Warwickshire Victim Needs Assessment: Executive Summary

Introduction

PCCs are responsible for commissioning support services to help victims cope and recover from the impact of crime

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) hold the statutory function for commissioning services to support victims of crime across England, within the policy and legislative framework of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (2015) and the EU Victims' Directive 2012/29EU. A condition of the Ministry of Justice grant given to PCCs to commission services for victims is that they provide evidence of how they are helping victims to:

- **Cope** with the impact of crime; and
- **Recover** from the harm they have experienced

From 2014-15, the Warwickshire PCC received this government funding to commission victim services for their local population. This included general support services for victims and specialist services for victims of domestic abuse, sexual abuse and violence (SAV) and child sexual exploitation (CSE).

Victims are a Priority for the Warwickshire PCC and Police Force

"*Putting victims and survivors first*" is one of the four objectives in the Warwickshire Police and Crime Plan 2016 – 2021[1]. Warwickshire Police's Vulnerability Strategy 2017 states: "*We will be fully compliant with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime 2015 and demonstrate this through our actions. We work proactively with the OPCCs and other appropriate partners to protect the most vulnerable.*"

A victim needs assessment was undertaken to inform commissioning

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire (OPCC) undertook a comprehensive needs assessment to understand the scale and type of support needs victims have, what works and how to improve the local system through commissioning and strategic actions to meet the needs of victims of crime, CSE and SAV.

TONIC was commissioned to provide external, independent support with this needs assessment, which seeks to answer three key questions:

1. What support do local victims need and want, and at what scale? Being informed by their experiences of existing provision
2. What services do we think will meet these needs and wants, based on evidence of what works?
3. How should these services be delivered in Warwickshire?

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1 Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner (2016)

Over 500 local residents affected by crime and relevant partner agencies contributed to this needs assessment

TONIC conducted a survey with 443 Warwickshire residents affected by crime and conducted in-depth interviews with 20 victims (supplemented by semi-structured discussions with 7 frontline practitioners in a range of victim focused services to ensure we had a more rounded view of victims' needs) and 49 staff at partner agencies, including frontline practitioners, service managers and senior commissioners and managers. They gathered a range of data from local agencies and national sources, including service activity levels, service performance data, demand levels and demographic details. Officers in the OPCC hosted a multi-agency workshop and explored other areas' delivery models.

What is the scale of need?

Recorded crime is rising, while crime rates have been falling

Across England and Wales, Police recorded crime levels have fluctuated since 1981, rising since 2012 after 10 years of decline. The Office of National Statistics attributes this increase to "improvements made by police forces in recording crime". They also point out that "there have been genuine increases in crime, particularly in some of the low-incidence but more harmful categories". At the same time, overall crime rates, as reported in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), have fallen steadily since a peak in the mid-1990s. However, figures also show that not all offence types have fallen. Total recorded crime in Warwickshire has been rising from a low point of September 2014, and is now reaching levels similar to those in December 2007.

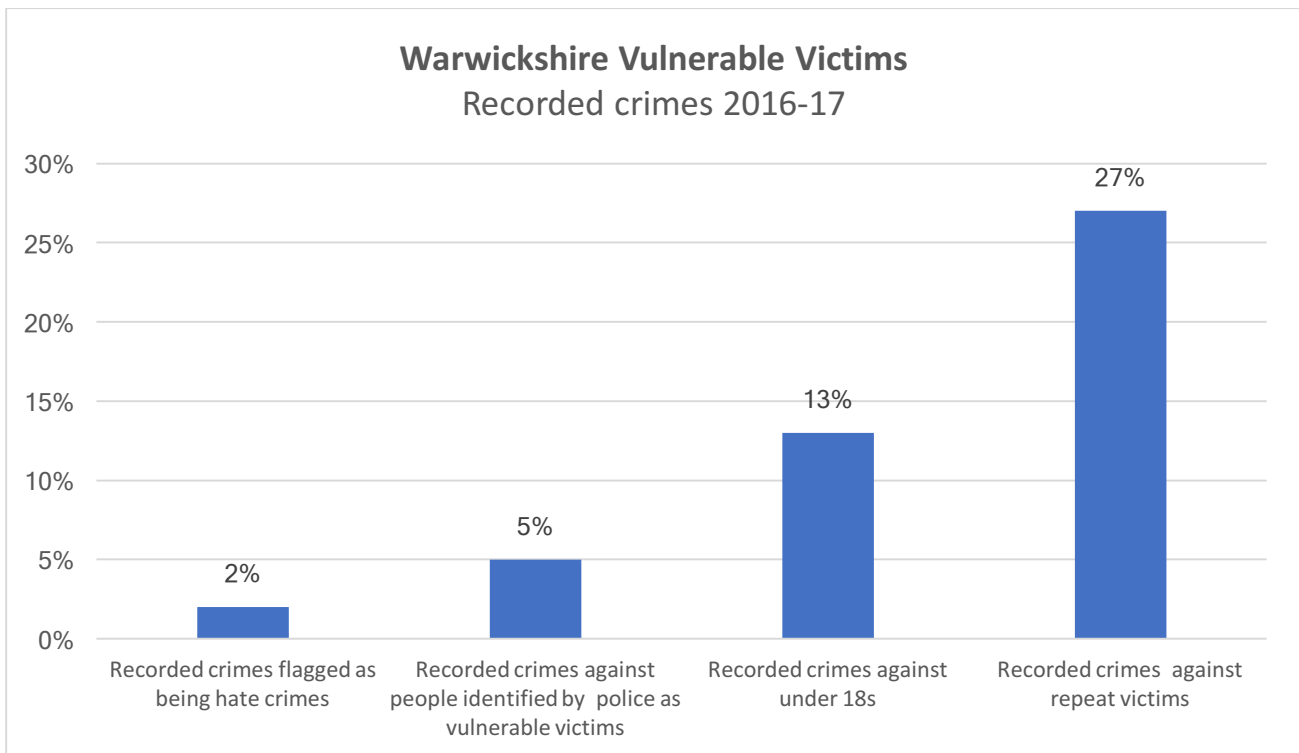**There were 36,864 victim based crimes in Warwickshire affecting around 27,000 unique victims**

In the 12 months to September 2017, there were 41,196 recorded crimes (exc. Fraud) affecting 74 in every 1,000 residents[2]. This is lower than the England average of 79.5 and West Midlands average of 74.3. 36,846 (89%) of these crimes were "victim-based"[3], which include:

- 18,520 (50%) theft offences
- 11,896 (32%) violence against the person
- 14,936 anti-social behaviour incidents
- 1,532 Sexual Offences - Data from the Warwickshire Community Safety Agreement (2017) indicates that in 2016 there were 422 Rape offences and 828 other sexual offences
- 664 hate offences and hate crime incidents
- 595 cyber crimes, with malicious communication offences accounting for 54% of all cyber crime offences
- 365 CSE incidents/offences
- 25 road traffic deaths

2 ONS (2018)
3 Police Recorded Crime (Home Office, 2018)

Our analysis[4] estimates there were around 27,000 unique victims in Warwickshire in 2016-17:

Warwickshire Vulnerable Victims
Recorded crimes 2016-17

Category	Percentage
Recorded crimes flagged as being hate crimes	2%
Recorded crimes against people identified by police as vulnerable victims	5%
Recorded crimes against under 18s	13%
Recorded crimes against repeat victims	27%

More than 1 in 4 crimes happen to repeat victims

In Warwickshire, repeat victims were more likely to experience violence without injury (33%), violence with injury (19%) and criminal damage and arson (13%). This may be, in part, attributable to domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour incidences.

60% of crime goes unreported, with higher rates not reporting for SAV

It has been well documented that a significant proportion of crime goes unreported[5]. A range of factors have been correlated to this, including immigration status of the victim[6], perceptions of not being believed or of no action being taken, as well as fear of reprisals such as being threatened if they report to police, or fear of being charged for an offence themselves.[7] Some people do not come forward as they do not understand that they have been a victim or that what has happened to them is a crime.

It is estimated that 60% of crimes are not reported to the police. In Warwickshire, there are low levels of self-referral to Victim Support, with 97% of referrals coming from the police.

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4 Based on a dataset of 27,032 victim-based crimes in 2016-17 provided by Warwickshire Police, which excluded some of the lower level crimes
5 Skogan, 1977
6 Gutierrez & Kirk, 2015
7 Scott, M & Senker, S. (2015) Hidden Harm in West Essex.

Rape and Sexual Violence have been seriously under reported with some studies identifying 80-90% of victims never disclosing abuse, in males this can be as high as 95%.[8]

The barriers to accessing support were detailed by our survey respondents:

- 26% were not willing to report to Police, feeling that the Police's response was a barrier, as was a lack of Police resources
- 25% said that no information about support services was given to them, ways to access support were unclear, and they did not know how to find support services
- 19% said that they did not feel worthy of support, felt they ought to have been able to cope, were concerned that they may not be believed, or said that the stigma of being a victim was a barrier to accessing support
- 19% stated that practical issues prevented access to services. This included some people finding it difficult to get to support sessions due to working hours and childcare or transport costs, living in rural areas, and lack of internet access
- 8% felt that waiting times were too long and that services did not have sufficient resources

20-60% of victims may want support, however there is evidence of higher support needs in some key groups, such as SAV and Burglary, while 1 in 3 who want support do not receive it

A study by Victim Support found that only 1 in 5 victims want some form of support[9]. This study found that the needs of victims are based both on their personal circumstances <u>and</u> the crime they have experienced, with 1 in 3 victims of burglary and 1 in 2 of sexual offence victims wanting some form of support. However, other Victim Support research shows that up to 60% of victims can be adversely affected psychologically by the crime and require support. Estimates for victims who want support but do not receive it may be as high as 1 in 3.[10]

Victims' needs can be multiple and complex

Academic studies have estimated that 20% of SAV victims have a history of self-harm, mental health problems or learning disabilities[11], with this being more prevalent for young women, who should, therefore, be a priority group for SAV support services. There is reliable evidence that being a victim of SAV can lead to the development of mental health problems and disorders, with around half of victims experiencing depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), disturbed behaviour or a combination of these.

8 Survivors Trust, 2014
9 Victim Support (2011)
10 Hahn. 2017
11 Cybulska, 2007

22,470 referrals to support services

In 2016-17, there were an estimated 22,470 referrals made to specific support services for victims in 2016-17, made up of:

- 20,757 referrals to Victim Support (adults and young people)
- 46 young people accessing Barnardo's CSE service)*
- 778 adults and young people accessing ROSA's SAV service*
- 889 adults and young people accessing Safeline's SAV service*

* potentially an underestimate based on partial data

Demand for victim services is rising

Warwickshire Police forecasts estimate that by the end of 2017-18, there will have been an increase of 14% in victim-based crimes on the previous year, rising to 30,855 - with 1,497 SAV offences and around 400 CSE offences. Around 21% of these crimes are estimated to happen to people who have been a victim at least twice within the last 12 months. Therefore, we estimate that there will be around 24,000 unique victims this year.

Following a decline in Victim Support referrals from 2011 to 2014, there has been a steep increase year-on-year after the current contracting arrangements were put in place in 2015.

What should a comprehensive victim services system contain?

Local support services are working well but the overall system can be improved

There is significant local investment in services supporting victims, with the PCC funding around £1.027m per year and at least £0.5m additional funding from partner agencies such as Warwickshire County Council, Warwickshire Police and NHS England. However, the overall system of support is currently fragmented, both in how it is commissioned and delivered.

The local victims who took part in our survey that had received support felt this particularly helped with how they feel generally (75%), valued having someone to talk to (72%), and welcomed practical support to cope with what had happened (63%). Victim Support's outcomes data shows that 43% of victims show an improvement following their support. However, this is only conducted with a small minority of service users. Many survey respondents shared their experiences of services and the police. This presented a mixed picture, with some highly positive experiences and some very negative ones, meaning provision may be inconsistent.

There are a good range of services on offer in Warwickshire, providing victims with a choice of where to be seen and which agency to engage with. Both current SAV service providers have experience in providing services for victims of sexual abuse and violence, offering Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs), groups and 1:1

counselling. The CSA service provider has national expertise in the subject area. The general victim services provider is the provider of a number of services across the country.

Since the new local contracting arrangements have been in place, Victim Support have developed innovation (e.g. new roles, toolkits, training, recruitment, volunteers and changes to processes) to improve the support they offer and the efficiency of service delivery. Partner agencies felt there were many strengths in the range of current service provision, but identified a number of areas that could be improved, including:

- Introducing a joint commissioning approach for victims and survivors, as has happened with Domestic Abuse
- To truly deliver the PCC's vision as expressed in the Police and Crime Plan and the Victim and Witness Charter, a multi-agency strategy and annual delivery plan is required
- We were told about "live" issues with data quality in the automatic data transfer of referrals from Police to Victim Support, which included Athena data quality issues, meaning that some victims have were being missed and not offered support
- The need to be better at promoting services and pathways to all victims – not just those who report crime – and to all relevant agencies and police staff
- The need for prevention of victimisation, as well as reaction to victims presenting for support
- Gaps in mental health and housing support needs for victims

Victim satisfaction levels are reasonably high, but Warwickshire Police "require improvement" in dealing with vulnerability
- 84% of victims are satisfied with their experience of the police
- 72% of hate crime victims are satisfied - recent improvements through the new Victim Management Unit (VMU) in Warwickshire Police have helped this to rise to 82%

However, in 2015, 2016 and 2017, Warwickshire Police were judged to "require improvement" by the HMIC inspection with regards to their response to vulnerability. [12]

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12 PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 (vulnerability) A national overview (HMIC, December 2015)

Local Provision

The current system is summarised in the following diagram:
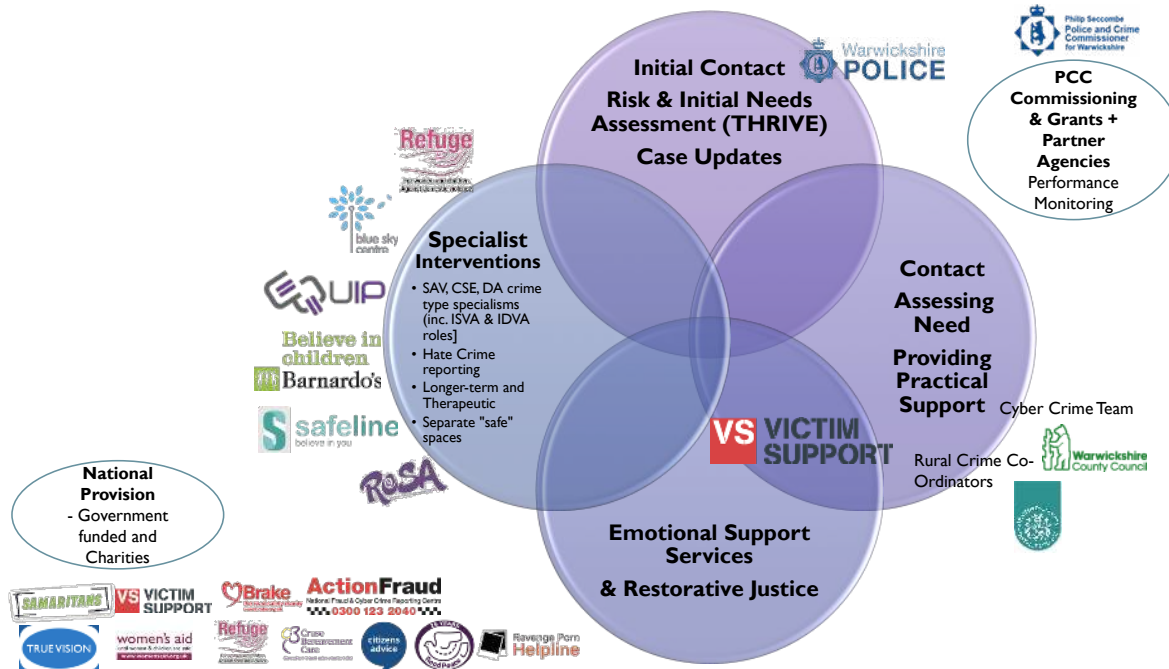

Warwickshire Service Providers

- Victim Support offering a general support and practical advice service for victims of most crime types
- ROSA and Safeline offering specialist support to victims and survivors of sexual abuse and violence
- Barnardo's offering specialist support to victims of Child Sexual Exploitation
- Refuge providing Domestic Abuse services
- Cyber crime team in Warwickshire County Council
- Rural Crime Co-ordinators
- EQuIP providing hate crime reporting assistance
- Road Peace and Brake providing road trauma victim support
- A range of national provision covering specific crime types is available to local victims

85% of referrals to Victim Support do not result in support being provided

People referred to Victim Support received the following support levels over the last 2 years:

2015-17 Victim Support
34,090 referrals - breakdown of outcomes
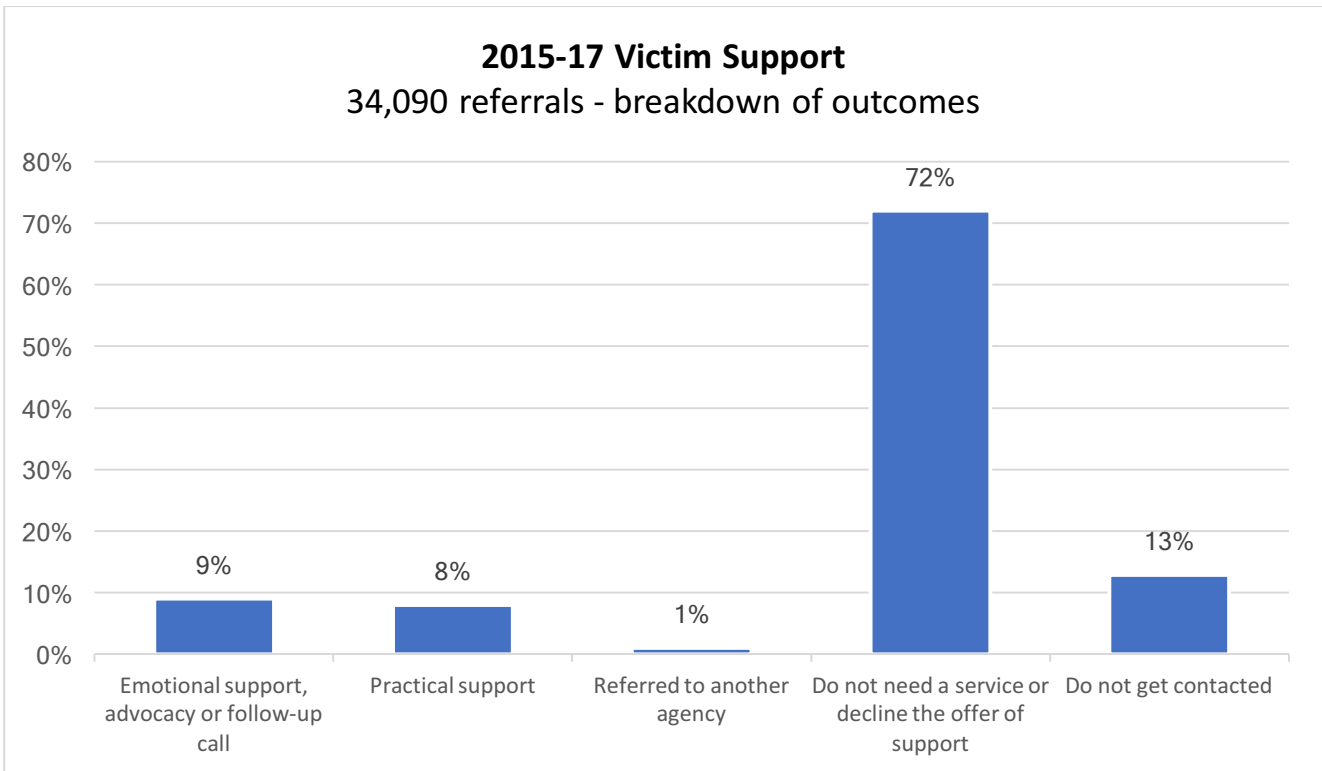
Too many Victim Support referrals are not being offered support

3,090 (9%) were unable to be created into cases and 1,291 referrals (3.8%) were not created into cases as they were from crime types not included in the current contract (predominately vehicle crime).

There is a substantial amount of other resource available to support victims

There are a large number of national resources include helplines, websites, information and counselling for specific crime types of groups of victims. There are a number of local services dealing with issues that victims commonly face, such as mental health support, IAPT, counselling, be-friending and housing. These resources need to be considered in order to integrate the best elements of this into local support pathways for victims as part of a co-ordinated response.

Engagement with support services varies in length for different groups. As a result, both brief and long-term interventions are needed. Support should not be time limited

The Healthcheck process TONIC conducted in 2016 for Warwickshire and West Mercia PCCs found that those who engaged with Victim Support attended an average of 2.2 sessions. With many receiving a single contact by telephone and a smaller number engaging over a longer period of a few months. We were told by SAV and CSE providers that their service users tended to engage over much longer periods, sometimes over a number of years.

What do Victims Want?

Victims want a choice of types of support and different ways to access this
Victims were able to articulate the impact of crime on their lives and the main components of effective support for them. This included support being open-ended; being treated with respect, valued and believed; having some control, autonomy and choice over their support and its makeup; being seen consistently by the same individuals; being kept informed about their case and their care. Being safe was a key theme that support needed to address for victims, as was the need for specialist, independent support.

People wanted a range and choice of ways to access support (including face-to-face, by telephone, online and self-serve) and in the types of support available to help them recover. This included a stronger police presence, a positive criminal justice outcome, practical advice on security and preventing re-victimisation, someone to talk to, advice, longer-term therapy and counselling.

Our interviews with victims showed the main elements of effective support that they wanted were:

- Being offered individual support quickly
- For support to be co-ordinated when multiple agencies were involved, with a consistency of response from all agencies
- Having someone to talk to, and being given time to talk
- Not feeling that support is time limited
- Help to feel safe and have control in their lives
- Validation and being believed
- Support for the whole family
- Taking action to prevent another incident happening to them again
- Being kept informed about their case
- Feeling respected
- Getting information about what to do next - in accessing support and the criminal justice system
- Dealing with practical issues related to the incident, such as getting security items (e.g. personal alarms, door alarms)
- Professional advocacy
- Support with financial recovery

Local victims want support services to be joined up with police, but to retain their independence

Amongst victims we engaged in the survey:

- 87% felt it was important for support services to specialise in the crime they had been affected by
- 76% said support services should be recommended by the police

In the survey, there was a fairly even split between those who felt support services should be run by the police (56%) or independent of the police (44%). However, in our interviews with victims, all but one expressed the importance of support being independent of police.

Protect the specialisms around sexual crimes and abuse with adults and children – ensuring support is available long-term

Specialist support services provide a vital additional component for victims in the criminal justice system. Many stakeholders emphasised the importance of using specialist staff with experience of working with SAV and CSE and relevant qualifications.

Support services being "specialist" is also very important to victims, with the need for them to be part of a joined up multi-agency approach being highlighted.

It was emphasised by many stakeholders and victims that support for SAV and CSE needs to be long-term and not time limited, as some people may never fully recover, but they can be helped to cope over a long period. Given this long-term need, the short-term nature of grant funding can lead to uncertainty for service users who want to feel reassured that there will be support for them in the future.

A number of gaps were identified in current provision

The most commonly mentioned gaps by victims, stakeholders and commissioners, were:

- Difficulty in accessing mental health support for victims
- Gaps in housing support relevant to victims' needs
- Waiting lists for specialist therapeutic interventions, including SAV and Domestic Abuse
- A lack of support after the end of court cases
- A lack of co-ordinated communications for the public and agencies about the full range of support available
- A lack of step-down services following the receipt of formal support
- No shared partner agency customer journey for victims across the criminal justice system – including how and when needs are assessed, and how support is accessed

and promoted. The current pathway is fragmented from the victims' perspective and can be hard for them and agencies to navigate
- No clear, high-level multi-agency governance group leads on the victims' agenda
- Inconsistent police response to victims in terms of case updates, assessing needs and responding in appropriate ways (e.g. validation and treating with respect)
- No clear senior lead for victims within the Police
- It is a concern that a number of victims who do report crimes to the police are currently being missed in the system and do not receive a support offer, as well as the large number of victims who do not report crimes to the police and the low levels of self-referrals to Victim Support (however higher levels of self-referrals were reported by SAV services)
- It was acknowledged that sometimes victims are overloaded with too many different agencies contacting them with information, to offer support, or to ask for satisfaction scores. On the other hand, it was also acknowledged that some victims do not receive any offers of help and are being missed

What works?

Effective practice with victims requires good information and communication, procedural justice, multi-agency working and the professionalisation of services
Literature shows that the following four pillars of good practice should be present in any effective victim services system:

- **Information and Communication** - Timely accurate information and effective methods of communication, both in delivering information and case updates and listening to victims' needs
- **Procedural Justice** - Perceptions of fair treatment, including knowledge of and access to entitlements, increases victims' perceptions of legitimacy and aids their compliance in the criminal justice system (CJS)
- **Multi-Agency Working** - Co-located multi-agency partnership working across statutory and voluntary sectors
- **Professionalised Services** - Particularly those that provide victims with a single individual advocate or case worker to help them in their whole journey throughout the CJS

Victim satisfaction is correlated with receiving entitlements from police
Analysis of a Victim Support survey showed a positive correlation between victims receiving their entitlements under the Victims' Code from the police, and the likelihood of them being satisfied with their experience. This also showed that the more entitlements a victim receives from the police, the greater their level of satisfaction.

Specialist services work most effectively for SAV and CSE victims
For Sexual Abuse and Violence (SAV), specialist services and teams are repeatedly cited as evidence of best practice. In addition, it is vital to offer long-term therapeutic interventions. Rape Crisis Centre (RCC) and Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC) are

cited as two areas of best practice, and Home Office ISVA guidance sets out good practice for these roles.

Evidence shows that an effective approach for Victims of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) must:

- Understand the level of CSE and develop a strategic response
- Be a multi-agency approach
- Raise awareness
- Facilitate policing and prosecution of perpetrators
- Provide victims with appropriate support, including an individually tailored care package, made up of support for family functioning, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and assistance in developing resilience

How could these services be delivered in Warwickshire?

There are a number of different delivery models used across the UK
Some provision is "in-house", being delivered by the police, but much is externally commissioned from 3rd sector providers, with core victim services provided by Victim Support, Catch 22, Citizens' Advice and other organisations. Specialist provision is delivered by national organisations like Barnardo's and NSPCC, as well as local agencies and charities.

The evidence is insufficient to set out the most effective delivery model
This means local partners must design a tailored and sustainable approach for Warwickshire based on an agreed understanding of the scale and nature of local needs, evidence of what works, what local victims want and clear outcomes to measure performance against.

No cost benefit analysis or comparison between performance at different Police Force Areas has been undertaken to allow us to have access to meaningful data to compare Warwickshire's performance against with regards to activity levels, outcomes for victims or value for money. In addition, data was insufficiently granular to allow for a meaningful assessment of the value for money delivered by local victim services.

Designing a locally tailored approach can improve services and respond to issues raised in this report, while competitive tendering can drive VFM and innovation
It is important for the design of future services to acknowledge the relationship between vulnerability and specific crime types, the chances of becoming a repeat victim and what influences the need for support services.

A well-run competitive tendering process can be used to encourage greater value for money and drive innovation.

Recommendations

The detail of these recommendations is set out in the full report.

1. Improve identification of the needs of victims, so services can target support more effectively and fewer victims are missed
Crime impacts negatively on victims and their families. The level of impact is based on many factors such as vulnerability, the type of offence and the individual's life situation. This impact can be short term and managed by the individual's own resilience or through their own support networks (e.g. family and friends), but it can also be severe and long-lasting, requiring specialist help. Effective identification by police of need and vulnerability is essential in meeting need.

1.1   Improve police data quality for victim needs, crime types and contact details to ensure no one misses out on the offer of support
1.2   Ensure consistent use of THRIVE (or THRIVE+) to identify vulnerable and priority victims support needs
1.3   Be better at keeping victims informed of progress on their case
1.4   Develop an effective set of core standard messages for victims about available support and how to access this – across all contact methods between police and victims / the public (link to Rec 2.3)
1.5   Use police performance measures to drive improvements

2. Ensure equality of access to all victims who need support, through effective communications to help people find the right support for them
The low levels of self-referrals and referrals to support services from other agencies needs to be addressed through a more comprehensive approach to marketing and promoting the support available.

2.1   Encourage and enable self-serve approaches for victims of crime
2.2   Involve victims and service users in the development of materials, especially from key groups
2.3   Develop a core set of common messages about available support, pathways to access and standards they can expect – to include consistency across online and published materials
2.4   Make best use of national resources
2.5   The pathway must allow non-reporters to directly access support without having to go through the police

3. Base the service design on evidence of what local victims want and what works

Aims for the service design should include:
- *To reduce duplication from the current system in identifying victims, assessing needs and offering support*
- *To develop a more efficient system that is more sustainable against a backdrop of increasing demand and no increase in available funding,*
- *To ensure all victims receive an equitable and appropriate response, removing current gaps in data transfer that leave some victims unsupported*

3.1 Maximise the impact of the first contact with a victim, reduce duplication and deliver appropriate interventions

3.2 Interventions should aim to prevent re-victimisation

3.3 Tailored support should be available for cyber crime, fraud, road trauma, elderly people, burglary and hate crime

3.4 Specialist provision must be available for SAV, CSE and young victims – based on best practice and not time limited

3.5 Services must be responsive and victim-led

3.6 There should be a pathway top allow victims of SAV and CSE to access out of area provision

3.7 A customer journey map for victims across the criminal justice system should be developed and agreed by partners

3.8 Restorative Justice should be integrated with support services and Probation/CRC/Youth Offending Services

3.9 Assure professionalism of services and staff through the performance management process

3.10 Interventions delivered must be based on evidence of effectiveness and local needs

3.11 Develop "step down" provision, such as self-help and support groups

3.12 Whole families can access support

3.13 Co-ordinated multi-agency approaches are needed for complex and highly vulnerable victims

3.14 Delivery methods must include a range of options, including face-to-face, online, by telephone etc.

4. Choose the right delivery model and ensure there is sufficient capacity to meet need

Rising demand against a backdrop of no increase in available funding and a number of areas for improvement identified, means that the delivery model will need to be efficient, effective and sustainable.

4.1   A hybrid model is recommended, where an external provider offers a first contact service to victims, co-located with police and with access to their systems to provide case updates. This is best integrated into VMU/Harm Hub

4.2   Allow capacity in the model for an estimated 20,000 referrals to the general victim service, with around 5,000 of these requiring an intervention. In addition, there should be capacity for a minimum of 1,500 adults and 850 young people for SAV and CSE specialist support

4.3   Local priorities should be agreed to enable the service to provide a targeted offer to priority groups and a universal offer to all other relevant groups

4.4   Increase the ISVA capacity

5. The should be a system-wide approach in Warwickshire, underpinned by effective strategic partnership arrangements

A whole system approach is needed to meet all victims needs with good joint working processes, strategic partnerships, shared governance and co-ordination across victims' justice, practical, emotional and financial support needs. No single agency can meet all victims' needs.

5.1   Identify a senior police lead for victims

5.2   Ensure police targets are fit for purpose and linked to compliance with the Victims' Code and the Warwickshire Victim and Witness Charter

5.3   Use performance management of new contracts to drive better outcomes and ensure a thorough quality audit is conducted annually

5.4   A joint commissioning approach will deliver better value, reduce duplication, encourage multi-agency approaches and offer greater scrutiny to the process

5.5   A multi-agency strategy for victims, with an annual delivery plan will help to focus actions that require strategic action and cannot be delivered through the commissioned services alone

5.6   A Victim Reference Group of service users and non-reporter should be convened to allow direct input into service design, communications, commissioning and performance monitoring