



**Tracy Brabin**  
**Mayor**  
of West Yorkshire



**Alison Lowe**  
**Deputy Mayor**  
for Policing and Crime

Item 6

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<b>Report to:</b>	Police and Crime Panel
<b>Date:</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	Report for the Police and Crime Panel: Supporting Victims and Witnesses

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<b>Report of:</b>	Tracy Brabin, Mayor of West Yorkshire
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## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

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- 1.1. To provide members of the Panel with an overview of the current regulatory structures in place that speak to the rights of victims, witnesses, and survivors.
- 1.2. Outline for the Panel the work of the Mayor in exercising her statutory responsibilities to provide victims services throughout West Yorkshire, utilising funding provided by the Ministry of Justice, and the challenges inherent in that process.
- 1.3. Provide Panel Members with an overview and ask for comments on the draft Victims and Witnesses strategy that sits subordinate to the Police and Crime Plan 2021-24.
- 1.4. To provide the Panel with an overview of the current structures, partnership arrangements and scrutiny panels that are in place to ensure the offer to victims strives for best practice and how through these, improvements in practice can be identified and secured.
- 1.5. To increase Panel awareness about the meaning and availability of Special Measures that assist vulnerable victims to provide evidence to a court and achieve justice.
- 1.6. To provide an overview of Investigations and Outcomes in West Yorkshire Police, with context.

## 2. BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

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- 2.1. The Victims Code provides victims, witnesses, and survivors of crime with twelve rights to which they are entitled. These rights must be delivered by all agencies within the Criminal Justice System (CJS). A Victims Law has been in development since 2020, and it is likely that the bill will be given Royal Assent at some point during the first half of 2023.
- 2.2. A statutory responsibility is placed on all criminal justice agencies to assure victims' rights. The metrics used to provide an accountability framework have not yet been agreed with the Ministry of Justice, however, the law will place on PCCs / Mayors, and justice inspectorates', greater responsibilities for assessing how criminal justice agencies deliver services to victims.
- 2.3. The Victims Bill also strengthens the Victims' Commissioner role by requiring departments and agencies to respond to the Commissioner's recommendations and enabling the Commissioner's annual report to be laid before Parliament. However, it should be noted that Dame Vera Baird QC, resigned her post on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2022 and is yet to be replaced.
- 2.4. The Victims' Bill creates a statutory duty to collaborate. It requires groups such as PCCs / Mayors, Integrated Care Boards and local authorities to:
  - Collaborate in the commissioning of support services and publish a joint strategy to commission support services.
  - Ensure the strategy is informed by assessments of victims' needs, including children and those with protected characteristics.
  - Seek the views of victims and survivors, service providers and other relevant groups.
  - Have awareness of existing commissioning activity in the local area.
- 2.5. There are significant challenges in the delivery of this duty, in particular a lack of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) data currently available within the Criminal Justice system. The duty requires that it is informed by protected characteristics information. Obtaining data to understand need across all groups in a holistic way is a priority for the Mayor in her capacity as chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board.
- 2.6. The joint support for a co-ordinated national victims' strategy called for in the Victims Bill, will necessitate greater collaboration between the Mayor and the District Community Safety Partnerships. The benefit will be a greater understanding of the provision of the complete victims' services offer in West Yorkshire, bringing with it a more holistic response and the elimination of a postcode lottery and subsequent inequalities inherent in that position.
- 2.7. The mechanism through which that collaboration is achieved is currently being discussed locally with partners, and nationally, through the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC).

### **3. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

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#### **3.1. Police and Crime Plan:**

The Police and Crime Plan 2021-24 was published in March 2022 and is due for a re-refresh in the light of the successes, priorities and challenges moving into 2024 and beyond. Priority One of the Plan is “Supporting Victims and Improving Criminal Justice Outcomes” and sets out the Mayor’s intention to hold WYP to account on behalf of victims and survivors, work with partners to improve outcomes for victims and survivors, and to commission services that support victims and survivors.

#### **3.2. The West Yorkshire Victims and Witnesses Strategy:**

The WY Victims and Witnesses Strategy is in the final phase of scrutiny before publication in May 2023. It is an update of the previous ‘Supporting People Harmed by Crime’ Strategy, published in 2021 by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Following consultation internally and with partners from the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, the young persons’ Independent Advisory Group (YIAG), the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) and the West Yorkshire Community Safety Partnerships Forum, amongst others, the Mayor has identified five clear themes:

- Place Victims at the heart of the Criminal Justice Process
- Equality of Access to Justice
- Victims’ Journey
- Children and Young People
- Vulnerable Adults.

3.3. Under each theme, are statements of intent and ambition that reflect the Mayor’s desire to improve the treatment of victims, survivors and witnesses within the criminal justice system, reduce trauma and crucially, trauma generated and re-lived through repeated contact with the criminal justice system. This means improving access to Special Measures for vulnerable victims, all victims of sexual and domestic abuse, and children and young people. Getting this right across the criminal justice system will improve outcomes, increase the number of people kept safe from their abusers and increase the number of perpetrators brought to justice.

3.4. Many of the most serious offences disproportionately affect women and girls. Putting women and girls at the heart of the police and crime plan is a Mayoral pledge and therefore is a vital cross cutting theme in the Mayor’s Victims and Witnesses strategy, together with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Trust and Confidence. The Mayor states how the Mayor will hold the police to account for the professional standards of the organisation, and those who work in them. The Mayor will also look to bring together other key partners to seek joint accountability for the measures in the Victims and Witnesses strategy

through the LCJB, chaired by Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime and with a membership of senior leaders from across the sector.

## **PROGRESS**

- 3.1. The CARA (Cautioning and Relationship Abuse) service commissioned by the Mayor through Restorative Solutions, is proving to be a significant tool through which repeat victimisation of Domestic Abuse victims is reduced. The mechanism that the scheme operates through is conditional cautioning. Where the case is admitted or proved, for low-risk domestic abuse incidents only, perpetrators may be offered a caution, with a conditions that they must comply with or risk being prosecuted. One such condition is to complete the CARA course in order to generate sustained behaviour and attitudinal change.
- 4.2 Over a 12 month period, 236 perpetrators attended the course. 6.8 % or 16 perpetrators offended again within 12 months against a WYP domestic abuse repeat offending rate of 42.2% or 100 perpetrators. What this means for victims is that 84 people, who may otherwise have become victims, did not. The CARA programme was recently extended for a further two years, 23/24 and 24/25.

### **4.3 Cost of Living – Uplift**

Recognising the increasing financial challenges, particularly from rising energy bills, funding was identified within the Ministry of Justice Victims' grant and a decision was sought from and agreed by the Head of Policing and Crime under the delegated decision process to allocate a 9% Cost of Living grant payment for 2022/23 to a total of 23 VCSE providers for a total value of £168,410. More details are available in Appendix 3.

### **4.4 Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) recommissioning**

The purpose of the SARC services is to co-ordinate and simplify the pathway for all victims of rape and sexual assault or abuse to access wider healthcare, social care and criminal justice processes to improve individual health and well-being, as well as criminal justice outcomes. The SARC does not just refer to a building but embraces a range of assessment and support services in close partnership with other established agencies. SARC facilities provide three main elements following disclosure: healthcare; forensic examinations; and visually recorded interviews, supporting 'Achieving Best Evidence' guidance.

The Mayor of West Yorkshire, the Yorkshire and the Humber Police & Crime Commissioners and the NHS England and NHS Improvement (the Commissioners) jointly commission a single Adult SARC Service that is delivered across the Yorkshire and Humber region.

This service was successfully procured, and the contract awarded to start on 1 April 2023 to the incumbent provider Mountain Healthcare.

- 4.5 The Mayor's Multi-Crime and specialist support services contracts are both held by Victim Support. The multi-crime service (essentially, all victims of crime can access) accepts over 70,000 referrals from WYP and the specialist service

accepts over 1500 referrals per year. Both contracts will be re-commissioned through an open process with victims' voice and lived experience being key considerations in the development of the contract specification.

#### 4.6 Recorded Crime Outcomes in West Yorkshire:

As part of the victim's journey, and ensuring a victim and survivor has access to justice, the Mayor holds West Yorkshire Police to account for the outcomes they achieve against recorded crime through their investigative process.

This information has previously been presented to Panel as a separate paper but as an inherent part of the Mayor's scrutiny function on behalf of the residents of West Yorkshire, it has now been integrated into this Victims and Witnesses paper.

Appendix 2, is the Recorded Crime Outcomes for West Yorkshire for a rolling twelve-month period to the end of September 2022. The data relates sanctioned crime outcomes under Home Office [Counting Rules](#). Outcomes 1 to 22 are shown below.

West Yorkshire Police is the top performing force within their Most Similar Group (MSG).

Outcome Type	Outcome Description	England & Wales		West Yorkshire	
		Outcomes in 12 months to Sept 2022	% <sup>(2)</sup>	Outcomes in 12 months to Sept 2022	% <sup>(2)</sup>
1	Charged/Summoned	387207	7.3%	20390	6.7%
2	Caution – youths	7727	0.1%	379	0.1%
3	Caution – adults	49902	0.9%	2349	0.8%
4	Taken into consideration	2724	0.1%	80	0.0%
5	Offender died	2005	0.0%	65	0.0%
6	Penalty Notices for Disorder	8464	0.2%	3	0.0%
7	Cannabis/Khat Warning	5332	0.1%	9	0.0%
8	Community Resolution	142849	2.7%	6318	2.1%
9	Not in public interest (CPS)	3090	0.1%	119	0.0%
10	Not in public interest (Police)	32052	0.6%	748	0.2%
11	Prosecution prevented: suspect under age	9303	0.2%	665	0.2%
12	Prosecution prevented: suspect too ill	18072	0.3%	894	0.3%
13	Prosecution prevented: victim/key witness dead/too ill	2586	0.0%	99	0.0%
14	Evidential difficulties: suspect not identified; victim does not support further action	326317	6.1%	2016	0.7%
15	Evidential difficulties: suspect identified; victim supports action	792016	14.9%	59606	19.5%
16	Evidential difficulties: suspect identified; victim does not support further action	1223542	22.9%	75569	24.7%
17	Prosecution time limit expired	21748	0.4%	817	0.3%
18	Investigation complete – no suspect identified	2136930	40.1%	129018	42.2%
20	Responsibility for further investigation transferred to another body	72484	1.4%	2946	1.0%
21	Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest – police decision	54206	1.0%	2214	0.7%
22	Diversionary, educational or intervention activity, resulting from the crime report, has been undertaken and it is not in the public interest to take any further action.	34243	0.6%	1265	0.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5332799</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>305569</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

MSGs are groups of police force areas that have been found to be the most similar to each other based on an analysis of demographic, social and economic characteristics which relate to crime.

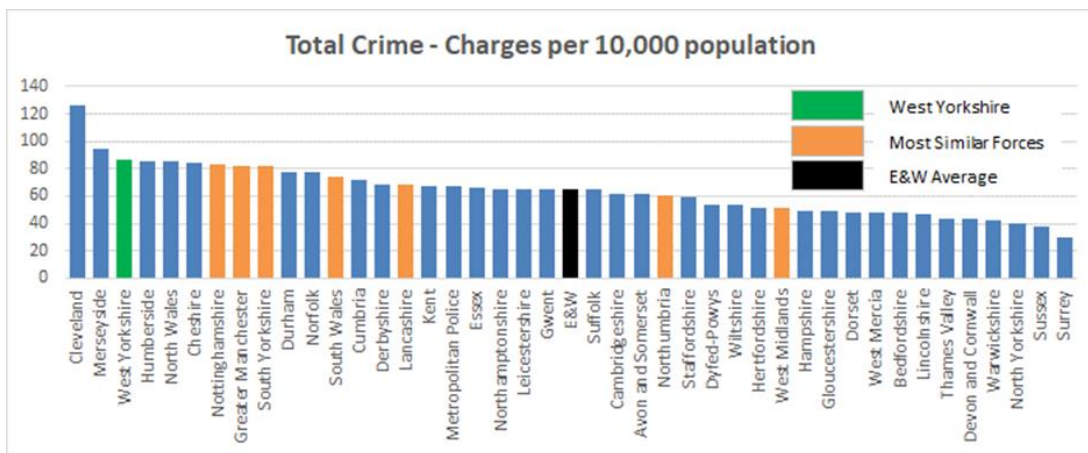
#### 4.7 Outcome 15 - Evidential Difficulties:

Outcome 15 relates to investigations where the crime is confirmed and the victim supports police action, but evidential difficulties prevent further action.

The outcome 15 disparity is largely explained by the variation in the way a ‘suspect’ is defined by different forces. Many have created a second category, variously called “Named”, “Mentioned” or “person of interest”, where a possible suspect is linked to the crime report without declaring them ‘suspect’. In West Yorkshire, we have no such second category, and nominals identified as possible suspects are often linked using the “suspect” label, attracting an outcome 15 if the offence is not proven, where in other forces another outcome, possibly outcome 14 or 18, would be used.

**4.8 Recorded Crime: Total Charges per 10,000 population:**

The Home Office place West Yorkshire Police (WYP) within a Most Similar Group (MSG) and measure force performance within it. WYP is represented in green and the MSGs in orange.



In addition to total crime (above), other key Home Office measures are; Rape, Violence Against the Person, Theft and Public Order offences.

**4.9 Rape:**

WYP achieve more charges per 10,000 population than any other force and perform significantly better than the next best force in their MSG. WYP put significant resources into the investigation of Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO), with a Force VAWG champion at Superintendent level, a RASSO gate keeper Detective Chief Inspector and a dedicated Detective Inspector. These officers are working at a strategic and systematic level, with partners from the VCSE sector, including those with lived experience, to improve the experience and confidence of victims and survivors to report rape and sexual offences, and remain engaged with the prosecution process.

However, there are significant structural challenges downstream in terms of court backlogs and case scheduling that may result in victims and survivors disengaging that will be at the forefront of LCJB priorities in 2023/24.

**4.10 Violence against the person:**

WYP have consistently been an outstanding performer in accurate and ethical crime recording (Peel Assessment 2021). In the last 12 months, many crimes previously classed and dealt with as Anti-Social Behaviour, have been classified correctly as Harassment under the Prevention of Harassment Act (PHA). All PHA offences are 'Violent Crimes' under Home Office counting rules. Many of these crimes will not result in positive disposals. Whilst they require a crime report, there is often not enough information or investigative factors to justify an investigation, or where an investigation takes place, sufficient information does not exist identify a suspect, or achieve a positive disposal such as a charge, conditional caution or community resolution.

#### **4.11 Theft and Public Order Offences:**

WYP achieve the highest or second highest number of charges, of the MSG forces for public order and theft respectively, in terms of charge performance per 10,000 population.

## **5. GOVERNANCE**

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### **5.1 Partnerships, boards and scrutiny arrangements:**

The Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) consists of three constituent parts, the Executive, the Victims and Witnesses group and the Efficiency and Effectiveness group. The first two are chaired by the DMPC and the third is chaired by a West Yorkshire Police Assistant Chief Constable. The LCJB is not currently a statutory partnership and does not confer any further powers on the Mayor (as PCC), however, it is likely that during the course of the present government, that position will change. This assumption, together with the provisions and duties placed on PCCs and criminal justice partners by the Victims' Bill (Law when enacted), suggested that 2023 was a good time to review the work of the LCJB, in order to:

- Secure buy-in from partners for meeting the provisions of the Victims Law (when enacted), improving internal processes and supplying local performance data co-terminus to the West Yorkshire delivery area.
- Set agreed strategic priorities aligned with the Police and Crime Plan that are specific and measurable.
- Form strategic partnerships with Mayoral authorities with PCC responsibilities, and regional PCCs.
- Improve outcomes, reduce length of time to trial and increase the provision of special measures to all who should be entitled to them, during the investigative process and at court.
- Ensure that West Yorkshire is a place where disparity and disproportionality around treatment or outcomes in the criminal justice system is ended.

## **5.2. Boards and groups working to support victims, survivors and witnesses:**

The multi-agency boards and groups working to improve support for victims, witnesses and survivors, can be divided into those owned and administered by the Mayor, within her PCC governance arrangements, and those owned and administered by West Yorkshire Police.

## **5.3 Mayoral:**

- Local Criminal Justice Board (including the Victims & Witnesses and Efficiency and Effectiveness groups)

The Board brings together key criminal justice system organisational stakeholders within the West Yorkshire to facilitate the running of a swift and appropriate justice process for both victims, survivors and perpetrators.

- The West Yorkshire Risk and Vulnerability Strategic Group

This group aims to bring key partners together to offer support and information with a view to ensuring that across West Yorkshire a consistent, collaborative and coordinated response is provided to all who are at risk of neglect, abuse, or exploitation, with a particular focus on children and young people.

- The West Yorkshire Anti-Slavery Partnership

This partnership is established to provide a strategic meeting framework on behalf of the statutory, non-statutory and VCSE organisations in West Yorkshire who contribute to tackling human trafficking and modern slavery in all its forms.

- The West Yorkshire Domestic and Sexual Abuse Board

The Board enables a coordinated response to domestic abuse and sexual abuse services across West Yorkshire with the aim of ensuring equality of access to support services for victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse and share and learn good practice for those working with families of domestic abuse and victims and survivors of sexual abuse across West Yorkshire.

## **5.4 West Yorkshire Police independent scrutiny panels:**

- Rape and Serious Sexual Offence (RASSO) improvement meeting.
- Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) scrutiny meeting.

Both the above panels are hosted and chaired by the West Yorkshire Police



VAWG champion who works both within the Mayoral hosted Violence Reduction Unit and WYP, Detective Superintendent Vanessa Rolfe. The VAWG policy officer from the Mayoral Policing and Crime team attends these meetings in terms of Mayoral scrutiny of the panels.

These panels arise out of the Operation [Soteria](#) Bluestone principles, a partnership of policing and leading academics brought about to significantly improve the outcomes for victims of rape and sexual offending. This work, conducted over a three-year period will result in a new National Operating Model for the investigation of Rape and other Sexual Offences. It will seek to reduce trauma associated with the investigative and court processes for victims and survivors. The meetings have a diverse membership from the statutory, VCSE sector and those with lived experience involved in supporting victims, witnesses and survivors. Anonymised cases are presented and reviewed with challenge, actions and learning taken back into the investigative environment to promote learning and improvement.

## **6. AIMS AND FUTURE DELIVERY**

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### **6.1 Strategy focus & delivery:**

The Mayoral Victims and Witnesses strategy has been designed to create direction and ambition to achieve outcomes outlined in the Police and Crime Plan. The LCJB is the mechanism that will deliver those.

Planned commissioning considers local need and will be undertaken to meet the priorities in the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan. The following provision will either be commissioned, or the commissioning process will start over the life of this strategy. However, in-year ad-hoc requests for funding or commissioning of activity will also be developed with considerations of "Must Do", "Could Do" or "Should Do" together with the availability of budget.

Planned commissions throughout 2022-2024 include:

- Restorative Justice service
- Victim Support service for victims of all crime
- Independent Sexual Violence Adviser service
- Domestic Abuse Perpetrator service
- Violence Reduction delivery, evaluation and research

### **6.2 Special Measures under the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act:**

All vulnerable victims and survivors of crime are entitled to a suite of special measures to assist them to give their evidence. The Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act (YJCEA) provides for categories of people and crimes that will always be considered vulnerable.

- Children and Young People

- Victims of Domestic Abuse
- Victims of Sexual offending
- Victims of Hate Crime
- Terrorism related offences.

Requests for special measures are notified to the Crown Prosecution Service as early as possible in the process and are applied for at court. A 'Ground Rules' hearing will be held with prosecution and defence advocates about the conduct of the trial with special measures approved by judiciary.

6.3 In West Yorkshire we are leaders in the use of Live Link (Sec 24 YJCEA) and Pre-trial Visual Recorded Cross-examination or Re-examination (Sec 28 YJCEA), which support where possible, reducing the level of trauma the victim and survivor could experience during the court process.

- Live Link is evidence in chief and re- examination on video to the court in real time, either from a room set aside in the court building or at a remote location.
- Pre-trial Visual Recorded Cross Examination or Re-examination is when the whole process of giving verbal evidence for the prosecution, and being examined by the defence advocate, is done on video prior to trial. The victim has no further involvement in the case and does not need to attend court.

6.4 There are currently three locations in West Yorkshire where victims and witnesses, alongside their qualified victim support service professional, usually IDVA, ISVA or Child ISVA/IDVA, can give their evidence using the Live Link or pre-record their visual evidence. These are wholly or partially funded by the Mayor.

- The Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) – Morley, Leeds.
- Victim Support – Wakefield.
- Women's Centre – Halifax.

All three locations are currently under-utilised. This is due to the lower number of requests for the use of Sec 24 and 28 that come from WYP and prosecutors.

To resolve this issue, the police MG2 (Special Measures) form is being revised by West Yorkshire Police. This will allow officers to be more specific about what they are requesting and crucially ensure that IDVA/ISVA support at court, in Live Link or Visually recorded testimony, is allowed.

6.5 Increasing the use of Sec 24 and Sec 28 (Special Measures) will be a key focus of LCJB activity and is a key ambition of the Victims and Witnesses Strategy and accompanying delivery plan.

## **7. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION BENEFITS AND IMPLICATIONS**

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- 7.1 The Mayor's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is central to the commissioning approach and processes. All funded services and activity require an Equality Impact Assessment, continuous performance monitoring of identified actions and progress will be monitored as part of our contracting and granting arrangements.
- 7.2 Our first Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Toolkit for Policing and Crime funded providers, services, and projects has been launched. The Toolkit has been designed to provide information that supports the completion of the EqIA for the services commissioned and funded by the Mayor to support the delivery of the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan.
- 7.3 All Policing and Crime funded providers, services, and projects are required to complete an EqIA. Equality, diversity and inclusion will be evidenced in the commissioning process and will be an expectation of all commissioned services in order for the Mayor to understand the impact of the service on the different communities she represents.
- 7.4 The Victims and Witnesses strategy, speaks specifically to:
- Improving the cultural competence of practitioners
  - Identifying emerging inequalities in the criminal justice system
  - Improving the confidence in policing and the criminal justice system of underrepresented and marginalised communities.
- 7.5 The Victims' Law (when enacted) and associated performance metrics, work with the Office of the Victim's Commissioner and the APCC, will provide the baseline for understanding diversity and inequality in the wider national system, creating a baseline for a cohesive national plan to be developed going forward.

## **8. IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN WEST YORKSHIRE**

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- 8.1 The Victim and Witnesses strategy speaks to children and young people directly through theme 4 of the strategy. As some of the most vulnerable in society children and young people must be prioritised to ensure they can achieve successful life outcomes, particularly if they have been a victim and survivor of crime. The Mayor's recognises that children and young people have specific rights in law to support them in the criminal justice system and brings scrutiny and accountability to this area through:
- Support and challenge within existing partnership scrutiny arrangements.

- An increased understanding and knowledge of special measures across Criminal Justice partners,
  - The adoption of a trauma informed approach. Children and young people are more likely to become victims of violent crime than people over 25 years old. The VRU and the Adversity, Trauma and Resilience framework, through a public health approach, is looking specifically at children and young people, both victims and perpetrators, and exploring methods to break that cycle through education and evidence lead policing tactics.
- 8.2 The Youth Independent Advisory Group were consulted during the early stages of the Victims and Witnesses Strategy formulation. Their feedback was instrumental in the decision to create a theme within the strategy specific to them, and their needs.

## 9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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### 9.1. Commissioning:

The Mayor's Policing and Crime Commissioning Strategy - to commission safe, just, and inclusive community-based services and activities for West Yorkshire was published in January 2023. The strategy is available here: [Policing and Crime Commissioning Strategy 2022-24](#)

The commissioning budget is split into the following strategic funding streams and the overall budget includes a combination of central government grants, the precept (police proportion of the council tax), Proceeds of Crime Act funding and other ad hoc opportunities such the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The current budgets cover the following areas and additional budget areas can be added if they are required during the life of this strategy:

- Victims of Crime
- Community Safety
- Criminal Justice
- Violence Reduction Unit
- Partnership Contributions

Some funding related activity is required to meet the Mayor's responsibility to provide services for victims of crime. Other funding relates to activity carried out in partnership with or through grants to a combination of local authorities, local providers and/or community groups all of which work with the Mayor to achieve the Police and Crime Plan priorities.

The Mayor allocates £10 million annually for community-based services and provision including:

Ministry of Justice Grant Funding in Relation to Local Commissioning of Victims' Support Services for West Yorkshire. This includes three West Yorkshire wide service contracts to deliver support to victims of all crime, victims/survivors of sexual abuse and restorative justice. This grant funds 33 different organisations.

Of these organisations, 26 are VCSE, including a number of 'by and for' organisations, 5 Local Authorities and 2 Hospital Trusts. In total our funded providers are delivering 70 different services/activities to approx. 90,000 victims of crime per year.

- Funded VCSE organisations are as diverse as the communities they serve, across the race, culture, LBGTQ+, gender and all protected factors. They are often staffed by dedicated individuals with previous lived experience.
- An overview of all the commissioned services and activities with allocated funding for the financial years 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 from the Ministry of Justice Grant Funding in Relation to Local Commissioning of Victims' Support Services for West Yorkshire is published on our website. Link <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/policing-and-crime/commissioning/>
- Community Safety Funding is passported to all five Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and West Yorkshire Police for Drugs Intervention Programme.
- Community Safety Reserve funds a West Yorkshire Wide Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Service that includes essential victims support amid the delivery of this behaviour change programme.

9.2 Our strong partnership working enables us to seek opportunities to co-commission services with other Police and Crime Commissioners/Police forces or public and VCSE organisations. This is achieved through the Mayor entering into partnership agreements for the joint provision of services either directly as a joint commissioner or contributor to a joint funding arrangement. Depending on the service, these may be undertaken through either a service level agreement or a grant. These arrangements will set out the Mayor's role, the necessary governance arrangements and the service requirements, and work within the parameters of this strategy and meet the priorities of the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan. co-commissioning with those who have lived experience is one of our real ambitions. Enabling those with lived experience to influence the way we commission services, and what we commission, will ensure services and delivery activities truly meet the needs of our communities.

9.3 The multi-crime victim support offer is currently awarded on a West Yorkshire wide basis. This service includes specialist support for victims and survivors of domestic abuse and sexual offences through Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA). These are vital roles, crucial to the welfare and journey to recovery of victims and survivors,

as well as helping maintain contact with the criminal justice system, supporting during interactions with the police, and advocating for the provision of special measures to support the taking and giving evidence in a trauma informed manner.

#### **9.4 Cost of Living impact**

Due to the increased cost of living to providers and those that they support the Head of Commissioning, Policing and Crime undertook a consultation with VCSE funded providers regarding issues, pressures and impact.

Appendix 3 provides an overview of the responses we received from funded providers on behalf of their service and the victims/survivors they support.

The Head of Commissioning has shared the findings with the MoJ informing them of our decision to provide a cost-of-living uplift payment for 2022/23 and stressed it is essential that the increasing cost of living pressures are taking into urgent consideration for the remainder of the multi-year grant allocations for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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- 10.1. The Victims Bill, when enacted into law by Royal Assent will provide a legal basis for collaboration, data provision from all criminal justice statutory agencies and performance metrics will be agreed by the Ministry of Justice applied throughout England and Wales.

[Annex A Victims \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

## **11. EXTERNAL CONSULTATION**

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- 11.1. External consultation has been held in respect to the Victims and Witnesses strategy through a number of forums and groups, including independent advisory groups, commissioned 'by and for' services with lived experience and the wider community, voluntary and social enterprise sector.
- 11.2. A full list of consulted partners will be available within the body of the final document.

## **12. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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- 12.1. The panel is requested to note the contents of this report.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS AND APPENDICES**

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**Appendix 1 – Draft Victim and Witness Strategy 2023**

**Appendix 2 - Recorded Crime Outcomes in West Yorkshire 2023/24**

**Appendix 3- Provides an overview of the responses we received from funded providers on behalf of their service and the victims/survivors they support.**

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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