**Agenda Item No 8**

**COMMUNITY OUTCOMES MEETING**

**29 July 2025**

**SUBJECT: Supporting Victims and Witnesses.**

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| **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT PRODUCED BY WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE**1. The attached report outlines work undertaken by West Yorkshire Police in respect of supporting Victims and Witnesses.
2. This cover paper highlights the importance of the report topic in respect of the Police and Crime plan and also includes the delivery of the Mayor and her office. Together the West Yorkshire Police (WYP) report and the cover paper provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of work underway in support of Victims and Witnesses.
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| **RECOMMENDATION**1. That the Mayor/DMPC uses the WYP report to scrutinise Force performance in respect of Victims and Witnesses.
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| **POLICE AND CRIME PLAN 24-28**1. The Police and Crime Plan was developed after extensive public and partner consultation culminating in the creation of ‘The Voice of West Yorkshire’. The Voice of West Yorkshire represents the views of over 6,500 respondents and includes the views of children and young people. It is part of a series of documents which includes a summary needs assessment. You can review the documents here: [West Yorkshire Combined Authority](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/policing-and-crime/the-police-and-crime-plan/)
2. 95.7% of respondents described Supporting Victims and Witnesses an important priority to them and 92% of partners agreed. Support for victims of all crimes received the most responses, followed by child criminal exploitation and driving improvements in the criminal justice system. This priority had the most balanced results with other areas of focus also receiving support. The Local Criminal Justice Board was highlighted as the way in which the Mayor can work with criminal justice partners to drive improvements in the criminal justice system that benefit victims of crime.
3. The Mayor has committed she will:
* work with WYP and criminal justice partners to ensure that all victims benefit from their rights under the Victim’s Code
* Use her convening powers to bring together Combatting Drugs Partnerships across West Yorkshire to ensure consistency of response
* Lead the Local Criminal Justice Board to make necessary improvements to the services offered to victims of crime, within delivery parameters set out by central government
* Make sure that justice is accessible for the most vulnerable victims and the most marginalised communities in West Yorkshire.

A detailed Equality Impact Assessment which looked at how the themes and priories impacted communities was completed for the 2024-28 plan, you can read it here:[eqia-stage-1-pc-plan-final-web-version.docx](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.westyorks-ca.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F4tijlbky%2Feqia-stage-1-pc-plan-final-web-version.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)[eqia-stage-2-pc-plan-final-web-version.docx](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.westyorks-ca.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2Fd5hcfsqw%2Feqia-stage-2-pc-plan-final-web-version.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) |
| **KEY INFORMATION****Notable activity by the Policing & Crime Team on this topic includes:**1. The Women’s Safety Unit a first of its kind dedicated unit which has been set up by the Mayor to tackle violence against women and girls in the region. The team are a pioneering partnership and comprised of members from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, the Violence Reduction Partnership and West Yorkshire Police. The unit is driving changes in:
* Investigations and Risk Assessments – improving outcomes for victims
* Victim Support and Engagement – embedding the voices of victim survivors and using this to drive improvements
1. Safety of Men and Boys - Our research shows that men and boys want those that are victims to be recognised and protection for those who are at risk of victimisation to be given. This cross‑cutting theme will ensure that we keep this focus.
2. There are also key police and community performance measures in relation to supporting victims and witnesses in the Police and Crime Plan.
3. You can also find out more about the detail within the Victims and Witnesses Strategy [here.](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/12168/vw-strategy-final.pdf)
4. The Mayor’s Safer Communities Fund continues to deliver projects to support victims and witnesses. You can find out more about the successful projects here (Mayor’s Safer Communities Fund - West Yorkshire Combined Authority (westyorks-ca.gov.uk)
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| **PARTNERSHIP CONTRIBUTION*** The LCJB Victims and Witnesses Group meets quarterly and is chaired by the head of the regional Rape and Serious Sexual Offences Unit within the Crown Prosecution Service.
* Membership includes the WYP Witness unit, the WYP head of the Victims and Witnesses unit, Courts Witness care, VCSE members including Victim support, Rape Crisis centres and Restorative Justice.
* Key Outputs include assessing Victims Code Compliance, Victims Right to review and advising on Victims Policy through lived experience.
* Survivor Panels for Women and Men and Boys, attended by the DMPC and hosted by VCSE organisations are now in the final stages of development. These will be another avenue for victims and survivors of crime to speak truth to power around their experiences of the support services and the criminal justice system.

**Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP)**The Home Office outlined three key success measures for VRPs and the Serious Violence Duty specified authorities with an emphasis on victims under the age of 25:I. A reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object and especially among those victims aged under 25,II. A reduction in knife-enabled serious violence and especially among those victims aged under 25,III. A reduction in all non-domestic homicides and especially among those victims aged under 25 involving knives.Locally we use an interconnected approach through the themes: individual, relationship, community, society, sustainability and cultural change, with each considering the risks and vulnerabilities linked to becoming a victim of crime. We also recognise how children and young people can fall into the categories of both perpetrator and victim, and this is weaved throughout our delivery.**Serious Violence Legal Duty (SVD):** The VRP continue to coordinate the West Yorkshire partnership response, providing intelligence, capacity and capability to duty holders, and with oversight still provided through the West Yorkshire Serious Violence Reduction Executive Strategic Steering Group. This duty exists to ensure councils, and local services work together to share information and identify activities to prevent and reduce serious violence. In addition, the VRP host the ‘Partnership Dashboard’ which collates a variety of datasets from numerous partners to allow an informed and detailed understanding of where, when, how and who is involved in serious violence. This data is used annually to produce the West Yorkshire Strategic Needs Assessment and Response Strategy for serious violence which when combined with the VRP’s Influential Factors report provides insights to why serious violence occurs in West Yorkshire too. More detail about the work of the Violence Reduction Partnership can be found here:[West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/policing-and-crime/west-yorkshire-violence-reduction-partnership/)[Strategic Needs Assessment/Response Strategy/Influential Factors](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/policing-and-crime/west-yorkshire-violence-reduction-partnership/needs-assessment-response-strategy/)[VRP Annual Report 2023-24](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/12890/vrp-annual-report-2023-24-final.pdf) |
| **EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION** It is important that all victims and witnesses are treat fairly, that vulnerabilities are addressed, diverse needs are met, access to information and support is available to all who need it. The Victims code and witness charter set out the key standards of service that victims and witnesses can expect from the criminal justice system. |
| **POLICING AND CRIME CONTACT** Sharon Waugh – sharon.waugh@westyorks-ca.gov.uk  |
| **ATTACHMENT**[Chief Constable’s report](https://theauthorityv13-auth.azurewebsites.net/media/u2liiek5/item-8-com-paper-victims-witnesses-july-25.docx)  |