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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.
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| 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**
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| 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
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