

London Victims' Board May 2022**Record of Meeting**

Attendees	
London Victims Commissioner	Independent Chair
Crown Prosecution Service	CPS
Judiciary	J
Victim Support	VS
Metropolitan Police Service	MPS
Her Majesty's Court and Tribunals Service	HMCTS
National Probation Service	NPS
Ministry of Justice	MoJ
National Health Service (England)	NHS
Parole Board	PB
Citizens Advice	CA
Bar Council	BC
London Heads of Community Safety	LHOCS
London Councils	LC
Magistrates Association	MA
Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime	MOPAC
Crest Advisory	CA

Agenda Items**1. Welcome, introductions, and apologies**

The Chair welcomed all board members and noted apology from Violence Reduction Group (VRG)

2. Review of minutes and update on actions arising from the last meeting

Minutes from the last meeting held January 2022 were accepted and the actions updated.

3. Victims Bill Update

MoJ provided an overview of the consultation events which comprised of 600 responses and 35 roundtables. The date for publishing the draft bill is yet to be confirmed. The Chair summarised that the pre-legislative scrutiny will provide a report on the bill which is envisaged to be ready by July 2022 and will be discussed at the July board meeting.

4. Victims Needs Assessment

The CPS commissioned Crest Advisory to conduct a strategic victims' needs assessment (SNA) to better understand the needs of victims and where they are not fully met in CPS communications. The purpose of this project was to support the improvement of the CPS' engagement and communication with victims and response to victims' needs. CA provided an overview of the progress to date on the Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) and presented an executive summary. The CPS will be organising a stakeholder engagement event in the next two weeks and broadly recognises the model that CA have presented and will test the recommendations both internally and externally. The Chair thanked colleagues at Crest Advisory concluding that the learnings from this work are widely applicable across all partner agencies.

5. Language barriers in the criminal justice system report

Victim Support have recently worked alongside the Bell Foundation, exploring language barriers within the CJS. Victim Support presented slides on the findings of victims experiencing language barriers within the CJS and discussed case examples.

Key points:

- This is a re-occurring challenge with accredited, useful support becoming challenging to source;
- Language support may be required at various points along the victim's journey
- Translation issues have affected the service-user experience, especially where victims whose first language is not English and those victims with insecure immigration status;
- Transparency, clarity, tactfulness needed in case management processes;
- There is a lack of awareness on the impact on the victim through an intersectionality lens;
- There needs to be cultural and intersectionality training;
- Recommendations slide 1-7 summarising the following areas – differing needs of the victim across the CJS journey, needing an accountability framework and agencies reviewing its translation and interpreting support services.

6. Portfolio Update from London's Victim Commissioner and Partners including MPS update on VAWG strategy and Baroness Casey Review

London Victims Commissioner Update

The Police and Crime Plan (& SNA)

- The Mayor's police and crime plan was published on 24th March, setting out MOPAC's priorities for the remainder of this Mayoralty.
- The four key themes of the Plan are:
 - Reducing and preventing violence
 - Increasing trust and confidence
 - Better supporting victims
 - Protecting people from being exploited or harmed

- Published alongside the PCP was a Strategic Needs Assessment. This is a significant piece of work looking at the needs of victims and provision of services in London

MPS VAWG Action Plan

- The MPS have published their VAWG Action Plan as part of their work to rebuild trust and confidence.
- To help the MPS with this, a series of groups have been convened with women (all of whom have been victims of various forms of VAWG) to share their experience with the MPS Assistant Commissioner.

Victims' Bill

- The Victims' Bill to be introduced soon so we have written to a number of MPs to schedule meetings and discuss our priorities.

MPS Update

The MPS provided an update on their VAWG action plan and the 'Rebuilding Trust Programme'. The VAWG action plan consultation started in November 2021 and ended in March 2022. The MPS received 1500 responses including feedback from interviews and roundtable events.

There are four key objectives introduced in April 2022 that will be measuring monthly activities, feed into the diversity, inclusion and engagement strategy and look at improving reach for the hard-to-reach communities and improve representation.

The Baroness Casey's review launched in February 2022 and will continue for the next 9-12 months, underpinning the need for the MPS external accountability and written into plans. Engagement, Quality and Learning is key to progress each pillar of the plan.

The Chair is looking to convene a roundtable with victims and survivors.

Parole Board (PB) Update

Further to the announcement by the Secretary of State at the end of April 2022 on the victims 'Right to Review', the Parole Board are looking at opening the parole process and increase transparency. The PB are concerned about re-traumatising victims after the crime has taken place a few years ago and are asked to attend a hearing. The PB will be working with probation leads in the Southwest and those colleagues working in Witness Support service to test this out. The PB are looking at whether they can make parole hearings public where media can attend similar to mental health tribunals. The Parole Board Chair can make a decision in the interest of public justice.

The Chair reinforced the important points being raised by the Parole Board and reiterated the need for good quality communications and specialist support to victims.

Victim Support - London Victims Witness Service (LVWS)

LVWS presented their Q4 data which saw an increase of 80% in referrals to their IDVA service and a 30% increase between quarters 3 and 4. The pre-trial and outreach service has also been busy with 200 more referrals in Q4 than in Q3 which is an 18% increase. The Police referrals remain constant at 9,000-10,000 per month.

LVWS continue to see a high level of housing need and complex mental health issues and have commissioned additional training for staff in these areas. LVWS have recruited a Restorative Justice (RJ) Co-ordinator who will promote the benefits of RJ and hopefully drive-up referrals.

LVWS have been successful in gaining additional funding for the male victims safe accommodation project and will be recruiting 2 specialist IDVAs, one in housing and one in immigration.

Finally, LVWS ran a national major incident test exercise to promote organisational resilience and review their preparedness to respond to a major incident (MI) such as a terrorist attack. The MOPAC-LVWS MI response will be reviewed in light of the learnings.

7. Any other business (AOB)

None

Close of meeting.