

London Victims' Board July 2020

Record of Meeting

Attendees	
Independent Victims Commissioner (chair)	VC
Mayors Office for Policing and Crime	MOPAC
Victims Reference Group	VRG
Metropolitan Police Service	MPS
Ministry of Justice	MoJ
National Health Service	NHS
Metropolitan Police Service	MPS
Ministry of Justice	MoJ
National Probation Service	NPS
Crown Prosecution Service	CPS
Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service	HMCTS
Victim Support (LVWS)	VS
Judiciary	J
Parole Board	PB
London Councils/London Heads of Community Safety	LC/LHoCs
Independent Bar Council	IBC
Citizens Advice	CA

Agenda Items

1. Welcome, introductions, and apologies

The Chair undertook a round of introductions.

2. Minutes and update on actions from last meeting

Minutes from the last meeting were accepted without comment.

3. Policy Update

- MoJ provided an update on the revised Victims Code of Practice (VCoP), published in November 2020 following formal consultation.
- Key changes to the code include:
 - a shorter and more coherent document for victims to navigate
 - the Victim Contact Scheme changing to an auto referral model

- victims of Mentally Disordered Offenders (MDOs) will have access to a Victim Liaison Officer and;
 - more rights for victims of Foreign National Offenders (FNOs) who face deportation
- MoJ are working closely with CJS agencies to develop practitioner guidance, and stakeholders to develop an awareness raising campaign. There are also plans to develop a child friendly version of the Code.
 - Members discussed plans for a Victims Law and estimated time frames. Board members expressed an interest in being involved in any consultation which follows.

4. Update from London's Victims Commissioner and Partners

Victims' Commissioner

- Court backlogs – the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime and the Victims Commissioner for London led the CJS partnership in discussions to improve the data picture around victims and witnesses affected by the backlogs and worked with the partnership to signpost victims to support services.
- Domestic Abuse Bill - lobbying work has continued on the DA bill, especially to improve protection for migrant victims and survivors and protect against use of the family courts to perpetrate abuse.
- The chair advised board members of new guidance published for jurors on rape myths and stereotypes which was a recommendation set out in the London Rape Review.
- Changes have also been made to the CPS Pre-Trial Therapy guidance following consultation.

Victims Reference Group

- The chair of the VRG advised housing issues have been exacerbated by COVID and victims agencies are working with local authorities to ensure domestic abuse victims are recognised as a priority.

MOPAC

- MOPAC has secured further funding from government to support the domestic abuse and sexual violence services which are significantly impacted by demand.
- MOPAC updated on plans to commission a specialist consultant to deliver a Strategic Needs Assessment for Victims in London in the new year.
- Next steps will be agreed in the new year to take forward the Victims Hub concept and test ideas.

MPS

- MPS updated on plans to trial a new Victim information leaflet which contains lots of relevant information to support victims through the CJS journey.
- MS also advised they are working on the development of a Victim Needs Assessment which will follow victim throughout their CJS journey and minimise repetition.
- A High Harm Survey is also in development, to measure satisfaction amongst the most vulnerable victims. This process is being managed carefully to avoid retraumatising victims and the methodology will be agreed with partners, ensuring it is compliant with information sharing legislation.

Parole Board

- A consultation into increasing the transparency of the parole process has recently closed. The board will be updated on key findings and next steps to be published shortly.

5. Any other business

Nothing of note.