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| **Policy Position Summary: Victims and Witnesses**  **19 June 2018** |
| What does the PCVC wish to achieve?   * Systems, processes and services that are designed around victim and witness needs; * Support for victims that is integrated, seamless and co-ordinated – an ‘end to end’ system; * The needs of victims and witnesses are central to criminal justice processes; * Victims are supported to remain engaged with criminal justice processes; * Opportunities for victims to cope and recovery from their experience are optimised. |
| Evidence Base   * While 80% of victims are likely to require little or no support, the remaining 20% often need complex care and support that requires robust needs assessment and a multi-agency approach (***Evidence and practice review of support for victims and outcome measurement, National Centre for Social Research 2012***) * Victims of crime have diverse needs that should be reflected in the range of support available and the services and interventions offered (***Measuring outcomes for victims of crime National Centre for Social Research, 2012***) * Victims too often feel themselves to be an afterthought for the CJS. Despite improvements over the last two decades, the system has continued to fall short - whether in relation to helping victims recover in the aftermath of crime, supporting them through the stresses of investigation and trial, or providing the right services (***Getting it right for victims and witnesses, MoJ, 2012***) * ***At risk, yet dismissed, 2013*:**   + **People with a severe mental illness (SMI) are five times more likely to be a victim of assault and three times more likely to be a victim of household crime than people in the general population**   + **Victims with mental health problems are often reluctant to come forward because they fear a negative response from the police; being blamed for the causing the incident; not being believed or taken seriously; worries that their mental health problem might be used as a basis to discredit them or that they might be sectioned if they try to report a crime against them**   + **Victims with SMI are up to four times more likely to be victimised by their relatives or acquaintances than those from the general population** * ***What works in supporting victims of crime: A rapid evidence assessment, National Victims Commissioner, 2016*:**   + **Timely and accurate information about the criminal justice process, combined with well-funded and co-ordinated support services, will enable victims to make informed choices , have a sense of autonomy and assist them in their recovery** |
| How will the PCVC’s aspirations be achieved?   * Delivery of an overarching Victim Care and Advice Service (VCAS) * Reviewing and refreshing victim pathways and support across the whole criminal justice system * Access to advocacy for victims with mental health problems and victims of hate crime * Access to victim initiated restorative approaches * Multi-agency planning framework to enable collaborative planning and delivery * Effective performance monitoring and evaluation * Using outcome based commissioning processes * Using Root Cause Analysis processes to identify and resolve issues that compromise victim/witness experience * Reviewing and refreshing victim pathways and support offer for victims of domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault * Development of a partnership memorandum of understanding to ensure appropriate support for victims of modern slavery/trafficking/exploitation * Delivery of specialist support for victims of Female Genital Mutilation, Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage * Improving the quality of Victim Personal Statements |