



Meeting the needs of victims in the criminal justice system

A consolidated report by the criminal justice inspectorates

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Foreword

Victims of criminal conduct are entitled to a range of services from organisations in the criminal justice system. The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (2013) sets out the minimum standards expected of these organisations, and is a principal component of the Government's overall commitment to helping victims of crime to navigate the criminal justice system.

In September 2014, criminal justice Ministers announced the intention of the four criminal justice inspectorates (of Constabulary, Prisons, Probation and the Crown Prosecution Service) to produce an annual joint appraisal of the quality of services provided to victims, based on relevant findings from the year's inspections.¹ This document represents the first fulfilment of this commitment.

This report does not seek to provide a full-scale check on agencies' compliance with the Victims' Code. It does, however, bring together relevant material from individual and joint inspection reports² in order to provide a good overview of the quality of service experienced by victims.

While it might be argued that re-publication of previous findings represents a form of double jeopardy for those organisations that were criticised, the strength of this consolidation is in highlighting cross-cutting areas for improvement, and placing individual issues, criticisms and good practice into the wider context of the victim's end-to-end experience of the criminal justice system. It also further emphasises victims' entitlements and the responsibility placed on organisations to make provision for their needs.

The review also highlights areas of the victim's journey through the criminal justice system which were not inspected during the reporting period. These will be considered for inspection in future years.

As the first annual summary, this report also provides a very useful baseline against which inspections can measure agencies' progress against the findings and recommendations of the original reports. The next, and subsequent, annual reports will add comment on such progress – to highlight good practice and add to the pressure for improvement where progress is lacking.

Signed by the Criminal Justice Joint Inspectors

December 2015

¹ *Our Commitment to Victims*, Ministry of Justice, London, September 2014. Available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-commitment-to-victims-september-2014

² Findings are taken from criminal justice inspection reports published between April 2014 and July 2015 (inclusive).

Summary

This is the first compendium of findings on the quality of services provided to victims by agencies within the criminal justice system (CJS). The information has been taken from across the full range of individual inspectorate and criminal justice joint inspection (CJJI) reports published during the selected period (April 2014 to July 2015).

The quality of the victim experience within the CJS is an underpinning focus for all CJJI work, and features prominently in many of the individual inspectorate programmes. As a result, over the reporting period this issue has been examined through the prism of:

- different types of crime;
- different types of victim (in terms of age, for instance, or vulnerability); and
- different geographical locations (with some inspections examining practice in a single county, while others visited every police force area in England and Wales).

This variety is both an advantage and disadvantage to this current piece of work. It is an advantage, because it places a spotlight on important elements of often very different victims' journeys through the CJS, allowing a focus on areas of particular risk or concern. However, it is also a disadvantage because it does not result in comprehensive coverage of a victim's end-to-end journey through the criminal justice system, which makes it difficult to make clear statements about the quality of victim services as a whole. This overall coverage will be improved in future, as chief inspectors build on the findings of this report, and identify where further scrutiny can best be targeted.

Principal findings

Despite the incomplete coverage in this first year, some things are clear:

- there were excellent individual examples of good practice across criminal justice sectors, and geographically across England and Wales, with dedicated staff putting the needs of victims first, and creative programmes and initiatives to ensure they get the best possible support;
- particular strengths were evident in terms of specialist teams – who were generally highly motivated and well trained – and in the widespread use of restorative programmes; but

- there were unacceptable inconsistencies in the service provided to victims – depending on the type of offence, where they lived or the degree to which local policies support and reinforce service provision. Given that the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (the Code) provides a standard which should transcend all these variables, there is clearly more work to do.

At the time of these reports, there were also particular concerns around crimes not being recorded, the lack of empathy shown by some professionals to some categories of victim, and the inconsistent provision of accurate and timely updates during the victim's journey through the CJS.

Victims are legally entitled to a range of services from CJS organisations, as set out in particular within the Code. This report is structured to reflect the victim's journey through the CJS and the level of service that should be expected from CJS organisations at each stage, using the Code as the principal reference. The rest of this section gives the principal findings grouped by the stage in the victim's journey to which they relate, preceded by the relevant standards expected at that stage, as set out in the Code or in summarised form.

First contact with the authorities

For victims to receive a quality service, the provisions of the Code to have effect, and appropriate support to be accessed, the crime must be recorded; vulnerable and/or repeat victims identified (so they can be given tailored support); and those handling the case must understand the Code, its provisions and the importance of supporting the victims.

Findings

Far too many reported crimes are either not recorded, or are subsequently 'no crimed'. The police are letting these victims down; without this first step, they and the community are denied justice and are unprotected from potential further harm. They are also denied access to support and services to which they are entitled under the Code.

First contact by 999 call-handlers with domestic abuse victims is generally very good, but there is room to improve identification of repeat and vulnerable victims.

In around one-third of all forces, (general) call-handlers were failing consistently to identify repeat and vulnerable victims, meaning that individuals who may be in most need of action or protection may not be getting it.

Progress has been made in identifying victims of anti-social behaviour who are vulnerable, or who are subject to repeat offending – but one in three forces' call-handlers were failing consistently to identify repeat and vulnerable victims. This is not helped by the lack of agreed national definitions.

Time limitations on call-handlers (through pressure from the volume of calls), and the lack of access to useful information from other agencies (such as healthcare services), meant that police officers were often responding to vulnerable individuals, and making decisions on whether to arrest, with little background knowledge of an individual's circumstances.

Police staff working in specialist units who were skilled in communicating with children could be seen as trusted adults. They considered the child's needs, built a trusting relationship and provided a route to other services.

Response

Victims should receive a consistently effective response, regardless of where they live. In particular, vulnerable victims should receive empathetic and extra support. Police officers and staff must understand the Code's provisions and the importance of supporting victims. Risk assessments should be thorough and appropriate.

Findings

- The variation in policies across police forces means that members of the public will receive different responses from the police for the same types of incident or crime, depending on where they live.
- For the Code to be effective, police officers and staff must understand its provisions and the importance of supporting victims; but some see it as merely a tick-box exercise.
- The extent to which forces engage with partner organisations and agencies to assess levels of risk, particularly the levels of risk to vulnerable individuals and groups, has increased in recent years.
- Despite improvements, the overall response to victims of domestic abuse is not good enough – first responders often lack empathy and in too many cases the quality of initial investigation is unacceptably weak.
- The lack of empathy and understanding means there are too many instances where victims of domestic abuse feel they are not being taken seriously or believed.
- People with mental health problems and children were taken into custody by the police because they were unable to secure the help they needed from health or social care services. On occasions, vulnerable people were taken into custody as a mechanism for getting them the support they needed.
- Police initial contact with children and immediate safeguarding issues were often good, although assessment and help provided to children and their families varied in quality.

- Some police officers did not regard all children as vulnerable. They saw the offence first, and the fact that it involved a child as secondary. Arrest policies relating to domestic abuse requiring positive action to be taken were interpreted in some forces as always meaning arrest, even if it involved a child.
- The arrest of children looked after and accommodated by the state (i.e. in care) following disruptive behaviour in a children's home, was also leading to children being detained.
- If a concern was not immediately identified as being child protection and the case was not allocated to a specialist team, the response was very mixed. It varied from excellent to poor.

Police investigation

The police are expected to investigate crimes and provide updates tailored to each victim's needs. Victims can elect to give a Victim Personal Statement (VPS), at the same time as their witness statement, to explain in their own words how the crime has affected them. Victims are entitled to be offered the chance to read their VPS aloud at any court hearing and the court must consider it before sentencing. Victims should receive information about the criminal justice process, who is responsible for doing what within the force, and any actions relating to the suspect (for example, bail conditions or release from custody).

All victims of crime need to understand what they can expect from the investigation and court process. The Code is clear that victims of crime are entitled to receive regular information up-dates and to be consulted about the possible outcomes of their case.

Findings

- Almost half of all forces need to improve their crime investigations; opportunities to secure successful outcomes for the victim are being missed.
- Where crime scenes are not attended, the quality of investigation varies considerably and may be no more than a recording of the event.
- All forces provide an appointment system for victims of crime; however, some appointments were made for the convenience of the police, or when the incident could and should have been dealt with immediately – which is neither appropriate nor acceptable.
- Victims notice when investigations are poor, which can add to their perception of not being believed. Accurate and timely information is important for victims in planning their safety.

- New technology and social media present opportunities to gather more evidence but its extraction can be problematic and resource-intensive.
- Officers were unclear how they should go about keeping in touch with victims and helping to ensure they are properly supported and informed about their cases. Too often, victim contact is viewed by officers as just another bureaucratic requirement.
- All forces have systems for ensuring victims receive information about their cases and regular contact from the police. All make training on the Code available to officers. However, most use an online training package which is regarded by staff as an ineffective way to train how to support victims.
- A small number of forces now operate the 'TrackMyCrime' system, which enables victims and witnesses to monitor the progress of the investigation of their crimes and to view updates online.
- When an investigation was understood from the beginning as a child protection matter, and most of the evidence was gathered at the time of the incident or shortly after it, the quality of investigation was generally assessed as being good.
- The quality of investigation of cases of child sexual exploitation (CSE) was very mixed. There were some excellent examples, but enquiries made for children who go missing from home were often not sufficiently effective to get good information about patterns of behaviour and risk, or intelligence about possible offenders.
- Inspectors variously found delays in beginning investigations, following up evidence by interviewing witnesses, obtaining medical reports and getting updates from social services.
- There was little evidence of the police listening to children or of a child's understanding of events informing police practice. However, where police had clearly listened to children and subsequent police action had taken account of the child's needs and risks, the outcomes were better.

Charge and pre-trial hearings

Victims and in some circumstances their families are entitled to be kept informed of charging and other decisions, and the reasons behind them.

The decision to prosecute should not depend primarily on the views of the victim in domestic abuse or any other type of case. Prosecutions can take place without the victim's support in appropriate cases where there is sufficient other evidence and it is in the public interest to prosecute (evidence-led prosecutions). All police staff need to view evidence-led prosecutions as a realistic option from the moment a report of domestic abuse is made, and act accordingly.

A bereaved close relative of a victim who died as a result of criminal conduct also has legal entitlements, including the appointment of a Family Liaison Officer.

Findings

- There were good examples of consultation with victims but too many cases examined contained inadequate communications at appropriate times and some revealed no communication at all.
- Standards of timeliness and accuracy in pre-trial notifications to victims' families in fatal road incidents were not met in almost three-quarters of cases.
- Some CPS areas have wrongly short-circuited required processes for informing families of prosecution decisions.
- Victims' right to review CPS decisions was appropriately notified in over three-quarters of cases sampled.
- The use of evidence-led prosecutions where victims are reluctant witnesses is disappointingly low.
- Victims' wishes were not properly considered in many out-of-court disposals.
- Where used appropriately, out-of-court disposals reduced first-time entrants to the CJS – but cases were identified of highly inappropriate application.
- Letters sent out by prosecutors and Witness Care Units can provide conflicting or different information to victims.
- Some forces were using child abduction warning notices (issued to a potential suspect) as a crime prevention tactic but there was little use of sexual risk orders to impose restrictions on known sex offenders.

Trial, sentencing and appeal

If victims are required to give evidence, they are entitled to be offered a full needs assessment by the Witness Care Unit (WCU) to make sure they are supported in giving best evidence. This may include the use of special measures; they are also entitled to visit the court before the trial date to familiarise themselves with the building and the court room.

They are entitled to be informed by the WCU of the sentence given to the perpetrator within one working day of the WCU receiving the information from the court. This includes a short explanation about the meaning and effect of the sentence. They should also be told of any notice of appeal, details of any hearing and the outcome.

A bereaved close relative in a qualifying case is also entitled to be offered a meeting with the CPS in defined circumstances, including where there is leave to appeal.

Findings

- Generally, victims and witnesses receive appropriate information from witness care units, supported by Victim Support and Witness Service staff.
- Concerns existed over late review of cases and late application for special measures – which could alienate witnesses.
- Giving evidence from remote facilities, via video links, can provide witnesses with a safe environment and save long journeys to court.
- Pre-sentence reports have improved in the identification of hate crime and disability but few included a sentence plan objective to address the hate crime element of the offending.
- There was good evidence of communications between the CPS Appeals Unit and bereaved families in fatal road incident cases.

Post-trial

Victims who choose to take part in the Victim Contact Scheme (VCS) are entitled to: receive information at principal stages; be assigned a liaison officer; make representations on conditions of licence or discharge; and be informed of the end of conditions or sentence.

In certain circumstances, offenders also have entitlements under the Code (for example, if subjected to serious assault or racial bullying while in prison). Appropriate handling while in custody can both protect the individual offender and aid rehabilitative progress, which is to the wider benefit of the community on their release.

When offenders are released, it is expected that there will be effective risk management planning to protect previous and/or potential victims. As part of this, CJ partners are expected to exchange relevant information and intelligence.

Findings

- Probation staff were not always informed of appearance of their cases until after the event, making offender management and victim or witness protection more difficult.
- Very few children have their risk to others reassessed before leaving custody.
- Police powers to issue child abduction warning notices and sexual risk orders are under-utilised.
- The effectiveness of risk management planning prior to release from custody varied widely. Where it worked well, processes were robust and significant information was exchanged.

- Some assessments of the likelihood of reoffending were hampered by incomplete or late exchange of information. Such assessments lacked appropriate analysis.
- There were good examples in YOTs of risk management and victim identification, but in others there were noticeable gaps in the quality of approaches and assessments.
- Some YOTs make good use of victim liaison officers but the victims' voice was not always represented on community panels in referral order cases.
- Although intelligence is shared between YOT partners, recording can be poor and some warning flags are not placed on appropriate records.

Restorative programmes and victim awareness

There are a number of restorative programmes established throughout the CJS, which are variously aimed at providing victims with reparation, mediation, reassurance and/or justice. They might alternatively aim to rehabilitate offenders through raising awareness of the adverse effects of their offending.

Restorative Justice (RJ) is a programme which brings together a victim with those responsible for the harm caused, and tries to find a positive way forward. RJ offers an opportunity for victims to be heard and for offenders to face the consequences of their actions and understand the very real impact that they have had upon others.

Community Resolution is an informal police disposal that enables the police to deal more proportionately with low-level crime and anti-social behaviour, outside the formal criminal justice system.

There are also a range of victim awareness courses and other restorative approaches which can be used to engage offenders, either in custody or in the community.

Findings

- There were concerted efforts to achieve community resolutions and use victim-led mediation.
- Restorative working was well-embedded into many YOT teams with good engagement with victims, including local businesses.
- Most YOT teams worked proactively to identify victims and address risk of harm.
- Some schemes lacked processes to ensure victims' wishes were always reflected in restorative approaches and victim-focused interventions.

- There was a wide range of victim awareness and restorative programmes in many prisons and YOIs – but they are absent in some establishments.
- Some establishments still lacked victim awareness courses, despite this being identified as one of the most commonly reported offending-related needs.

Compensation, complaints and enhanced entitlements

Victims are entitled to information about applications for compensation under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. They should have details of progress, a clear explanation of the decision and a right for further review, if applicable.

If victims do not think that they have received the services and support that they are entitled to in the Code, they can make a complaint and expect to receive a full response from the relevant service provider.

The Code sets out enhanced entitlements for victims in particular categories, where additional support or services are most likely to be needed, namely: victims of the most serious crime; persistently targeted victims; and vulnerable or intimidated victims. The enhanced entitlements include reduced target times for notifications, use of video-recorded interviews and intermediaries, notification of decisions and consultation.

Findings

- Many police officers were unaware that disability hate crime entitles the victim to enhanced entitlements.
- Only one in six forces visited routinely sought children’s consent to video recording of interviews, and too often interviewers concentrated on too complex issues.
- Almost three-quarters of notifications to families of victims in fatal road incidents failed to meet the required standards of timeliness and accuracy.
- People in detention are often also victims themselves, although not always considered as such. They include victims of domestic abuse, rape and human trafficking.
- There are good examples of counselling, psychological wellbeing services, support and advice, but availability of these options varied significantly.

Next steps

Chief inspectors will analyse the findings of this composite report and identify the gaps in its coverage of victims' rights. This analysis will be used to inform individual and joint inspection programmes for the coming year.

In compiling and checking the content for this consolidated report, there were representations made, not least by reference group members, concerning improvements made since the original reports. For example, in respect of domestic abuse, these crimes have since been added to the annual data requirement of police forces – making data more visible – and extended victim satisfaction surveys have been piloted.

In addition, consultation on technical changes to the Code has recently been completed, demonstrating the Government's continued commitment to improving the service to victims. The Victims' Commissioner has also published a series of themed reports which further raise the profile of victims' services.

However, it is not the role of this consolidated report to map changes since the original publications, although there will be opportunity for some comparisons on progress, or otherwise, in future reports.

In the meantime, chief inspectors remain committed to reporting and supporting the promotion of victims' rights across the CJS and this statement will, year-on-year, help to evidence how successfully agencies are providing all victims with the services to which they are entitled, and which they deserve.

Introduction

Origins

The criminal justice (CJ) inspectorates (of constabulary, the Crown Prosecution Service, probation and prisons) have a long history of working together to address cross-cutting issues within the criminal justice system (CJS).

The criminal justice joint inspection (CJJI) programme³ examines a range of very specific themed issues with a number of underpinning factors which form a focus for inspectors. These include: achieving value for money; promotion of equality and diversity; and the quality of the victim and witness experience.

In September 2014, CJ Ministers publicly stated *Our Commitment to Victims*,⁴ which listed a number of initiatives, planned over the following three years, aimed at enhancing the services provided to victims by CJ agencies.

The statement focussed on five commitments, which included one to: “increase transparency and accountability of criminal justice agencies”. Within that commitment, the statement announced the intention of CJ inspectorates to consolidate the relevant findings from a year of published reports and then, based on those findings, to publish a joint appraisal of the quality of services provided to victims by CJS agencies.

The task

Chief inspectors undertook to produce a composite report on victims’ services to increase transparency and highlight the accountability of CJ agencies for the quality of the services they provide to victims.

The report is designed to examine the provision of services to victims, including explaining how the CJ agencies meet their obligations under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime 2013 (“the Code”).

This is the first composite report and therefore not all aspects of the Code will have been assessed by the inspectorates in the course of the selected period.

³ *Criminal Justice Joint Inspection Joint Business Plan 2015/16*, Criminal Justice Inspectorates, London, March 2015. Available from www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk

⁴ *Our Commitment to Victims*, Ministry of Justice, London, September 2014. Available from www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-commitment-to-victims-september-2014

The reporting period

This report consolidates relevant findings and recommendations from individual and joint reports which were first published by the CJ inspectorates between April 2014 and July 2015 (inclusive). This represents a full business year but also allows inclusion of reports whose publication was delayed due to the general election. In view of the importance of the issue, the HMIC report on domestic abuse was also included – despite being published 27 March 2014.

Reference group

The Code lists a number of service providers⁵, including police, CPS, courts, probation, prisons, witness care units and youth offending teams. In addition, there are clear interests for Ministers, government departments, the Victims' Commissioner and, of course, victims themselves.

To provide an external overview of the material collated, and the balance and content of this composite report, an expert Reference Group was established with representatives from most of those interests listed above – to provide their knowledge and advice and comment on the emerging consolidation of findings.

The CJ chief inspectors are grateful for the contribution of Group members and for their continuing involvement beyond the publication of this first composite report on victims' services.

Format of the report

This report consolidates relevant findings from numerous other reports, all of which have already been published. To prevent unnecessary repetition of detail from those reports, the following chapters set out in brief:

- the expectations of victims' services;
- a summary of the principal findings;
- a list of the reports to be cited – with their principal findings in bullet form; and
- a link to access the full report.

Chapters follow the victim's journey from first contact with authorities to post-trial, and then cover the specific issues of restorative justice, compensation, complaints and enhanced entitlements.

A comprehensive list of all reports consulted appears at Annex A to this report.

⁵ Code for Victims of Crime (2013), p2, paragraph 7.

1: First contact with authorities

Expectations

For victims to receive a quality service, and for the provisions of the Code to have effect, and appropriate support to be accessed, the crime must be recorded; vulnerable/repeat victims identified (so they can be given tailored support); and those handling the case must understand the Code, its provisions and the importance of supporting the victims.

Principal findings from 2014/15

- Far too many reported crimes are either not recorded, or are subsequently 'no crimed'. The police are letting these victims down; without this first step, they and the community are denied justice and are unprotected from potential further harm. They are also denied access to support and services to which they are entitled under the Code. (Source: Making the Victim Count)
- First contact by 999 call-handlers with domestic abuse victims is generally very good, but there is room to improve identification of repeat and vulnerable victims. (Everyone's Business)
- In around one-third of all forces, (general) call-handlers were failing consistently to identify repeat and vulnerable victims, meaning that individuals who may be in most need of action or protection may not be getting it. (Core Business)
- Progress has been made in identifying victims of anti-social behaviour (ASB) who are vulnerable, or who are subject to repeat offending – but one in three forces' call-handlers were failing consistently to identify repeat and vulnerable victims. This is not helped by the lack of agreed national definitions. (Crime inspection)
- Time limitations on call-handlers (through pressure from the volume of calls), and the lack of access to useful information from other agencies (such as healthcare services), meant that police officers were often responding to vulnerable individuals, and making decisions on whether to arrest, with little background knowledge of an individual's circumstances. (Welfare of Vulnerable People in Police Custody)
- Police staff working in specialist units who were skilled in communicating with children could be seen as trusted adults. They considered the child's needs, built a trusting relationship and provided a route to other services (In Harm's Way).

Relevant reports from April 2014-July 2015

Title: Crime recording: Making the victim count

Lead: HMIC

Published: November 2014

Scale: 43-force inspection

Focus: HMIC examined and assessed the integrity of crime data in each force, focusing on three broad themes: leadership and governance; systems and processes; and the people and skills involved. The inspection looked at how each force applies the standards and rules for crime-recording laid down by the Home Office; how police culture and behaviours affect recording; how victims of crime are being served by police crime recording practices; and how the police use out-of-court solutions such as cautions, cannabis warnings, community resolutions and penalty notices for disorder when dealing with offenders.

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

- Over 800,000 crimes reported to police have gone unrecorded each year⁶.
- The quality of recording varied depending on the way the report was received:
- 98 percent of crimes reported directly to a crime recording centre are recorded (783 crimes recorded from 799 that should have been);
- 81 percent of crimes reported to call handling centres as an incident are recorded (4922 of 6081); and
- 55 percent of crimes contained within reports recorded on other stand-alone IT systems (including reports direct to specialist departments) are recorded (500 from 912).
- Even when crimes are correctly recorded, too many are removed or cancelled as recorded crimes for no good reason.
- Of a sample of 3246 cases examined, 664 were incorrectly cancelled – including 200 rape allegations and 250 violent crimes.
- In over 800 of the 3,246 decisions reviewed there was no evidence that the victim was told of the decision to no-crime their report.
- These victims may be under the impression that their crimes continue to be recorded and investigated when they are not.

www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/publications/crime-recording-making-the-victim-count/

⁶ Cited from *State of Policing 2013/14* – findings on ‘effectiveness’.

Title: Everyone's Business: An inspection of the police response to domestic abuse

Lead: HMIC

Published: March 2014

Scale: 43-force inspection

Focus: In September 2013, the Home Secretary commissioned HMIC to conduct an inspection on domestic abuse. They were asked to consider the effectiveness of the police response to domestic violence and abuse, focusing on the outcomes for victims; whether risks to victims of domestic violence and abuse are adequately managed; and identifying lessons learnt from how the police approach domestic violence and abuse. HMIC was also asked to make any necessary recommendations in relation to these findings when considered alongside current practice.

Principal relevant findings from this report

- Between two and seven percent of all calls for assistance to the police in England and Wales relate to incidents of domestic abuse.
- Staff answering 999 calls usually understand the definition of domestic abuse and mark cases accordingly on their information systems. They make sure that in the vast majority of cases an officer responds either immediately or within the hour. There were many good examples of call-handlers getting the right information from victims and providing them with sound advice on how to keep safe until the responding officer arrived.
- However, there are aspects of this first contact that could be improved. Some forces either have no definitions of what constitutes a repeat (in terms of previous police contact) or vulnerable victim, and in some forces the definitions are not well understood by staff.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/news/news-feed/police-response-to-domestic-abuse/

Title: Core Business: An inspection into crime prevention, police attendance and the use of police time

Lead: HMIC

Published: September 2014

Scale: 43-force inspection

Focus: This report examines all 43 police forces in England and Wales. It looks at three principal aspects of day-to-day policing: the prevention of crime; how crime is investigated and offenders are brought to justice; and freeing up and using police time more efficiently (which includes the use of modern technology).

Principal relevant finding from this inspection

- In around one-third of all forces call-handlers were failing consistently to identify repeat and vulnerable victims, meaning that individuals who may be in most need of action or protection, may not be getting it.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/state-of-policing-13-14/

Title: Crime inspection

Lead: HMIC **Published:** November 2014 **Scale:** 43-force inspection, with national findings published in the 'Effectiveness' chapter of *State of Policing 2013/14*

Focus: This inspection looks at how effective police forces are at cutting crime. The public expects the police to reduce, prevent and investigate crime, bring suspects to justice and, in conjunction with other services and agencies, care for victims. To assess each force's effectiveness, we looked at three areas: How effective is the force at reducing crime and preventing offending? How effective is the force at investigating offending? And how effective is the force at tackling anti-social behaviour?

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

- Since HMIC last inspected this area in 2012, forces' ability to assess and respond to the vulnerability of victims has improved considerably.
- HMIC is pleased that progress has been made and that forces are now identifying the vulnerability of victims of anti-social behaviour and taking appropriate action to intervene early and keep these victims safe.
- At the time of inspections, there was no agreed national definition in policing of what constituted a 'vulnerable' person. A standard definition existed for 'repeat victim', but forces had adapted this and defined it differently across a variety of categories of crime and anti-social behaviour. This is unhelpful and leads to confusion among staff and inconsistencies in the service provided to the public.
- HMIC is concerned that many forces still store information about vulnerability and risk relating to anti-social behaviour separately from information about crime. This means officers may not always have access to relevant and important information about victims at the times that and in the circumstances in which the information is needed.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publication/crime-inspection-force-reports/

Title: Welfare of Vulnerable People in Police Custody**Lead:** HMIC**Published:** March 2015**Scale:** Fieldwork in six forces

Focus: In January 2014, the Home Secretary commissioned Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to conduct a thematic inspection on the welfare of vulnerable people in police custody, "including, but not limited to, those with mental health problems, those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, and children". In particular, the Home Secretary asked HMIC to consider groups for whom there has been "a pronounced concern" about their treatment by the police – especially people of African-Caribbean descent. The fieldwork was conducted jointly with HMI Prisons.

Principal relevant inspection findings

Custody could have been avoided for a number of vulnerable adults and children had other services been available to support them. Some were in custody because they were a risk to themselves or others, not because they had committed a crime.

Police staff and officers demonstrated an understanding of the needs of vulnerable people and tried to respond appropriately; and

Time limitations on call-handlers (through pressure from the volume of calls), and the lack of access to useful information from other agencies (such as healthcare services) meant that police officers were often responding to vulnerable individuals, and making decisions on whether to arrest, with little background knowledge of the individual's circumstances.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/the-welfare-of-vulnerable-people-in-police-custody.pdf

Title: In Harm's Way: the role of the police in keeping children safe**Lead:** HMIC**Published:** July 2015:**Scale:** National programme plus

individual reports

Focus: In early 2014, HMIC began a national programme of child protection inspections (available at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/child-abuse-and-child-protection-issues/national-child-protection-inspection/). Since then, it has also undertaken a number of other inspections concerning vulnerable children. This report summarises the findings contained in the reports of all these inspections and considers the implications for future action.

Principal relevant inspection findings

- In all areas inspected, where the initial concern reported to the police was clearly a child protection matter and was allocated to a specialist team, the police response was invariably good. We found that officers:
 - responded promptly and attended scenes promptly (all except one area);
 - obtained good information from witnesses;
 - engaged sensitively and well with children and families; and
 - worked well with children's social care services to decide next steps.

Case study

A 12-year-old girl with learning disabilities had been assaulted by her mother following an argument. A joint visit was made to the school by police and children's social care services. The girl was spoken to with the support of the school nurse, and her concerns listened to. Her special needs and her wishes were taken into account. She stayed with her mother, with the support of a social worker, while the investigation continued.

Police staff working in specialist units who were skilled in communicating with children could be seen as trusted adults. They considered the child's needs, built a trusting relationship and provided a route to other services.

Some local neighbourhood and school police officers and police community support officers were also trusted by children and able to perform this role.

Children involved in a domestic abuse incident or who returned, having been missing from home were often not seen by the police or other agencies in order to check that they were safe and well. Furthermore, children were spoken to in the presence of parents who might influence the child's account.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/child-abuse-and-child-protection-issues/national-child-protection-inspection/

2: Response

Expectations

Victims should receive a consistently effective response, regardless of where they live. In particular, vulnerable victims should receive empathetic and extra support. Police officers and staff must understand the Code's provisions and the importance of supporting victims. Risk assessments should be thorough and appropriate.

Principal findings from 2014/15:

- The variation in policies across police forces means that members of the public will receive different responses from the police for the same types of incident or crime, depending on where they live. (Core Business)
- For the Code to be effective, police officers and staff must understand its provisions and the importance of supporting victims; but some see it as merely a tick-box exercise. (Core Business)
- The extent to which forces engage with partner organisations and agencies to assess levels of risk, particularly the levels of risk to vulnerable individuals and groups, has increased in recent years. (Core Business)
- Despite improvements, the overall response to victims of domestic abuse is not good enough – first responders often lack empathy, and in too many cases the quality of initial investigation is unacceptably weak. (Everyone's Business)
- The lack of empathy and understanding means there are too many instances where victims of domestic abuse feel they are not being taken seriously or believed. (Everyone's Business)
- People with mental health problems and children were taken into custody by the police because they were unable to secure the help they needed from health or social care services. On occasions, vulnerable people were taken into custody as a mechanism for getting them the support they needed. (Welfare of Vulnerable People in Police Custody)
- Police initial contact with children and immediate safeguarding issues were often good, although assessment and help provided to children and their families varied in quality. (Online and on the Edge)

- Some police officers did not regard all children as vulnerable. They saw the offence first, and the fact that it involved a child as secondary. Arrest policies relating to domestic abuse requiring positive action to be taken were interpreted in some forces as always meaning arrest, even if it involved a child. (Welfare of Vulnerable People in Police Custody)
- The arrest of children looked after and accommodated by the state (i.e. in care) following disruptive behaviour in a children's home, was also leading to children being detained. (Welfare of Vulnerable People in Police Custody)
- If a concern was not immediately identified as being child protection and the case was not allocated to a specialist team, the response was very mixed. It varied from excellent to poor. (In Harm's Way)
- Children who might need additional help were identified in those areas that had a well-developed multi-agency safeguarding hub. However, even where these were in operation, inspectors found many examples of delay, poor or superficial investigations, and a general lack of help for children in some areas (In Harm's Way).

Relevant reports from April 2014-July 2015

Title: Core Business: An inspection into crime prevention, police attendance and the use of police time

Lead: HMIC

Published: September 2014

Scale: 43-force inspection

Focus: For an overview of this inspection, see page 19.

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

- A small number of forces aim to attend all reports of crimes and incidents, while the majority base their response decision on the perceived level of threat, harm and risk to the victim, caller or community.
- However, worryingly almost half of forces were unable to provide inspectors with details of the reported crimes they had actually attended.
- Without such basic information, they cannot adequately assess the service they are providing to victims, or properly understand the demands being placed upon them.
- While much of the evidence HMIC found about officer awareness of the Code was positive, some forces viewed the Code merely as a compliance check list. A number of the systems designed to ensure that officers make appropriate and regular contact with victims are viewed by officers as tick-box exercises requiring compliance.

- Similarly, when some officers were asked about the Code, they could describe the process or system they had to comply with, but could not explain what a good victim-focused service really means.
- HMIC found the extent to which forces engage with partner organisations and agencies to assess levels of risk, particularly the levels of risk to vulnerable individuals and groups, has increased in recent years.
- The police and these other organisations are sharing information and this is being used to direct resources towards ensuring vulnerable people and communities are safe, or to prevent further crimes from being committed.
- In addition, many forces are now working with local authorities and other organisations to establish how they can provide appropriate support to those individuals and families who are well-known to the police and other agencies and consistently require public service interventions and resources.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/core-business/

Title: Everyone’s Business: An inspection of the police response to domestic abuse

Lead: HMIC **Published:** March 2014 **Scale:** 43-force inspection

Focus: For an overview of this inspection, see page 19.

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

- The overall police response to victims of domestic abuse is not good enough. This is despite considerable improvements in the service over the last decade, and the commitment and dedication of many able police officers and police staff. In too many forces there are weaknesses in the service provided to victims; some of these are serious and this means that victims are put at unnecessary risk.
- HMIC found alarming and unacceptable weaknesses in some core policing activity, in particular the quality of initial investigation undertaken by responding officers when they are called to a scene.
- The report also identifies that officers may lack the necessary supervision, knowledge and skills effectively to tackle domestic abuse, and some have poor attitudes.
- In too many forces there are weaknesses in the service provided to victims; some of these are serious and this means that victims are put at unnecessary risk. Many forces need to take action.

- HMIC highlighted the effect of the attitudes of a force’s leaders on the response received by victims of domestic abuse. However, in most forces there was a worrying lack of visible leadership or any clear direction from senior officers on domestic abuse.
- The views of victims were sought through focus groups and an online survey and many were higher risk victims with multiple interactions with police. The majority reported at some time experiencing poor attitudes from responding officers – they felt they were not taken seriously, were judged unfairly and some officers demonstrated a considerable lack of empathy and understanding.
- HMIC’s report on domestic abuse found evidence of a culture in which officers complied with the systems that are in place, rather than one of empathy and understanding with and protection of the victim. As a result, there are too many instances where victims of domestic abuse feel they are not being taken seriously or believed.

Quote

“In our area...it is still a bit of a lottery as to what kind of response you get. Some officers are absolutely brilliant and the feedback from victims is excellent, in that they felt they were listened to, questioned appropriately and sensitively and that officers keep them up to date with what is happening. Others are frankly diabolical and seem to have no understanding about what they are dealing with.” (IDVA)

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/news/news-feed/police-response-to-domestic-abuse/

Title: Online and on the Edge: Real risks in a virtual world

Lead: HMIC

Published: July 2015

Scale: fieldwork in six forces

Focus: Dealing with child sexual exploitation in a virtual world requires a different style of policing from the conventional methods of the past. This report sets out findings from an inspection of the police service’s efforts to tackle online child sexual exploitation, and concludes that forces need to better understand the nature and potential scale of this type of offending to ensure that more is done to protect children from harm, and bring perpetrators to justice.

Principal relevant inspection findings

During inspection visits to six forces, HMIC found that initial contact with children and safeguarding practice were often good. This was particularly apparent when the online world encroached into the traditional world of the child and their family.

- From 119 cases, inspectors considered the initial police response was good or adequate in 78 percent of cases.
- There was strong and consistent evidence across all the forces inspected that the majority of specialist staff were highly motivated, well-trained and keen to provide a good service to victims and the public.
- There was evidence of good, individual examples of specialist police officers effectively combining investigative and safeguarding approaches to protect children.
- The source of the report or referral to the police often had a noticeable impact on the quality of the early assessment and help for the child and their family.
- However, where the incident involved children other than the 'identified' child, wider opportunities to investigate were often not followed up or even considered, for example, where other victims were identified or named. This was the case for online child sexual exploitation cases allocated to both uniformed and specialist officers.
- The assessment and help provided to children and their families varied in quality. Of 119 cases, inspectors considered that the assessment and help provided was good or adequate in 61 percent of cases.

Case study

A woman reported to police that her daughter had sent indecent images of herself to men in both the UK and the USA. The initial police response was good. The girl told police that she had sexual intercourse with her boyfriend at the age of 12 and confirmed she had sent indecent photos to him. Her boyfriend was identified and arrested by police. A second man, who was alleged to be in possession of the photos of the girl, was named in the police record. There was no evidence that the second man was ever interviewed or that his computer was seized. Appropriate referrals and safeguarding arrangements were put in place for the girl, but there was no record of action in relation to other potential offenders and victims.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/online-and-on-the-edge-real-risks-in-a-virtual-world/

Title: Welfare of Vulnerable People in Police Custody

Lead: HMIC

Published: March 2015

Scale: Fieldwork in six forces

Focus: For an overview of this inspection, see page 21.

Principal relevant inspection findings

- People with mental health problems and children were taken into custody by the police because they were unable to secure the help they needed from health or social care services. On occasions, vulnerable people were taken into custody as a mechanism for getting them the support they needed;
- Some police officers did not regard all children as vulnerable. They saw the offence first, and the fact that it involved a child as secondary. Arrest policies relating to domestic abuse requiring 'positive action' to be taken were interpreted in some forces as always meaning arrest, even if it involved a child.
- The arrest of children looked after and accommodated by the state (i.e. in care) following disruptive behaviour in a children's home, was also leading to children being detained;
- Inspectors observed a number of ways in which forces were working proactively to divert people away from custody in the future, for example, police officers working in schools to tell children about the risks of offending, Some forces had liaison and diversion teams in custody suites to arrange support for people with mental health problems when leaving custody;
- Despite this more proactive approach, the number of vulnerable people repeatedly detained is high; and
- Improvements in multi-agency care planning would help to prevent these repeat detentions, by addressing some of the underlying problems.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/the-welfare-of-vulnerable-people-in-police-custody.pdf

Title: In Harm's Way: the role of the police in keeping children safe

Lead: HMIC, **Published:** July 2015: **Scale:** National programme plus individual reports

Focus: For an overview of this programme see page 21.

Principal relevant inspection findings

- If a concern was not immediately identified as being 'child protection' if, for example, the call was about domestic abuse or a missing child or a child offending and the case was not allocated to a specialist team, the response was very mixed. It varied from excellent to poor.
- Some police officers and staff clearly understood the needs of children and identified the risks to which they were exposed, while others did not.

Case study

A 14-year-old girl was sexually assaulted by a known offender with a mental health problem. She and her family were very afraid of the alleged perpetrator. Against the family's wishes, the police sent a uniformed officer to the home to investigate the allegation

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/child-abuse-and-child-protection-issues/national-child-protection-inspection/

3: Police investigation

Expectations

The police are expected to investigate crimes and provide updates tailored to each victim's needs. Victims can elect to give a Victim Personal Statement (VPS), at the same time as their witness statement, to explain in their own words how the crime has affected them. Victims are entitled to be offered the chance to read their VPS aloud at any court hearing and the court must consider it before sentencing. Victims should receive information about the criminal justice process, who is responsible for doing what within the force, and any actions relating to the suspect (for example, bail conditions or release from custody).

All victims of crime need to understand what they can expect from the investigation and court process. The Code is clear that victims of crime are entitled to receive regular information up-dates and to be consulted about the possible outcomes of their case.

Principal findings from 2014/15

- Almost half of all forces need to improve their crime investigations – opportunities to secure successful outcomes for the victim are being missed. (Crime inspection)
- Where crime scenes are not attended, the quality of investigation varies considerably and may be no more than a recording of the event. (Crime inspection)
- All forces provide an appointment system for victims of crime; however, some appointments were made for the convenience of the police, or when the incident could and should have been dealt with immediately – which is neither appropriate nor acceptable. (Crime inspection)
- Victims notice when investigations are poor - which can add to their perception of not being believed. Accurate and timely information is important for victims in planning their safety. (Everyone's business)
- New technology and social media present opportunities to gather more evidence but its extraction can be problematic and resource-intensive. (Online and on the Edge)
- Officers were unclear how they should go about keeping in touch with victims and helping to ensure they are properly supported and informed about their cases. Too often, victim contact is viewed by officers as just another bureaucratic requirement. (Online and on the Edge)

- All forces have systems for ensuring victims receive information about their cases and regular contact from the police. All make training on the Code available to officers. However, most use an online training package which is regarded by staff as an ineffective way to train how to support victims. (Crime recording)
- A small number of forces now operate the 'TrackMyCrime' system, which enables victims and witnesses to monitor the progress of the investigation of their crimes and to view updates online. (Crime recording)
- When an investigation was understood from the beginning as a child protection matter, and most of the evidence was gathered at the time of the incident or shortly after it, the quality of investigation was generally assessed as being good (In Harm's Way)
- The quality of investigation of cases of child sexual exploitation (CSE) was very mixed. There were some excellent examples, but enquiries made for children who go missing from home were often not sufficiently effective to get good information about patterns of behaviour and risk, or intelligence about possible offenders. (In Harm's Way)
- Inspectors variously found delays in beginning investigations, following up evidence by interviewing witnesses, obtaining medical reports and getting updates from social services. (In Harm's Way)
- There was little evidence of the police listening to children or of a child's understanding of events informing police practice. However, where police had clearly listened to children and subsequent police action had taken account of the child's needs and risks, the outcomes were better. (In Harm's Way)

Relevant reports from April 2014-July 2015

Title: Crime inspection

Lead: HMIC **Published:** November 2014 **Scale:** 43-force inspection, with national findings published in the 'Effectiveness' chapter of *State of Policing 2013/14*

Focus: For an overview of this inspection, see page 20.

Principal relevant findings

- In too many respects, the police are insufficiently effective at investigating crime. Eighteen of the 43 forces needed to improve the ways in which they investigate crime. In particular, the quality of initial investigation was below that which the public can reasonably expect. All but six forces have a policy to investigate some crimes over the telephone (desk-based investigation).

- At attended scenes, inspectors found good examples of Police and Community Support Officers (PCSOs) assisting in visits to reassure victims and supporting investigations by undertaking house-to-house enquiries – despite having had no formal training.
- Where reports of crime are not attended, HMIC found a wide disparity in the quality of investigations and their supervision. All too often the only action taken on a report was to file it. In other areas, for volume crimes (e.g. vehicle crime and criminal damage), a trend was emerging of victims being asked in effect to carry out the investigation themselves. In such, the likelihood of a crime report being pursued further than simply recording it appeared to be based on the extent of the victim's immediate knowledge of the existence of any witness, forensic or CCTV evidence – which is unacceptable.
- All forces provide some kind of appointment system for victims of crime, either through appointments at a police station or through appointments for officers and staff to visit the victims at their homes. HMIC sees the value in this approach for both the police and victim. However, HMIC was provided with a number of examples where appointments were being made for the convenience of the police, or when the incident could and should have been dealt with immediately. The use of appointment systems in these ways is neither appropriate nor acceptable.
- HMIC's crime inspection reviewed at least 20 case files in every force and found inconsistencies in the way evidence was gathered during the initial stages of an investigation.
- These included failures to do house-to-house enquiries, to take photographs of injuries in domestic abuse assault cases, or to collect CCTV evidence on assaults in a public place.
- All these matters are of serious concern. Opportunities to secure a successful outcome for victims of crime are being missed as a result of failures to conduct an effective, prompt and professional investigation.
- Despite these concerns, HMIC also saw many examples of effective investigations, particularly in cases of crimes where specialist officers and resources are used, for example investigations of murder or serious and organised crime.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publication/crime-inspection-force-reports/

Title: Everyone's Business: An inspection of the police response to domestic abuse

Lead: HMIC

Published: March 2014

Scale: 43-force inspection

Focus: For an overview of this inspection see page 19.

Principal relevant findings from this report

- Evidence from focus groups showed that victims notice when an investigation is poor. This can contribute to their perception that they are not believed or that they are not being taken seriously.
- The domestic abuse practitioners that were surveyed assessed that initial evidence gathering by frontline officers required 'some' or 'a lot' of improvement in respect of photographs being taken (57 percent); telephone calls and text messages being logged (57 percent); and house-to-house enquiries made (48 percent).
- It is particularly important that victims of domestic abuse are given all the information they need about the status of their case - not least as this helps them to plan for their own safety better. Where domestic abuse is concerned, this information can make all the difference to victim safety.
- The situation of victim involvement at the end of the investigative process is mixed:
 - 72 percent were informed of their offence being cancelled (2,219 of 3,062);
 - 60 percent had their views considered before police issued a caution (411 of 687); and
 - 34 percent had their views considered before police issued a PND (187 of 550).
- Of the community resolutions examined, 196 out of the 907 cases (22 percent) showed no evidence of proper consultation with the victim. As the resolution is intended to bring satisfactory closure for the victim, it is important that victims' wishes are fully documented. This will give the force confidence that victims are being listened to and that they are at the centre of decisions made by the police to resolve the crime.
- Victims in focus groups raised concerns that they were being required to recount their stories repeatedly. In a police investigation it is important that the response officer hears directly from the victim, but they can establish important facts about any history of domestic abuse from police systems so that they have some understanding by the time they arrive on the scene.

Quote

“This female officer, who took my statement. She is the only one in the whole 12 years who actually read my case history before coming out. It was such a relief. Often you have to go through the whole thing over and over again. You feel like a broken record player. She made me feel I mattered.” Domestic abuse victim

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/news/news-feed/police-response-to-domestic-abuse/

Title: Online and on the Edge: Real risks in a virtual world

Lead: HMIC

Published: July 2015

Scale: Fieldwork in six forces

Focus: For an overview of this inspection, see page 26.

Principal relevant findings from this report

- The rise of the mobile phone means there is now a huge amount of potential evidence available to the police from any suspect. On many occasions, relevant evidence and information for online child sexual exploitation investigations may be held on mobile phones. This information may include indecent images and sexualised chat between children and adult offenders, using a range of social media sites, such as Facebook and Blackberry Messenger.
- However, extracting this data can be problematic, requiring forensic mobile equipment that allows quick assessment of the nature and scale of offences. Inspectors found such technology was available for use by frontline officers in three of the six forces inspected – North Wales, Northumbria and Kent forces. At the time of the inspection North Wales Police had used this technology to examine approximately a thousand mobile phones in the preceding 18 months.
- Officers were unclear how they should go about keeping in touch with victims and helping to ensure they are properly supported and informed about their cases. Too often, victim contact is viewed by officers as just another bureaucratic requirement. Evidence from HMIC’s file review and unannounced visits to police stations support this; contact with victims is variable and unacceptably inconsistent both within and across many forces.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/online-and-on-the-edge-real-risks-in-a-virtual-world/

Crime Recording: Making the Victim Count

Lead: HMIC **Published:** November 2014: **Scale:** 43-force inspection

Focus: For an overview of this inspection, see page 18.

Principal relevant findings from this report

- All forces have put in place systems for ensuring victims receive information about their cases and regular contact from the police.
- All forces make training on the Code available to officers. However, most forces use an online training package to inform officers about changes to the Code and, almost without exception, officers told HMIC that this is an ineffective way of providing training about how to support victims.
- A small number of forces now operate the 'TrackMyCrime' system, which enables victims and witnesses to monitor the progress of the investigation of their crime and to view updates online. Victims are offered the opportunity to participate in the system at the time they report the crime and have access via a secure personal account. One force reported 95 percent of users have expressed satisfaction with this system.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/crime-recording-making-the-victim-count/

Title: In Harm's Way: the role of the police in keeping children safe

Lead: HMIC, **Published:** July 2015: **Scale:** National programme plus individual reports

Focus: For an overview of this programme see page 21.

Principal relevant inspection findings

- Inspectors found that when an investigation was understood from the beginning as a child protection matter, and most of the evidence was gathered at the time of the incident or shortly after it, the quality of investigation was generally assessed as being good.

Case study

A 13-year-old girl was having a sexual relationship with a 20-year-old man. A detective identified the girl as a potential victim of sexual abuse, arranged for specially trained officers to interview the family, provided them with some immediate advice and reassurance, quickly involved children's social care services and organised a medical examination at the sexual assault referral centre (SARC). The man was arrested promptly, and appropriate bail conditions were imposed that took into account the risk he posed to other children.

- There were a number of examples where individual police officers had made a considerable difference to the lives of children. They gained a child's trust, followed up actions and continued to support the child as the case progressed. Children were helped and protected, sometimes in spite of the system, rather than because of it.
- Children who might need additional help were identified in those areas that had a well-developed multi-agency safeguarding hub. However, even where these were in operation, inspectors found many examples of delay, poor or superficial investigations, and a general lack of help for children in some areas.
- Poor interview planning, which does not take account of the likely impact of an investigation on a child, or the likely response of a suspect, risks allowing an abuser an opportunity to silence the child. The child protection inspection found several cases of children and mothers withdrawing or changing their stories.
- Prior planning, which does not include protective contingency plans, may increase risk or lead to victim disengagement from the process, resulting in missed opportunities to identify potential investigation leads.
- In cases of sexual assault, specialist police interviewers were skilled in interviewing children and were sensitive to their needs. Those areas that had a SARC – with good quality interview and examination rooms and skilled staff – provided a better service for victims.
- Cases referred by another agency such as the former CEOP or children's social care services were more likely to be dealt with by a specialist, while reports from the public, parents or children themselves were less likely to be investigated by a specialist.
- inspectors noted a number of excellent joint investigations and interviews, particularly in sexual or physical assault cases and high quality joint investigations in some CSE cases.

- In cases where there were conflicting accounts, where evidence was limited, or further work had to be undertaken by another part of the system (such as the high-tech crime unit), investigations were often poor and protracted.
- In cases of CSE, where a child was reluctant to cooperate, the case was often quickly concluded and no further action was taken. Across a range of investigations, the investigation was often shallow with few leads followed up.
- Inspectors also found few examples where children were referred for a medical examination. In some cases this should have been undertaken, not only for evidential purposes, but to ascertain the child's health and wellbeing. Often medical assessments were not requested for several days after an allegation of assault, when signs of injury had reduced.

Case study

In a physical abuse case where a nine-year-old boy was pinned down and held around his throat by his father who had returned home drunk, there was a delay in arranging a medical examination and interviewing the three other children in the family.

- Where evidence was inconclusive and it was unlikely that a case would proceed to prosecution, there was limited evidence of police working with other agencies to identify the implications of this for future safeguarding of a child. In a number of cases lack of evidence of abuse was treated in much the same way as a conclusion that no abuse had occurred, and children were returned home without a proper risk assessment or safeguarding plan.
- This was most apparent in cases of domestic violence, young children alleging violence against a parent who contested the child's story (and sometimes the child then changed it), or adolescent girls who did not understand their relationship as exploitative or were reluctant to incriminate a 'boyfriend'.
- The quality of investigation of cases of child sexual exploitation (CSE) was very mixed. The enquiries made for children who go missing from home were often not sufficiently effective to get good information about patterns of behaviour and risk, or intelligence about possible offenders.
- In some forces the perception of exploitation as a girl's 'lifestyle choice' was still in evidence, especially if the girl was looked after by the local authority or was brought into the police station on offending grounds.
- However, inspectors also found some very good practice with examples of police engaging well with children, investigating thoroughly, using intelligence well, and assiduously pursuing offenders.

- There were sometimes delays in beginning an investigation, even in serious cases – 11 months in one case of sexual assault on a child by a grandparent. There were also delays in following up evidence by interviewing witnesses or photographing scenes of crimes. Inspectors found cases of children separated from their parents for many months and, in two cases, for over a year but without any sign of the case coming to a conclusion.
- Inspectors also found examples of delay in obtaining medical reports (the examinations had been completed), photographs from police photographers and updates from children’s social care services. Occasionally, delays were pursued by the police but mostly the delay was noted on the file but no further action recorded.
- In failing to investigate more deeply a case where a parent denied an accusation against them, it appeared that the police gave greater credence to the parent’s account. There was not much evidence in any of the forces inspected of the police listening to children or of a child’s understanding of events informing police practice. However, where police had clearly listened to children and subsequent police action had taken account of the child’s needs and risks, the outcomes were better.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/child-abuse-and-child-protection-issues/national-child-protection-inspection/

4: Charge and pre-trial hearings

Expectations

Victims (and in some circumstances their families) are entitled to be kept informed of charging and other decisions, and the reasons behind them.

The decision to prosecute should not depend primarily on the views of the victim in domestic abuse or any other type of case. Prosecutions can take place without the victim's support in appropriate cases where there is sufficient other evidence and it is in the public interest to prosecute (evidence-led prosecutions). All police staff need to view evidence-led prosecutions as a realistic option from the moment a report of domestic abuse is made, and act accordingly.

A bereaved close relative of a victim who died as a result of criminal conduct is entitled to: have a Family Liaison Officer assigned by the police, where the Senior Investigating Officer considers this to be appropriate (This will happen in the majority of cases); and be offered accessible advice on bereavement and information on available victims' services by the police.

In some cases, the police, CPS or Youth Offending Team (YOT) (if the offender is under 18) may consider it appropriate to deal with an offence without taking it to court. This enables the incident to be dealt with relatively quickly and may prove more effective in preventing further offences. Where an out of court disposal is being considered by the police, CPS or YOT, victims are entitled, where practicable, to be asked for views and to have these views taken into account when a decision is made.

Principal findings from 2014/15

- There were good examples of consultation with victims but too many cases examined contained inadequate communications at appropriate times and some revealed no communication at all. (FRTI)
- Standards of timeliness and accuracy in pre-trial notifications to victims' families in fatal road incidents were not met in almost three-quarters of cases. (FRTI)
- Some CPS areas have wrongly short-circuited required processes for informing families of prosecution decisions. (FRTI)
- Victims' right to review CPS decisions was appropriately notified in over three-quarters of cases sampled. (Joint inspection on the provision of charging decisions)

- The use of evidence-led prosecutions where victims are reluctant witnesses is disappointingly low. (Everyone’s Business)
- Victims’ wishes were not properly considered in many out-of-court disposals. (Crime Recording)
- Where used appropriately, out-of-court disposals reduced first-time entrants to the CJS – but cases were identified of highly inappropriate application. (Newport & Online and on the Edge)
- Letters sent out by prosecutors and Witness Care Units can provide conflicting or different information to victims. (Gwent and South Wales)
- Some forces were using child abduction warning notices (issued to a potential suspect) as a crime prevention tactic but there was little use of sexual risk orders to impose restrictions on known sex offenders. (In Harm’s Way)

Relevant reports from April 2014-July 2015

Title: Joint inspection of the investigation and prosecution of fatal road traffic incidents (FRTI)

Lead: HMCPSI

Published: February 2015

Scale: Six areas

Focus: A joint thematic inspection of the investigation and prosecution of offences arising from fatal road traffic incidents by the police and the Crown Prosecution Service respectively.

Principal relevant findings

- There were good examples of consultation and communication with victims but too many cases either contained inadequate communications or letter required simply had not been sent, which is unacceptable.
- There was a record of the charging decision having been appropriately communicated to the victim’s family in only 12 of the 72 cases (16.7 percent) examined in the FRTI inspection. In a small number the first ascertainable communication to the family was recorded only a few days before a plea and case management hearing in the Crown Court, or even after that time. This is too late.

Quote

“The first contact we had with the CPS was...in court. That morning we were told he was going to plead guilty and be sentenced. We were left shocked and upset. We weren’t prepared for that, other family members weren’t there who wanted to be. At that point we didn’t know hardly anything about the case and were left not knowing what had just happened.”

- Within this inspection, all the case files that resulted in court proceedings were assessed for the adequacy of the notifications to the victims' families throughout the life of the case. The standards of timeliness and accuracy were fully met in 5.0 percent, partially met in a further 21.7 percent and not met in 73.3 percent. This level of performance is clearly not acceptable.
- Police overall were professional and thorough but needed to prioritise the valuable work of family liaison officers who perform a sensitive role in reassuring both victims' families and the public that a road death investigation is just as important as all other homicide cases.
- It was the practice of most CPS Areas visited to provide their charging decision electronically to the police with a request to ensure that the FLO visit the family and deliver their letter explaining the decision directly. However, some CPS Areas had abbreviated the process by inviting the FLO to tell the family of the decision without a CPS letter. This is in breach of the CPS guidance and places an unreasonable expectation on the FLO and can lead to confusion in the minds of the family, especially where a decision conflicts with what the Senior Investigating Officer has told the family they expect the decision to be.
- Inspectors examined some files where all or part of the case had been discontinued by the prosecution, or where the defendant had offered to plead guilty to a different offence to the original charge. Of 18 cases where the families ought to have been consulted about the decision to accept guilty pleas to other charges or a basis of plea offered by the defendant, in 11 (61.1 percent) there was evidence of appropriate consultation but the rest were silent on this aspect.
- There were 11 cases where the prosecutor proposed discontinuance of the case either in its entirety or in respect of the principal offence charged. There was evidence of appropriate consultation in seven cases (63.6 percent).
- Where the prosecutor accepted an offer of pleas or discontinued the case there were only six cases out of 22 (27.3 percent) where a timely communication of this decision was sent to the family. There were a further 16 cases (72.7 percent) where either no letter was sent or it was not timely.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/joint-inspection-of-the-investigation-and-prosecution-of-fatal-road-traffic-incidents/

Title: Joint inspection of the provision of charging decisions

Lead: HMCPSI **Published:** May 2015: **Scale:** Six areas

Focus: The decision whether or not to charge someone with a criminal offence is a fundamental stage in the criminal justice process. This joint inspection, between Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Inspectorate and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, has closely scrutinised how well the police and the CPS ensure that quality charging decisions are made.

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

- The Victim's Right to Review Scheme came into force in June 2013 and relates to qualifying decisions made after that date. This scheme makes it easier for victims to seek a review of a CPS decision not to bring charges or to terminate all proceedings. In the file sample of CPS Direct cases where the decision was to take no further action there was appropriate reference to the right to review in 77.5 percent of cases. In a further 19.8 percent inspectors were unable to determine from the information on the digital file whether there had been the appropriate notification.
- The right to review will be notified to the victim by the police when they inform them of the CPS decision to take no further action. Not all police officers demonstrated a clear understanding of how the scheme operated and their responsibilities in terms of communication with the victim. Inspectors could not therefore be certain how effectively the right to review was communicated to the victim. In two cases the victim exercised their right to review, but in each the original outcome was upheld.

www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/cjii/inspections/joint-inspection-of-the-provision-of-statutory-charging/

Title: Everyone's Business: An inspection of the police response to domestic abuse

Lead: HMIC **Published:** March 2014 **Scale:** 43-force inspection

Focus: For an overview of this inspection, see page19.

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

- HMIC understands that it is harder to secure a conviction of the guilty without the engagement or the support of the victim. Our file review data shows that a considerably larger proportion of offences led to conviction when the victim supported police action. If a victim says that they do not want the offender to be brought to justice, this is not a reason in itself for the police to step back. In fact it is a reason to gather evidence more proactively.

- It makes a huge difference to frontline officers when they see cases being prosecuted that do not rely on the victim's evidence. It needs to be made clear through police action and behaviour, that it is not the victim's responsibility to bring domestic abusers to justice; this is the job of everyone who works in the CJS. It is also critically important that police officers understand why a victim may withdraw or withhold support for a prosecution.
- There were disappointingly mixed reports about the extent to which forces and the CPS are pursuing evidence-led prosecutions. Forces often refer to these as 'victimless prosecutions' – unfortunate shorthand that can tend to suggest there is no victim.

<http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/news/news-feed/police-response-to-domestic-abuse/>

Title: Crime Recording: Making the Victim Count

Lead: HMIC

Published: November 2014

Scale: 43-force inspection

Focus: For an overview of this inspection, see page 18.

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

- In some cases the police, CPS or Youth Offending Team (YOT) may consider it appropriate to deal with an offence without taking to the offender court. To be correctly applied, out-of-court disposals must be both appropriate for the offender and the victims' views should be sought and taken into account before a decision is taken.
- In this review, evidence that victims' wishes were properly considered was only found in 1,309 cases (from 2,144 out-of-court disposals where there was a victim) – amounting to just 61 percent.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/crime-recording-making-the-victim-count/

Title: Full Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Work in Newport

Lead: HMI Probation

Published: September 2014

Scale: Single area

Focus: This joint inspection of youth offending work in Newport is one of a small number of full joint inspections undertaken by HM Inspectorate of Probation with colleagues from the criminal justice, social care, education and health inspectorates. Inspectors focused on six key areas: reducing reoffending, protecting the public, protecting children and young people, ensuring that the sentence is served, the effectiveness of governance and the delivery of interventions.

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

- Disposal decisions in most instances of low level offending by children and young people without a previous criminal record, were made by a YOT police officer. This had helped ensure a consistent and creative approach. In combination with the 'bureau', it had meant that all restorative justice disposals, and a high proportion of cautions issued, led to appropriate referral for early intervention work through local authority prevention services. This had coincided with a significant reduction in first time entrants to the criminal justice system and was believed to be the principal reason for this.
- Inspectors found evidence that some forces sought to avoid the inappropriate criminalisation of children by the use of alternative disposals to a court appearance.

www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2014/09/Newport-FJI-report.pdf

Title: Online and On the Edge: Real risks in a virtual world

Lead: HMIC

Published: July 2015

Scale: fieldwork in six forces

Focus: For an overview of this inspection, see page 26.

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

HMIC found that inappropriate use of police cautions as alternatives to court was an issue of concern.

Case study

A mother contacted the police concerned that her 11-year-old daughter was being groomed by someone who contacted her through the internet. The man used a false profile on Facebook. Nine months later, in April 2014, the suspect was identified as a 62-year-old man living in another force area. The investigation was passed onto the second force but no action was taken. In July 2014, the man's adult daughter found multiple indecent images of children, including self-generated indecent images on his phone. The man was arrested and admitted the possession of indecent images of children and was cautioned by police on the same day.

There was no rationale for the caution. He was a council worker who routinely visits council tenants. There was no evidence of further investigation in relation to the images of other children on his phone or the ongoing risk he posed to children. The police did not seize his home computer. An investigation of his Facebook page was not pursued on the basis that his profile had been deleted

Case study

A mother of a 13-year-old girl contacted police in July 2014 after discovering that a 20-year-old man a former neighbour, had sent indecent images of himself via 'snap chat' to her daughter and requested similar photos from her. The girl's mother knew the offender as they both worked with young children at a national cycling club. Another child was also targeted by the same man but there was no record of any action being taken. The man disposed of his phone prior to his arrest. During interview he admitted the offences. Records show that in 2012 he had been dealt with by way of a restorative justice disposal for similar offences. The officer and supervisor recorded that due to his admissions he was not a sexual predator, and a caution was administered.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/online-and-on-the-edge.pdf

Title: Inspection of CPS performance in dealing with victims and witnesses in Gwent and South Wales (CPS Cymru-Wales)

Lead: HMCPSI **Published:** April 2014 **Scale:** Single CPS area

Focus: This focused inspection of the CPS units in Gwent and South Wales has allowed us to examine in better detail the processes that support effective victim and witness care. Getting this right is critical because victims and witnesses are essential to the delivery of justice. Without them, offenders cannot be prosecuted or the innocent acquitted.

Principal relevant inspection findings

- Letters to victims examined by inspectors were, overall, of a satisfactory standard, in plain language and free from legal jargon.
- Inspectors examined 29 cases that had been flagged as involving a vulnerable or intimidated victim. Of these 13 (44.8 percent) had been sent within one working day of the decision in accordance with the target. In eight cases (27.6 percent) the letters had been sent late and in the reprincipaling eight (27.6 percent) no letter had been sent. In one it was noted that the victim had been spoken to at court but in others there was no explanation of why a letter had not been sent
- In particular types of case, the CPS should offer to meet with the victim or their family to further explain the reason for the decision to substantially alter a charge or to take a case no further. A sample of 20 files was examined in which the offer of a meeting should have been made. Only nine cases contained one. Of the reprincipalder, no offer was made in the letter in eight cases and there were three cases in which a letter could not be found.

- Inspectors found that, in general, victims received information about the progress of their case including, where appropriate, details of defendants' bail conditions and trial dates. However letters sent out by prosecutors and Witness Care Units (WCUs) sometimes provided conflicting or differing information about case progress or outcomes.
- Inspectors also examined the degree of communication at court - including keeping victims informed of case progress, assisting them at court to refresh their memory from their written or video statement, and answering questions on court procedure and processes. More often than not it was the Witness Service officers who had most contact with victims and witnesses at court, provided information and kept them updated.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmcpsi/wpcontent/uploads/sites/3/2014/05/VWGS_W_FOC_Apr14_rpt.pdf

Title: Annual Report

Lead: HMCPSI

Published: July 2014

Scale: All areas

Focus: The Chief Inspector's annual report provides an overall assessment of CPS performance for the year, informed by the Annual Casework Examination Programme, follow-up and joint inspections.

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

- In 2014-15, HMCPSI examined 1,101 cases prosecuted by the CPS as part of its Annual Casework Examination Programme. These were drawn from across a range of CPS Areas and comprised a mix of magistrates' court and Crown Court cases. The sample included a mix of different case types, including those of rape, domestic abuse and racially or religiously aggravated. In each case prosecutors assessed a range of victim issues.
- Special measures applications were timely and of good quality in 67.5 percent of relevant cases. The attendance of victims and witnesses was secured appropriately in 89.6 percent of relevant cases.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmcpsi/inspections/hmcpsi-annual-report-2013-14/

Title: In Harm's Way: the role of the police in keeping children safe

Lead: HMIC, **Published:** July 2015: **Scale:** National programme plus individual reports

Focus: For an overview of this programme see page 21.

Principal relevant inspection findings

- Those forces that had developed a more strategic approach to child sexual abuse (CSE) were using child abduction warning notices issued to a potential suspect as a crime prevention tactic when there was little prospect of a prosecution. Overall, however, there was not a great deal of evidence that the police were using their powers to full effect. There was little use of sexual risk orders which may be sought from a court to impose restrictions on a known sex offender.
- Where an offender had been convicted of a sex offence in a court and was on the sex offender's register, police practice was much more confident .
- Inaction was found to be a problem rather than action, but there were also cases where a decision to pursue criminal action against a child was misplaced. Decisions not to pursue adults who offend against children while at the same time pursuing child offenders, many of whom are very vulnerable, are contrary to accepted good practice.

Case study

A 15-year-old girl made a rape allegation about a (previous) care worker. The police concluded she was lying and she was cautioned for perverting the course of justice. No criminal charges were made against the worker but he was disciplined for inappropriate behaviour.

- Police officers, whose contact with children was more limited, varied considerably in how they related to children. Some of the decisions taken by police to prosecute, or threaten with prosecution, children involved in fights between siblings and peer to peer 'sexting' were unhelpful in developing protective relationships for the future.
- There were also cases where police action damaged trust. In particular, where children disclosing abuse were accused of lying or criminal proceedings were taken against them.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/child-abuse-and-child-protection-issues/national-child-protection-inspection/

5: Trial, sentencing and appeal

Expectations

If victims are required to give evidence, they are entitled to be offered a full needs assessment by the Witness Care Unit (WCU) to make sure they are supported in giving best evidence. This may include the use of special measures. They are also entitled to visit the court before the trial date to familiarise themselves with the building and the court room.

Victims are entitled to be informed by the WCU of the sentence given to the perpetrator within one working day of the WCU receiving the information from the court. This includes a short explanation about the meaning and effect of the sentence.

A bereaved close relative in a qualifying case is also entitled to be offered a meeting with the CPS: following conviction of the suspect to confirm that a victim personal statement (VPS) has been made or to confirm that it is up to date. This meeting will usually take place at court; and in cases which result in an acquittal or in a conviction on a less serious charge.

If an application is made to the Crown Court to appeal against a conviction or sentence in the Magistrates' Court, victims are entitled to be informed of the following information by the WCU within one working day of them receiving it from the court:

- any notice of appeal that has been made;
- the date, time and location of any hearing; and/or
- the outcome of that appeal, including any changes to the original sentence.

Following grant of leave to appeal, a bereaved close relative, in a qualifying case, is entitled to be offered a meeting with the CPS to explain the nature of the appeal and the court processes.

Principal findings from 2014/15

- Generally, victims and witnesses receive appropriate information from witness care units, supported by Victim Support and Witness Service staff. (Gwent and South Wales)
- Concerns existed over late review of cases and late application for special measures – which could alienate witnesses. (Gwent and South Wales)

- Giving evidence from remote facilities, via video links, can provide witnesses with a safe environment and save long journeys to court. (Gwent and South Wales)
- Pre-sentence reports have improved in the identification of hate crime and disability but few included a sentence plan objective to address the hate crime element of the offending. (Disability Hate Crime follow-up)
- There was good evidence of communications between the CPS Appeals Unit and bereaved families in fatal road incident cases. (FRTI)

Relevant reports from April 2014-July 2015

Title: Inspection of CPS performance in dealing with victims and witnesses in Gwent and South Wales (CPS Cymru-Wales)

Lead: HMCPSI **Published:** April 2014 **Scale:** single CPS area inspection

Focus: For an overview of this inspection, see page 45.

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

- In the HMCPSI inspection of Gwent and South Wales inspectors found that although the special measures applied for were appropriate in most cases, they were often being made at a late stage. In addition, there is no flag or trigger on the CPS case management system (CMS) to indicate that special measures are required; this often means that the Witness Care Unit cannot tell from the system if they have been applied for.
- In South Wales and Gwent there were concerns from CPS and WCU staff that the default position of the Area was to summons any witness who indicated that they would not attend court. Inspectors shared these concerns, and also felt that late review of cases and late applications for special measures could contribute to the reluctance of witnesses to attend court and increases the likelihood of (or threat of) a witness summons becoming necessary. This combination of factors could alienate an otherwise willing witness.
- The inspection found that generally victims and witnesses were given appropriate information – principally from the WCUs – including support available to them, giving evidence in court and, more generally, information on the court process.
- The Victim Support and Witness Service officers in Gwent and South Wales provide a valuable service such as providing the statement at court to the witnesses, looking after the video links used for special measures, and arranging pre-trial visits for victims and witnesses.

- CPS Cymru/Wales supports a joint partnership facility whereby witnesses give their evidence via live link to the court from premises located remotely. This provides a safe environment and saves witnesses from long journeys to court. Victim Support manages the building, provides statements and administers oaths, while prosecutors speak with the witness prior to the start of the case over the video link if needed.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmcpsi/wpcontent/uploads/sites/3/2014/05/VWGS_W_FOC_Apr14_rpt.pdf

Title: Follow-up Inspection of the Serious Fraud Office

Lead: HMCPSI **Published:** November 2014 **Scale:** Single agency inspection

Focus: HMCPSI first inspected the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) by invitation in the spring and early summer of 2012. The inspection was focussed on casework. Eight recommendations were issued, agreed by the SFO, and the report published in November 2012. It is HMCPSI practice to carry out follow-up inspections in order to promote improvement. The aim of the process is to assess and report on progress against recommendations. In this sense, follow-up is about identifying the action taken to address recommendations and assessing its impact on the business.

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

- Inspectors found that the quality of witness care at court was excellent, but coverage was not complete.
- Law Clerks (who provide administrative support on the cases) themselves have a key role in communicating with victims before the case comes to court but there was a lack of clarity over the precise roles of witness care officers and Law Clerks regarding communication with witnesses.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmcpsi/wpcontent/uploads/sites/3/2014/11/SFOFU_Nov14_rpt.pdf

Title: Joint Review of Disability Hate Crime Follow Up

Lead: HMCPSI

Published: May 2015

Scale: Six areas

Focus: This joint follow-up review considered how the police, Crown Prosecution Service and probation service providers (National Probation Service/Community Rehabilitation Companies) have responded to the seven recommendations contained in the Criminal Justice Joint Inspection

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

- In almost all the probation cases reviewed in the disability hate crime follow-up inspection there was evidence that the offender manager, when preparing a report for court, had sufficient information regarding the nature of the offence to recognise this was a hate crime and that the victim was disabled. This is a significant improvement from the situation inspectors found at the time of the initial review, when the vast majority of writers of pre-sentence reports stated they had little or no information that the victim was disabled or that there was a hate crime element to the offence.
- However, reports failed, in the majority of cases, to make an analysis of the offence or risk of harm posed by the offender to the victim or potential victims. Only three reports contained a proposed sentence plan objective to address the hate crime nature of the offence.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/joint-review-of-disability-hate-crime-review.pdf

Title: Joint Inspection of the investigation and prosecution of fatal road traffic incidents

Lead: HMCPSI **Published:** February 2015 **Scale:** Six areas

Focus: For an overview of this inspection, see page 40.

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

- Inspectors found that there was good evidence of prompt and accurate communication between the CPS Appeals Unit prosecutor and the bereaved family through the police FLO.
- Meetings were offered to families by the CPS Appeals Unit but in many families took advantage of the offer to speak to the allocated prosecutor by telephone, which avoided the need for a meeting. As the families may be resident in any part of the United Kingdom or even abroad in some cases, the additional inconvenience and expense of a visit to London can be spared. Appeal cases are often heard together, especially where there is a similar issue of law or sentencing involved and this can cause problems for the CPS to manage the care of bereaved families at court.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/joint-inspection-of-the-investigation-and-prosecution-of-fatal-road-traffic-incidents/

6: Post trial

Expectations

If victims choose to take part in the Victim Contact Scheme (VCS), they are entitled to:

- decide whether they want to receive information about key stages of the offender's sentence;
- be assigned a Victim Liaison Officer (VLO) who will act as point of contact in the probation trust unless a victim of an unrestricted patient (see below);
- receive information and make representations to the probation trust about victim-related conditions to be included on the offender's release licence or conditions of discharge in the event of release. For example, this could include a condition to prevent the offender from contacting the victim or family;
- be informed by the probation trust about any conditions which an offender is subject to on release or discharge which relate to the victim or family;
- be informed of the date on which these conditions will end; and
- be informed about any other information which the probation trust considers to be appropriate in the circumstances of the case, including about key stages of the offender's sentence, or treatment in the case of a restricted or unrestricted mental health patient.

In certain circumstances, offenders also have entitlements under the Code (for example, where subject of serious assault or racial bullying while in prison). Appropriate handling while in custody can both protect the individual offender and aid rehabilitative progress, to the wider benefit of the community on their release.

When offenders are released, it is expected that there would be effective risk management planning to protect previous and/or potential victims. As part of this, CJ partners would be expected to exchange relevant information and intelligence.

Principal findings from 2014/15

- Probation staff are not always informed of appearance of their cases until after the event, making offender management and victim or witness protection more difficult. (Transforming Rehabilitation)
- Very few children have their risk to others reassessed before leaving custody. (Resettlement services to children)

- Police powers to issue child abduction warning notices and sexual risk orders are under-utilised. (In Harm's Way)
- The effectiveness of risk management planning prior to release from custody varied widely. Where it worked well, processes were robust and significant information was exchanged. (Prison Inspections)
- Some assessments of the likelihood of reoffending were hampered by incomplete or late exchange of information. Such assessments lacked appropriate analysis. (Prison Inspections)
- There were good examples in YOTs of risk management and victim identification, but in others there were noticeable gaps in the quality of approaches and assessments. (Youth offending)
- Some YOTs make good use of victim liaison officers but the victims' voice was not always represented on community panels in referral order cases. (Youth offending)
- Although intelligence is shared between YOT partners, recording can be poor and some warning flags are not placed on appropriate records. (Youth offending)

Relevant reports from April 2014-July 2015

Title: Transforming Rehabilitation: Early Implementation

Lead: HMI Probation **Published:** April-September 2014 **Scale:** Four areas

Focus: Findings from inspections undertaken between April and September 2014. In particular, inspectors looked at the newly created interface between the National Probation Service (NPS) and Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs).

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

- In one case nDelius⁷ had out of date flags, including one relating to victim contact which was relevant in 2010. In another case, warning flags were not completed which could have had serious implications.
- The case in question should have been flagged to warn of; potential risk to staff, mental health concerns, self-harm or suicide concerns and risk to children.

www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wpcontent/uploads/sites/5/2014/12/Transforming_Rehabilitation-Early_Implementation1.pdf

⁷ nDelius is the national probation case management system.

Title: Joint thematic inspection of resettlement services to children by Youth Offending Teams and partner agencies

Lead: HMI Probation **Published:** March 2015 **Scale:** Six establishments

Focus: The inspection was to assess the effectiveness of resettlement work by Youth Offending Teams, both in the community and through the work of Young Offender Institutions and Secure Training Centres.

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

- Very few children had been reassessed before leaving custody to work out who, if anyone, was at risk of being harmed and what needed to be in place to manage that risk and protect potential victims.
- This was particularly worrying when there were other children living in the same place, whether at home or in other accommodation.

Case study

Kevin was a looked-after child and had a history of aggressive and violent behaviour, was involved in gang activity, had witnessed domestic violence towards his mother and had attacked her himself. He was assessed as posing a risk to women and had exhibited aggressive behaviour to female custodial staff. He wanted to return home to live but was unable to do so because of the threat he posed to his mother. Children's social care services did not attend planning meetings and accommodation was not found until very late, without consultation with Kevin. There was no work carried out with him about his relationship with her. Kevin did not stay at the placement. He went to stay at his mother's home, leaving her at risk of violence from him. There were a number of concerning incidents towards his mother and other women. The police were eventually involved by Kevin's mother. There was no evidence that children's social care or the YOT had taken any steps to protect her.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/youthresettlementthematic/

Title: Report of a Review of the Implementation of the Zahid Mubarek Inquiry Recommendations

Lead: HMI Prisons **Published:** June 2015 **Scale:** Desktop review of 55 inspection reports

Focus: The report of the Inquiry into the racist murder at HMYOI Feltham of Zahid Mubarek in March 2000 was published in April 2006. This review explored the extent to which the changes that the Inquiry called for have become embedded in culture and practice, and whether prisons and young offender institutions have become

safer as a result of the initiatives and the work the Prison Service has undertaken since the Inquiry reported.

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

The issue of racist bullying in prison and racially motivated attacks may sometimes be appropriate for referral to police and if such a referral is necessary, those who have experienced the abuse, whether verbal or physical potentially fall within the remit of the Code. Inspectors found that the current tools to manage the racial and cultural dynamics of a prison did not always help governors identify or address race issues effectively – for example, race relations management meetings needed to be more frequent and better managed.

However, the introduction of the race incident report form, now superseded by the discrimination incident report form (DIRF), has helped to improve the investigation of race-related complaints in prisons. Inspection reports indicate that most investigations into DIRFs were well conducted and, in some establishments, were quality assured by a community organisation. However, some reports indicated that quality assurance was not always effective.

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/07/Mubarek-final-published.pdf>

Title: In Harm's Way: the role of the police in keeping children safe

Lead: HMIC, **Published:** July 2015 **Scale:** National programme plus individual reports

In early 2014, HMIC began a national programme of child protection inspections (available at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/child-abuse-and-child-protection-issues/national-child-protection-inspection/). Since then, it has also undertaken a number of other inspections concerning vulnerable children. This report summarises the findings contained in the reports of all these inspections and considers the implications for future action.

Principal relevant findings from this inspection

- Inspectors found that those police forces that had developed a more strategic approach to child sexual exploitation (CSE) were using child abduction warning notices issued to a potential suspect as a crime prevention tactic when there was little prospect of a prosecution.
- Overall, however, there was not a great deal of evidence in the reports that the police were using their powers to full effect. It is noted elsewhere in the inspection report the low level of prosecutions of offences against children, and there was little evidence of the use of sexual risk orders which may be sought from a court in order to impose restrictions on a known sex offender.

- Where an offender had been convicted of a sex offence in a court and was on the sex offender's register, police practice was much more confident and inspectors noted the contribution police officers working in this area make to child protection.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/in-harms-way.pdf

Title: Prisons inspection programme

Lead: HMI Prisons **Published:** various dates **Scale:** Inspections of individual establishments

Focus: Prisons are inspected at least once every five years, although we expect to inspect most establishments every two to three years. Some high-risk establishments may be inspected more frequently, including those holding children and young people. Other types of custodial sectors have different inspection cycles. The inspection of facilities is predicated on a dynamic risk assessment, taking into account issues such as time since the last inspection, type and size of establishment, significant changes to the establishment or changes in leadership, and intelligence received.

The majority of inspections are full and unannounced, assessing progress made since previous inspections and undertaking in-depth analysis.

HMI Prisons report on the risk management plans drawn up on prisoners, which impact on the degree of protection which can be afforded to victims, witnesses and the general public during their sentence and at the point of release; and on Parole Board decisions. The following are a selection of findings from those inspections:

Positive examples from the programme

a) HMP Oakwood

Arrangements for identifying prisoners who presented a high risk of harm to the public or to known victims were sound, and safeguarding and monitoring measures were appropriate. Restrictions were monitored and reviewed through the monthly inter-departmental risk management team meetings, which were effective; release arrangements for high-risk prisoners were also reviewed there.

b) HMP Peterborough (men)

Public protection processes were robust and information was appropriately shared. Multi-agency public protection arrangements were well understood and the prison's existing systems identified and tracked cases.

Public protection staff were located alongside offender management unit (OMU) staff, which ensured information was easily and effectively shared.

Those posing a potential risk were prevented from seeing or contacting children until fact checks had been undertaken and prisoners subject to restrictions were seen individually by an offender supervisor to have their situation explained.

c) HMPYOI Brinsford

Public protection arrangements were being reorganised and the plans were generally appropriate. The screening of prisoners on arrival was undertaken appropriately and offender supervisors were reasonably well integrated into the process. The monthly interdepartmental risk management team meeting was reasonably well attended by representatives from across the prison. Given the age of the population and ages of many victims, much of the meeting was taken up with 'risk to children' reviews for the 38 prisoners presently identified.

d) HMP Springhill

The prison had introduced a number of changes in the OMU and to the assessment of prisoners for ROTL in response to several high profile failures across the estate. The changes included: ensuring all prisoners had an updated offender assessment system (OASys) assessment (used to provide a framework for assessing their likelihood of reoffending and the risk of harm to others) on arrival at Springhill (if new to the open estate); completing risk assessment documents; and seeking information from community offender managers including victim engagement.

Areas for improvement from the programme

e) HMP Doncaster

Risk management plans were not always of high enough quality, particularly those prepared by offender supervisors in the prison. The latter did not specify the restrictive measures and the offending behaviour work required to keep victims and potential victims safe.

Some MAPPA alerts were not flagged on IT systems as required. One domestic violence perpetrator who had been at the prison for nine months and was three weeks short of discharge with no clear arrangements in place for his release. He had a restraining order which he did not know the details of, potentially leaving the victim at risk and the prisoner liable to non-compliance action.

f) HMP Elmley

The majority of offender supervisors were not proficient in risk of serious harm (RoSH) screenings and analysis, completing risk management plans or

sentence plans. RoSH analyses were thorough in only three cases examined, and there was a current and sufficient risk management plan in only one case.

OASys reviews were superficial and many simply replicated previous reports. In some cases, critical information on risk of harm and risk of reoffending was missed or misrepresented, which could have left staff, other prisoners and victims vulnerable.

g) HMP Foston Hall

Offender management work and OASys documents were generally satisfactory. However, the assessment of prisoners' likelihood of reoffending needed improvement and only three (25 percent) of the 12 cases sampled had received a prompt or sufficient assessment. The prison did not have direct access to the Police National Computer (PNC) to obtain information on previous convictions, and relied on HMP Nottingham, with whom it had an agreement, to supply it, causing delays.

Case samples contained no Crown Prosecution Service papers, which meant that, without victim or witness statements, OASys documents lacked sufficient analysis. Some aspects of the serious risk of harm screening needed to be improved.

h) HMP Nottingham

OASys assessments were routinely late, undermining the management of risk. At the time of inspection 110 OASys were outstanding, some by several months. It followed that all processes flowing from the OASys were also late, and formal risk of harm screening and risk of serious harm assessments were frequently delayed, and not always of sufficient quality. Some risk management plans did not adequately consider victims or the risk posed by prisoners on release into the community.

www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections

Title: Inspections of youth offending

Lead: HMI Probation **Published:** various dates **Scale:** see details below

Focus: Inspection of youth offending work under the current programme consists of the following elements:

- **Full Joint Inspection (FJI)** – targeted at a small number of YOTs each year where performance gives particular cause for concern, together with at least one where published performance is strong and worth sharing.

- **Short Quality Screening (SQS)** – targeted at approximately 20 percent of YOTs each year across the whole range of published performance. The focus of this programme is work at the start of the sentence, along with pre-sentence reports (PSRs). This focus was chosen because our previous programme indicated that each aspect often required significant improvement.

Positive examples from the programme

a) Sutton

Where there was an identifiable victim or potential victim, the risk of harm they faced had been effectively managed in almost all cases. The YOT had made good use of their victim liaison officer who provided case managers with details of the impact of the offence on the victim.

b) West Berkshire

In all seven cases where there was an identifiable victim or potential victim, risk of harm to them was well managed. In those cases that required it, there was appropriate use of victim liaison officers and effective sharing of information by case managers with teachers, social workers, and others to ensure victims and potential victims were safe.

c) Trafford

There was strong evidence that appropriate work had been undertaken to address risk of harm to identifiable victims or potential victims. There were good systems in place for identifying victims, who were promptly contacted via a letter to establish if they wanted to be involved in restorative justice. Management oversight was given to any case which involved particular risks, such as those with sexual or domestic violence offences.

Areas for improvement from the programme

d) Wakefield

During the case assessment, inspectors saw no evidence of communication with YOT police officers in community cases, although it was better in the custodial environment. However, it became clear that this may, in some cases, be a flaw in recording activity by YOT staff, rather than a lack of interaction with the police.

e) Brent

The risk of harm to identifiable victims was being managed well in only one-third of relevant cases. Whilst there was some evidence of victim empathy work and letters of apology being written by the child or young person, victims had not been systematically identified, nor risks assessed and plans put in place to protect them.

f) Isle of Wight

Taking account of the needs of victims is crucial in helping to keep them safe. It was found that the quality of work in this area was variable, with the risk of harm to victims being effectively managed in just over one half of the cases looked at. In the others there were noticeable gaps in the quality of both the assessment of harm to actual or potential victims and planning to address and minimise this harm.

g) Kent

Given the focus on the child or young person, the victim's, or potential victim's, perspective was not always well addressed within intervention plans. There were five instances where this was the case, which left some room for improvement.

h) Cumbria

Victim safety was not fully considered in plans. Often, victims were known to the child or young person and we were concerned that in a few cases previous violence against parents/carers was not managed via a planning process.

j) Hillingdon

Sometimes there was insufficient exploration of victim issues, including the child or young person's current attitude towards their victim. Sometimes the case manager had not recognised the need for a review following a significant change or receipt of information. For example, in a custodial case there was evidence of a threat made to a victim by a relative of the child or young person. It was pleasing that the appropriate actions had been taken in custody, but there was no recognition of the situation in the YOS assessment or planning.

k) Islington (FJI)

Victims were rarely identified and risk management plans often failed to plan for known risks. There was little linkage between offending behaviour work and actions to manage the risk of harm.

l) Bristol

Taking account of the needs of victims is crucial in helping to keep them safe. It was found that there was enough work undertaken to protect victims in just over half of the cases which merited this. There were noticeable gaps in the quality of the assessment of harm to victims and planning to address and minimise this harm.

m) Newport

In referral order cases, reports to the community panel were often limited. The voice of the victim was not heard in initial panels, either through their attendance or through the report writer or other representative speaking on their behalf. Members that were spoken to said they had never seen a victim at the panel.

In general panels were too ready to accept the lack of victim attendance and the poor quality of reports that they received. They needed to be more demanding of the Youth Offending Service to ensure that the principles for referral orders are met.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-inspections/youth-inspection-programmes/inspecting-youth-offending-work/

7: Restorative programmes and victim awareness

Expectations

There are a number of restorative programmes established throughout the CJS, which are variously aimed at providing victims with reparation, mediation, reassurance and/or justice. They might alternatively aim to rehabilitate offenders through raising their awareness of the adverse effects of their offending.

Restorative Justice (RJ) is one such programme which brings together a victim with those responsible for the harm caused, and tries to find a positive way forward. If the offender is an adult, victims are entitled to receive information on RJ from the police, including how they could take part. This is dependent on the provision of RJ in the local area.

RJ also offers an opportunity to be heard and sometimes to have a say in the resolution of offences. This can include agreeing activities for the offender to do as part of taking responsibility for their actions to repair the harm that they have done. RJ can provide a means of closure and enable victims to move on, while providing an opportunity for offenders to face the consequences of their actions and to understand the very real impact that it has had upon others.

RJ is not the same as Community Resolution. Community Resolution is an informal police disposal that enables the police to deal more proportionately with low-level crime and anti-social behaviour, outside the formal criminal justice system. Community Resolutions are primarily aimed at first time offenders where genuine remorse has been expressed, and where the victim has agreed that they do not want the police to take formal action.

There are also a range of victim awareness courses and other restorative approaches which can be used to engage offenders, either in custody or in the community.

Principal findings from 2014/15

- There are concerted efforts to achieve community resolutions and use victim-led mediation. (State of Policing)
- Restorative working was well-embedded into many YOT teams with good engagement with victims, including local businesses. (Youth Offending)
- Most YOT teams work proactively to identify victims and address risk of harm. (Youth Offending)

- Some schemes lacked processes to ensure victims' wishes were always reflected in restorative approaches and victim-focused interventions. (Youth Offending)
- There are a wide range of victim awareness and restorative programmes in many prisons and YOIs – but they are absent in some establishments. (Prisons and custody Inspections)
- Some establishments still lack victim awareness courses, despite this being identified as one of the most commonly reported offending-related needs. (Prison and custody inspections)

Relevant reports from April 2014-July 2015

Title: State of Policing 2013/14

Lead: HMIC **Published:** November 2014 **Scale:** 43-force inspections

Focus: This is Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary's report to the Secretary of State under section 54(4A) of the Police Act 1996. As required by that section, it contains his assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in England and Wales in respect of the inspection year 2013/14.

Principal relevant findings from this report

- Some forces are making a concerted effort to resolve cases of anti-social behaviour out of court, for example by adopting a restorative approach which uses victim-led mediation techniques to bring the offender and victim together to discuss the impact of an offence and provide an opportunity for the offender to apologise directly to the victim.
- This technique, also known as community resolution, is part of the new crime outcomes framework, and is available for all forces to use. In most cases, the use of these methods is overseen by scrutiny panels which include independent members from outside the police force, to ensure that they are being used appropriately.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/state-of-policing-13-14.pdf

Title: Youth offending inspection programme

Lead: HMI Probation **Published:** Various dates **Scale:** individual areas

Focus: For an overview of Short Quality Screening (SQS) inspections and Full Joint Inspections (FJI), see details on page 48.

HMI Probation highlighted a number of instances where restorative approaches were applied:

a) Luton SQS

There was evidence of victim empathy work, letters of apology being prepared by the child or young person and restorative justice interventions taking place.

In one case the restorative work that had been started in the community continued after the imposition of a custodial sentence.

Case study

One inspector wrote, “As a result of a breach of his youth rehabilitation order and further offending, Bruce was sent into custody for 12 months. Whilst in the community the case manager had been undertaking restorative justice work with Bruce and his parents (victims) from whom he had had stolen. Despite the sentence, the case manager continued the restorative work in custody”.

b) Sutton SQS

Although there were many examples of reparation there were no examples of direct restorative justice reparation being used, even when this would have been appropriate.

There was evidence of good quality victim work in many cases. The RJ model was well embedded in the work of the team. Considerable effort was made to engage with all victims, including local businesses.

Where a full RJ conference was not appropriate, a range of intermediate actions was used to ensure that the child or young person understood the impact of their offence on the victim. Victims were offered appropriate information about the progress of the child or young person and could also make representations about any reparation undertaken.

c) Cornwall SQS

The risk of harm to victims who had been identified was managed well in just over half the inspected cases. Case managers had often not prioritised their assessments and plans to include victim work. When this was done well, it was done extremely well. In one case, a considered and reflective letter had been prepared by the child or young person to give to the victim. The insight

that had been shown was exceptional and this had been used well by the case manager to inform other work to reduce reoffending.

In another case, there was some promising practice:

Quote

“one of the burglary victims identified in this case attended the initial panel meeting. The victim then specified a community project for the young person to undertake some reparation work. The case manager also undertook some good victim awareness work and adapted her methods of delivery to the needs of the young person”.

d) Islington SQS

User Voice’s⁸ discussions with parents/carers, and children and young people, about victim work showed that good work around victim awareness had been done in these sessions. Much of this related to the case manager explaining the consequences of their actions and then taking children and young people through empathy and association exercises as this example illustrates:

Quote

“My YOT worker showed me the truth and how lucky I was and the domino effect. And what if I had gotten away with her phone and she had loads of pictures that she can never get back. That kind of thing, I never thought of it like that, I only thought of it as money in my hand and me. They broke it down and now I understood what the actual effect is.”

In terms of restorative practices only a few children or young people made any mention of any work being done. One in particular noted that their case manager had encouraged them to write a letter to their victim and that this had been the turning point for them in seeing the consequences of their actions and crime.

e) Wakefield SQS

Whilst victim contact was undertaken systematically by the Victim Liaison Officers (VLOs), there was no process in place to ensure that the wishes of victims, for example for a letter of explanation or apology, were always reflected through restorative approaches and victim-focused interventions. However, some good work was seen on restorative approaches and victims themselves confirmed that they had received strong support, saying that staff had provided “Great moral support” and that they “Could not ask for a better

⁸ A charitable organisation which fosters dialogue between users and service providers in the CJS.

person”. Of particular note was the Parent and Grandparent Group, which offered additional support to grandparents and parents/carers of children and young people who offend.

f) Wakefield FJI

There was a DVD where a victim had been filmed talking about the effect a burglary had had upon her whole family. This was very powerful and was used to help children and young people to understand the effect of their behaviour, to good effect. One young person said “It made me feel emotional”.

The YOT had access to good quality interventions and delivered them as their design intended, almost always giving proper attention to restorative justice for the victims and reinforcing positive factors in the child or young person’s life.

g) Trafford FJI

There was strong evidence that appropriate work had been undertaken to address risk of harm to identifiable victims or potential victims. There were good systems in place for identifying victims, who were promptly contacted via a letter to establish if they wanted to be involved in restorative justice. Management oversight was given to any case which involved particular risks, such as those with sexual or domestic violence offences.

www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/

Title: Custody inspection programme

Lead: HMI Prisons **Published:** Various dates **Scale:** individual areas

Focus: A programme of inspections at prisons and young offender institutions examining conditions of detention.

Many prisons and young offender establishments run programmes that focus on restorative activities and/or are victim-centred, these include:

- Sycamore Tree victim awareness course (based on Christian principles);
- Supporting offenders through restoration inside (SORI) course;
- Thinking skills programme (TSP);
- Focus on resettlement (FOR); and
- RESOLVE (a violence reduction programme).

During inspections the following positive situations were found:

- HMP Leicester: A restorative programme had been introduced and considerable effort put into encouraging prisoners to participate.
- HMP Lincoln: A good commitment to restorative approaches and staff training had been rolled out to raise skills and awareness.
- HMP Whitemoor: Victim awareness programmes were run by the chaplaincy – including Sycamore Tree and Citizenship and Social Relations in Islam, Islamic Guidance and Restorative Justice.
- HMP Oakwood: Victim awareness was addressed through in-cell workbooks and a restorative justice project in partnership with a local police force.
- HMYOI Werrington: During eight months before the inspection, 146 boys had attended a range of seven courses. Victim awareness and consequential thinking had each been attended by 93 boys.

Case study

Medway: well-planned piece of restorative justice work was carried out in collaboration with a young person's home based YOT. This involved a meeting in controlled circumstances between a person who had been a victim and was now living in the community, meeting with the perpetrator of the offence, who was a resident within the centre. At some point in the future, both parties are likely to be living in the same geographical area and the meeting reduced the risk of further conflict arising between them by allowing the participants to explain their point of view in order to establish a common understanding. Centre staff routinely contacted the home YOT to establish if there was any potential to carry out RJ work.

The centre had recently received recognition for the progressive work being carried out by the Restorative Justice Council. There are plans to continue to improve this area of work and specialist advice is being taken about how the role of peer mentors could be modified so they could be supported to become mediators. This will include dealing with low-level issues concerning other residents of the centre.

Conversely, inspectors also found areas for improvement, including:

- HMP Doncaster: A needs analysis had identified victim awareness as one of the most commonly reported offending-related needs but there was no victim awareness course, although there were examples of good one-to-one victim work being delivered by probation officers.
- HMP Elmley: There was no victim awareness course.

- HMP and YOI Peterborough (women): There was no victim awareness course despite it being evident that such work was required, but there were some good examples of offender supervisors delivering one-to-one work.
- HMP Nottingham: There were no accredited offender behaviour programmes...there was a restorative justice programme but only 10 prisoners had completed this in the previous year.
- HMYOI Deerbolt: There was little or no individual offending behaviour work and the Sycamore Tree victim awareness programme had yet to be delivered, although this had been agreed over 12 months earlier.
- HMP Manchester: There was no designated victim awareness course, despite some evidence of the need, and no plans to introduce such a course.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections

Title: Police custody inspection programme

Lead: HMIC and HMI Prisons **Published:** Various dates **Scale:** individual areas

Focus: This programme consists of a series of inspections looking at strategy, treatment and conditions, individual rights and health care. They also contribute to the United Kingdom’s response to its international obligation to ensure regular and independent inspection of all places of detention

As regards police custody, again the findings were mixed but positive findings included:

- Bedfordshire Police: Custody sergeants questioned and refused custody where appropriate and were aware of alternatives to custody such as restorative approaches and voluntary attendance.
- Warwickshire Police and West Midlands Police: Every custody suite had excellent leaflets with details of local support agencies, including helplines for sex offenders and domestic violence perpetrators – to improve victim awareness. These were handed out, but not routinely.
- Met Police (NW cluster): Many detainees were given a useful support agency information leaflet...this was available in the most common 19 foreign languages spoken across London.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections

8: Compensation, complaints and enhanced entitlements

Expectations

Victims are entitled to clear information as to whether they may apply for compensation under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. Having applied, they should have details of progress, a clear explanation of the decision and a right for further review, if applicable.

All should be treated by service providers in a respectful, sensitive and professional manner without discrimination of any kind. If victims do not think that they have received the services and support that they are entitled to in the Code, they can make a complaint and expect to receive a full response from the relevant service provider.

The Code sets out enhanced entitlements for victims in particular categories, where additional support or services are most likely to be needed, namely: victims of the most serious crime; persistently targeted victims; and vulnerable or intimidated victims.

The enhanced entitlements include reduced target times for notifications, use of video-recorded interviews and intermediaries, notification of decisions and consultation.

Principal findings from 2014/15

- Many police officers were unaware that disability hate crime entitled the victim to enhanced entitlements. (Disability Hate Crime - follow up)
- Only one in six forces visited routinely sought children's consent to video recording of interviews, and too often interviewers concentrated on too complex issues. (Achieving best evidence)
- Almost three-quarters of notifications to families of victims in fatal road incidents failed to meet the required standards of timeliness and accuracy. (FRTI)
- People in detention are often also victims themselves, although not always considered as such. They include victims of domestic abuse, rape and human trafficking. (Prison Inspections)
- There are good examples of counselling, psychological wellbeing services, support and advice, but availability of these options varied significantly. (Prison inspections)

Relevant reports from April 2014-July 2015

Title: Joint review of disability hate crime (follow-up)

Lead: HMCPSI **Published:** May 2015 **Scale:** Six areas

Focus: For an overview of this inspection, see page 51.

Principal relevant findings from this report:

- Under the Victims Code up-dates are required to be given to disability hate crime victims within one day, where a suspect is arrested, interviewed, charged, bailed or released without charge. Many officers spoken to during the focus groups did not realise that disability hate crime was one of the offences that entitled the victim to an enhanced service. Police crime recording systems had, in the principal, not been adapted to take account of the Code, and therefore did not prompt officers to provide an enhanced service to the victim.
- Generally, the level of contact with victims was regarded as quite good by inspectors in the disability hate crime follow up inspection; however there were exceptions to this. The one day time scale imposed by the Victims Code proved problematic, (often due to shifts worked by police officers dealing with cases) and the case file examination revealed that where a suspect had been identified, there was contact within the required one day identified in only 29 of 50 crime reports.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/joint-review-of-disability-hate-crime-review.pdf

Title: Achieving best evidence in child sexual abuse cases – A joint inspection.

Lead: HMCPSI **Published:** December 2014 **Scale:** Six areas

Focus: This report sets out the findings from our inspection of both the police service's adherence to the Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) Guidance and Crown Prosecution Service's (CPS) evidential use of the resultant ABE recorded interview. It also determines whether the Guidance is providing children who have been raped and sexually exploited with the means of giving their best evidence, leading to a successful outcome.

Principal relevant findings from this report:

- Inspectors found, in the joint inspection of the use of video recorded interviews with children that only one of the six police forces visited regularly asked for the child's consent about whether to participate in a video interview or make a statement.

- Too often interviewers focussed on concepts which present difficulties for children, such as dates and times, length and frequency of events, and weight, height and age estimates. This was evident even in cases involving very young children.
- The Achieving Best Evidence Guidance is a lengthy document, which reflects the fact it needs to cover all of the necessary elements for the interviewing of vulnerable, intimidated and significant witnesses. There is, however, a short discrete section dealing with child witnesses. The Guidance is clear about the expectations for interviewing children and what constitutes best practice.
- The interviews of children assessed by inspectors illustrated failures in compliance rather than inherent problems with the Guidance itself. Compliance could be improved through better awareness, training and supervision. Interviewers would also be assisted by a booklet to be used as an aide memoire throughout the various phases of the interviewing process.
- The Guidance is due to be revisited to consider whether there is a need for further revision. It is in that context that inspectors made a recommendation to include additional guidance where advice or clarity would assist operational staff.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cjji/inspections/achieving-best-evidence-in-child-sexual-abuse-cases/

Title: Joint Inspection of the investigation and prosecution of fatal road traffic incidents (FRTI)

Lead: HMCPSI **Published:** February 2015 **Scale:** Six areas

Focus: For an overview of this inspection, see page 40.

Principal relevant findings from this report:

- In some CPS Areas there is good practice where police investigating officers expedited the decision-making and consultation process with the CPS in cases where the only suspect was the partner or close relative of the victim and the degree of blame was slight.
- In a case examined in the FRTI inspection, the CPS accepted the offer by the defence to plead guilty on a basis which did not adequately meet the seriousness of the offence. There was no evidence that the victim's family were consulted about this decision, as required by the CPS's own policy.

- All the case files examined in the FRTI inspection that resulted in court proceedings were assessed for the adequacy of the notifications to the victims' families throughout the life of the case. The standards of timeliness and accuracy were fully met in 5.0 percent, partially met in a further 21.7 percent and not met in 73.3 percent. This level of performance is clearly not acceptable.

www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/publications/joint-inspection-of-the-investigation-and-prosecution-of-fatal-road-traffic-incidents/

Title: Custody inspection programme.

Lead: HMI Prisons **Published:** Various dates **Scale:** individual establishments

Focus: For an overview of these inspections, see page 67.

Principal relevant findings from these reports:

Although not always considered, people in detention are also often victims themselves. HMI Prisons inspections flagged a number of areas where vulnerable or intimidated people would benefit from additional attention, including:

- HMP Preston: The counselling and psychological wellbeing service provided support and advice to prisoners who had experienced domestic violence, rape or abuse, or been involved in prostitution. However, there were no other interventions to encourage prisoners to disclose these experiences.
- HMYOI Cookham Wood: Migrant Help visited the establishment (A voluntary organisation offering support to migrants and victims of trafficking). An innovative enhanced sexual behaviour service had recently been established which was working closely with case workers to identify and support victims and perpetrators of sexually harmful behaviour. There were advanced plans to provide art therapy, family support and peer support.
- HMP Eastwood Park: The EO, equalities orderly and immigration officer had an awareness of trafficking. However, staff, including those in key areas such as health care or the offender management unit, had not received any training on the needs of trafficked women and the support available for them.
- HMP Send: The National Offender Management Service had discontinued a number of interventions for prisoners who had been victims of abuse, rape or domestic violence or who had been involved in prostitution. Prisoners were asked on induction if they had been victims of these crimes or involved in sex work, but there was no evidence to suggest they were encouraged on a continuing basis to disclose their experiences. Managers were hoping to secure alternative services, but no clear plans were in place.

- HMP Askham Grange: Reasonable help was available for those who had experienced domestic abuse or rape, but victims of human trafficking and those who had been involved in prostitution were not identified well or supported adequately.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections

Title: Inspection of CPS performance in dealing with victims and witnesses in Gwent and South Wales (CPS Cymru-Wales)

Lead: HMCPSI **Published:** April 2014 **Scale:** individual area inspection

Focus: For an overview of this inspection, see page 45.

Principal relevant findings from this report:

- Inspectors examined 29 cases that had been flagged as involving a vulnerable or intimidated victim. Of these 13 (44.8 percent) had been sent a letter within one working day of the decision as per the target. In eight cases (27.6 percent) the letters had been sent late and in the reprincipaling eight (27.6 percent) no letter had been sent. In one it was noted that the victim had been spoken to at court but in others there was no explanation of why a letter had not been sent.
- Significant work has recently taken place in cases where a victim or witness has particular needs as a result of mental health issues. The Area has identified a number of intermediaries for such cases and provided training to prosecutors on things to be aware of – for example, certain mediation can make witnesses lethargic and less coherent in the morning, so they can be called to give evidence in the afternoon instead.

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmcpsi/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/05/VWGSW_FOC_Apr14_rpt.pdf

9: Conclusions and next steps

Report focus

The consolidation of relevant extracts from previously published reports was never likely to provide a comprehensive coverage of the quality of services provided to victims within the CJS – nor was it intended to do so. However, it is indicative of the importance of the issue that virtually every report published in the selected period had aspects relating to victims’ services.

While not a compliance check on the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (the Code), the ‘victim’s journey’ forms the structure for this report and is central to the marshalling of findings.

When the Ministry of Justice published the revised Code in October 2013, the then Minister for Victims, Damian Green, stated clearly its purpose, and the principal point of difference from the 2005 Code:

‘Written for victims and not the “system”, the new Code sets out in plain English how to navigate an often confusing and intimidating criminal justice system, explaining what help victims can expect from the moment a crime is reported to support available after a trial.’⁹ The message is clear: the needs of victims, not of the individual agencies, should be at the heart of the criminal justice system.

The Criminal Justice Inspectorate Chief Inspectors fully support and promote this opinion, as this report has shown.

Key findings

Our inspections between April 2014 and July 2015 examined the experience of victims at multiple points in their journey through the system, with focus on those who have suffered different kinds of crime, or who are vulnerable in some way. The inspections referred to in this report therefore range from assessments of individual prison establishments or of victim and witness care in a particular district, to studies that cross agencies and geographical areas.

This variety is both an advantage and disadvantage to this current piece of work. Advantage, because it highlights important elements of often very different victims’ journeys through the CJS, allowing a focus on areas of particular risk or concern; but a disadvantage, because it does not provide full or comprehensive coverage, which makes it difficult to make clear statements about the quality of victim services as a whole. This will be improved in future years.

⁹ *Improving the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime: Response to consultation*, Ministry of Justice, October 2013, p.4. Available from www.consult.justice.gov.uk

Despite the incomplete coverage in this first statement, some things are clear:

- there were excellent individual examples of good practice across sectors and the country, with dedicated staff putting the needs of the victim first, and creative programmes and initiatives to ensure they get the best possible support;
- particular strengths were evident in terms of specialist teams – who were generally highly motivated and well trained – and in the widespread nature of restorative programmes; but
- there were unacceptable inconsistencies in the service provided to victims – depending on the type of offence, where they happen to live or the degree to which local policies support and reinforce service provision.

At the time of these reports, there were also particular concerns around crimes not being recorded, the lack of empathy shown by some professionals to some categories of victim, and the inconsistent provision of accurate and timely updates during the victim's journey through the CJS.

Given that the Code of Practice for Victims provides a standard which should transcend all variables of place, type of offending or point of progression in the victim's journey, there is clearly more work to do.

Next steps

Chief inspectors will analyse the findings of this composite report and identify the gaps in its coverage of victims' rights. This analysis will be used to inform individual and joint inspection programmes for the coming year.

In compiling and checking the content for this consolidated report, there were representations made, not least by reference group members, concerning improvements made since the original reports. For example, in respect of domestic abuse, these crimes have since been added to the annual data requirement of police forces – making data more visible – and extended victim satisfaction surveys have been piloted.

In addition, consultation on technical changes to the Code has recently been completed, demonstrating the Government's continued commitment to improving the service to victims. The Victims' Commissioner has also published a series of themed reports which further raise the profile of victims' services.

However, it is not the role of this consolidated report to map changes since the original publications, although there will be opportunity for some comparisons on progress, or otherwise, in future reports.

In the meantime, chief inspectors remain committed to reporting and supporting the promotion of victims' rights across the CJS and this statement will, year-on-year,

help to evidence how successfully agencies are providing all victims with the services to which they are entitled, and which they deserve.

Annex A – Relevant inspection reports from the reporting period

All of the reports listed below were published during the period and were searched for issues relating to victims and victim services. Not all are cited in the principal report.

Criminal Justice Joint Inspections

- *Resettlement provision for adult offenders: Accommodation and education, training and employment.* HMI Prisons/HMI Probation, September 2014. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cjji/inspections/adultresettlementthematic
- *Achieving Best Evidence in Child Sexual Abuse Cases - A Joint Inspection, HMCPSI and HMIC,* December 2014. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cjji/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/12/CJJI_ABE_Dec14_rpt.pdf
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- *The contribution of Youth Offending Teams to the work of the Troubled Families Programme in England.* HMI Probation, Care Quality Commission, HMIC, Ofsted, HMI Probation, January 2015. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cjji/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/01/Troubled-Families1.pdf
- *Investigation and prosecution of fatal road traffic incidents.* HMCPSI and HMIC, February 2015. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cjji/inspections/investigation-prosecution-fatal-road-traffic-incidents
- *The treatment of offenders with learning disabilities in the criminal justice system – phase two in custody and the community.* A joint inspection by HMI Probation and HMI Prisons, March 2015. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cjji/inspections/learningdisabilitiesphase2/
- *Joint Review of Disability Hate Crime,* HMCPSI, HMIC and HMI Probation, May 2015. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cjji/inspections/joint-review-of-disability-hate-crime

- *The Provision of Charging Decisions*, HMCPSP and HMIC, May 2015. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cjji/inspections/joint-inspection-of-the-provision-of-statutory-charging/

HMIC

- Core business; an inspection into crime prevention, police attendance and use of police time, HMIC, September 2014. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/core-business.pdf
- Crime recording: making the victim count, HMIC, November 2014. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/crime-recording-making-the-victim-count.pdf
- *State of Policing 2013/14* www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/state-of-policing-13-14.pdf

Note: There are 43 force reports underpinning State of Policing findings:

- On 'effectiveness': www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publication/crime-inspection-force-reports/
- On 'legitimacy': www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publication/police-integrity-corruption-force/
- Cheshire Constabulary: Burglary Dwelling www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/cheshire-pcc-commission-burglary-dwelling-report.pdf
- *Everyone's business – improving police response to domestic abuse* www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/improving-the-police-response-to-domestic-abuse.pdf
- *Integrity Matters*: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/police-integrity-and-corruption-2015.pdf
- *Policing in austerity – meeting the challenge* www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/policing-in-austerity-meeting-the-challenge.pdf
- *Online and on the edge: real risks in a virtual world [CSE]* www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/online-and-on-the-edge.pdf
- *In harm's way: the role of the police in keeping children safe* www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/in-harms-way.pdf

- *Building the picture: an inspection of police information management*
www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/building-picture-an-inspection-of-police-information-management/
- Policing in austerity – progress reports:
 - Bedfordshire: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/bedfordshire-responding-to-austerity-progress-report.pdf
 - Gwent: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/gwent-responding-to-austerity-progress-report.pdf

HMCPSI

- *Inspection of CPS performance in dealing with victims and witnesses in Gwent and South Wales (CPS Cymru-Wales)*
www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmcpsi/wpcontent/uploads/sites/3/2014/05/VWGSW_FOC_Apr14_rpt.pdf
- *Follow-up inspection of the Serious Fraud Office*
www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmcpsi/wpcontent/uploads/sites/3/2014/11/SFOFU_Nov14_rpt.pdf

HMI Probation

- *Transforming rehabilitation – early implementation*
www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wpcontent/uploads/sites/5/2014/12/Transforming_Rehabilitation-Early_Implementation1.pdf
- *Joint thematic inspection of resettlement services to children by Youth Offending Teams and partner agencies*
www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/youthresettlementthematic/

Full Joint Inspection (FJI) reports on:

- Peterborough (Published April 2014)
- Islington (June 2014)
- Newport (September 2014)
- Wakefield (October 2014)
- Lambeth (January 2015)
- Trafford (February 2015)
- Bromley (May 2015)

- Short Quality Screening (SQS) reports on:
- Cambridgeshire; Torbay; Newham; Suffolk (April 2014)
- Brent; Isle of Wight; West Sussex (May 2014)
- Cumbria; Kent (June 2014)
- Barnet; Sutton; Luton; East Lincolnshire; Wiltshire (July 2014)
- Cornwall & Isles of Scilly; County Durham (August 2014)
- Conwy & Denbighshire (September 2014)
- Derby City; Tower Hamlets & City of London (October 2014)
- Hillingdon; Essex; Harrow (November 2014)
- Sheffield; Bedfordshire (December 2014)
- Bolton; South Tyneside (January 2015)
- Redbridge (February 2015)
- Carmarthenshire; Stockport; Northamptonshire; West Berkshire; Bristol (March 2015)
- Waltham Forest; Slough; West Mercia; Thurrock (May 2015)

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/

HMI Prisons

- *Report of a Review of the Implementation of the Zahid Mubarek Inquiry Recommendations* www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprison/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/07/Mubarek-final-published.pdf

Prison custody inspections of (HMP unless stated):

- Dartmoor; Leicester; Eastwood Park; Lincoln (Published April 2014)
- Haverigg; Whitemoor; Durham; Woodhill (May 2014)
- Winchester; Bedford; Send (June 2014)
- Gartree; Birmingham; Ranby (July 2014)
- Preston; Doncaster; Parc, Isis, Hindley and Glen Parva YOIs (August 2014)
- Springhill; Swaleside; Wormwood Scrubs; Chelmsford YOI (September 2014)

- Altcourse; Wymott; Peterborough (women) and Cookham Wood YOIs (October 2014)
- Wakefield; North Sea Camp; Hewell; Emley; Swinfell Hall YOI (November 2014)
- Askham Grange and Portland YOIs (December 2014)
- Northumberland; Thameside; Garth; Werrington, Hollesley Bay and Feltham YOIs (January 2015)
- Swansea; Foston Hall; Oakwood; Bristol; Nottingham (February 2015)
- Hull; Guys Marsh; Brixton; Long Lartin; Styal and Low Newton YOIs (March 2015)
- Dovegate; Bellmarsh; Manchester; Deerbolt YOI (May 2015)
- Peterborough (men): Pentonville; Kirklevington Grange; High Down; Wetherby YOI (June 2015)
- Littlehey; Wandsworth; Brinsford YOI (July 2015)

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections/

Police custody inspections of:

- Newham (Published April 2014)
- Southwark; Islington (May 2014)
- Northumbria (July 2014)
- British Transport Police (September 2014)
- Bedfordshire (October 2014)
- South Yorkshire; Durham (December 2014)
- Kent (February 2015)
- Leicestershire (March 2015)
- Cleveland; North Wales; Warwickshire & West Mercia (May 2015)

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections/

Court custody facility inspections:

- Cambridgeshire and Essex (July 2014)
- Kent (Feb 2015)
- Surrey and Sussex (Feb 2015)

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections/?post_type=inspection&s&p_rison-inspection-type=court-custody-facility-inspections

Inspections of Immigration removal centres:

- Haslar (July 2014)
- Dover (July 2014)

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections/?post_type=inspection&s&p_rison-inspection-type=immigration-removal-centre-inspections

Annex B – Glossary

anti-social behaviour	behaviour by a person which causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the person (see section 101 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011)
ASB	anti-social behaviour
CJB	Criminal Justice Board
CJS	Criminal Justice System
Code of Practice for Victims of Crime	established under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004; places obligations on organisations providing services within the criminal justice system (including the police) to provide a minimum level of service to victims of criminal conduct
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CPS Appeals Unit	part of the Special Crime Division at CPS headquarters, formally launched on 26 January 2011; handles all appeals against final decisions in the Administrative Court and the Court of Appeal and all cases in the Supreme Court
Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority	deals with compensation claims from people who have been physically or mentally injured because they were the blameless victim of a violent crime in England, Scotland or Wales; executive agency, sponsored by the Ministry of Justice
Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme	Government-funded scheme designed to compensate blameless victims of violent crime in Great Britain; administered by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority
Criminal Justice Joint Inspection	product of long-standing cooperation between the four criminal justice inspectorates (of Constabulary; the Crown Prosecution Service; Prisons; and Probation) which was formalised by the Police and Justice Act 2006.

criminal justice system	collective term to describe the administration of justice in England and Wales; the means by which crime is investigated and detected where evidence relating to crime is gathered and presented; the guilt of alleged offenders assessed; and punishment and redress are delivered in accordance with the law and the expectations of the public
Crown Prosecution Service	principal prosecuting authority in England and Wales responsible for prosecuting criminal cases investigated by the police and other investigating bodies, for advising the police on cases for possible prosecution, reviewing cases submitted by the police, determining any charges in more serious or complex cases, preparing cases for court, and presenting cases at court
Diversity	political and social policy of promoting fair treatment of people of different backgrounds or personal characteristics; the Equality Act 2010 specifies nine protected characteristics in this regard: gender; age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; and sex and sexual orientation
Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service	administers the criminal, civil and family courts and tribunals in England and Wales; also administers non-devolved tribunals in Scotland
integrated offender management	approach adopted by different public sector organisations (including local authorities, the police and probation services) who work together to manage persistent offenders who commit high levels of crime or cause damage and nuisance to communities
intimidated victim	individual eligible for extra support under the Code of Practice for Victims; defined in the Code as someone whose quality of evidence will be affected because of fear or distress about testifying in court
IOM	integrated offender management
National Police Chiefs' Council	organisation which brings together 43 operationally independent and locally accountable chief constables and their chief officer teams to co-ordinate national operational policing; works closely with the College of Policing, which is responsible for developing professional standards, to develop national approaches

on issues such as finance, technology and human resources; replaced the Association of Chief Police Officers on 1 April 2015

National Probation Service	public sector provider of supervision and rehabilitation services for high risk offenders; responsible for preparing pre-sentence reports, managing approved premises for offenders, assessing offenders in prison and preparing them for release, supervising offenders in the community to ensure they meet the sentencing requirements ordered by the courts and prioritising the wellbeing of victims of violent and sexual offences committed by those serving sentences of 12 months or more or detained as mental health patients
partner agencies	public sector entities, such as those concerned with health, education, social services , the criminal justice system and the management of offenders, which work together to attain their common or complementary objectives
Partnership	co-operative arrangement between two or more organisations, from any sector, who share responsibility and undertake to use their respective powers and resources to try to achieve a specified common objective
PCC	police and crime commissioner
performance management	actions by managers which are intended to ensure that goals are being met consistently in an effective and efficient manner; it can focus on the performance of an organisation, a department, employee, or the processes to build a service
persistently targeted victim	individual eligible for extra support under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime; defined in the Code as someone who has been 'targeted repeatedly as a direct victim of crime over a period of time'
police and crime plan	prepared by the police and crime commissioner (or other local policing body) under section 7, Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011; sets out his police and crime objectives, the policing which the police force is to provide, the financial and other resources which the police and crime commissioner will provide to the chief constable, the means by which the chief constable will

report to the police and crime commissioner on the provision of policing, the means by which the chief constable's performance will be measured and the crime and disorder reduction grants which the police and crime commissioner is to make and the conditions to which such grants are to be made; the police and crime commissioner's police and crime objectives are his objectives for the policing of the area, the reduction in crime and disorder in the area and the discharge by the police force of its national or international functions; under section 8, Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, police and crime commissioners and chief officers must have regard to the relevant police and crime plan when exercising their functions; the Secretary of State for the Home Department may give guidance about how that duty is to be complied with

police and crime commissioner

elected entity for a police area, established under section 1, Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, responsible for securing the principal maintenance of the police force for that area and securing that the police force is efficient and effective; holds the relevant chief constable to account for the policing of the area; establishes the budget and police and crime plan for the police force; appoints and may, after due process, remove the chief constable from office

restorative justice

process by which victims and offenders communicate with each other (such as through a facilitated meeting) with the aim of reducing the impact of harm caused by the offence

risk assessment

process to assist in decision-making on appropriate levels of intervention based on expected or forecast levels of harm to individuals, the public, offenders, or property

TrackMyCrime

service which allows interested parties such as victims, witnesses and guardians to monitor the progress of police investigations through a secure website

transforming rehabilitation

a reform programme designed to change the way offenders are managed in the community; aims to bring down reoffending rates while continuing to protect the public

Victim Personal Statement	written record of the impact of the crime on the victim, which the victim can choose to make at the same time as a witness statement, to explain in his or her own words the effect of the crime; may be read aloud at any court hearing and/or considered before sentencing
Victim Support	independent charity supporting victims and witnesses of crime committed in England and Wales; it was set up almost 40 years ago and has grown to become the oldest and largest victims' organisation in the world; Victim Support offers assistance to more than a million victims of crime each year and works closely with the police and other institutions and entities in the criminal justice system
victim support	services which enable and support victims of crime to participate in the criminal justice system; includes information, advice and care and can be provided by a number of organisations including the police and voluntary organisations
Victims' Code	Code of Practice for Victims of Crime
victim of the most serious crime	individual eligible for extra support under the Code of Practice for Victims; defined in the Code as 'a close relative bereaved by criminal conduct, a victim of domestic violence, hate crime, terrorism, sexual offences, human trafficking, attempted murder, kidnap, false imprisonment, arson with intent to endanger life and wounding or causing grievous bodily harm with intent'
VPS	Victim Personal Statement
vulnerable victim	individual eligible for extra support under the Code of Practice for Victims; defined in the Code as an individual who was under the age of 18 at the time of the offence, or whose quality of evidence is likely to be affected because of a mental disorder, another 'significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning', or who has a physical disability or is suffering from a physical disorder
vulnerability	condition of a person who is in need of special care, support or protection because of age, disability or risk of abuse or neglect

WCU	witness care unit
witness care unit	provides a single point of contact for victims and witnesses for information about the progress of their cases and to minimise the stress of attending court; in place across England and Wales; jointly staffed by the police and the Crown Prosecution Service
witness service	operates in all courts to support all witnesses through the court process; run by Citizens Advice
YOI	young offender institution
YOT	youth offending team
young offender institution	type of British prison intended for offenders aged between 18 and 20, although some cater for younger offenders from ages 15 to 17, who are classed as juvenile offenders; introduced under the Criminal Justice Act 1988
youth offending team	in England and Wales, a multi-agency team, coordinated by a local authority. which deals with young offenders, sets up community services and reparation plans, and attempts to prevent youth recidivism and incarceration; set up following the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act with the intention of reducing the risk of young people offending and re-offending, and to provide counsel and rehabilitation to those who do offend