Executive Summary – Avail Consulting (October 2004)

Report of a Joint Thematic Review of Victim and Witness Experiences in the Criminal Justice System – HMCPSI/HMISA/HMIC (May 2009)

The Victim's Charter; A Statement of Service Standards for Victims of Crime - Criminal Justice System



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