

PCC and CC Force Inspection response record

Version:

Force	Staffordshire
Police and Crime Commissioner	Ben Adams
Chief Constable	Chris Noble
Title of inspection	Meeting the needs of victims in the CJS
Inspectorate	 <p>HMICFRS Making communities safer</p>
Summary of inspection	<p>This inspection aimed to assess how well the criminal justice system meets the needs of victims, from when a victim reports an offence to after the offender has been convicted.</p> <p>It was a joint inspection by HMICFRS, His Majesty’s Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate and His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation. In this inspection, we assessed whether the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Probation Service understand what victims need, whether they meet those needs and whether they provide a good quality service.</p>
Grade	
Recommendations	<p>Recommendation 1 By 31 December 2024, the Ministry of Justice, Home Office and Attorney General’s Office should work together to use this inspection as the basis for a broader and fundamental review of the experience of victims of crime, involving other Government departments and agencies as necessary. Such a review could draw on evidence from this inspection, and look more broadly at how best to include information on all services available to victims of crime, seeking to improve the availability of access for victims and the consistency of the service they receive. It could also seek to promote better sharing of information about positive practice and initiatives aimed at improving the victim experience.</p> <p>Recommendation 2 By 30 September 2024, the Ministry of Justice should develop Victims’ Code performance metrics and reporting systems. These should include how criminal justice bodies engage with victims and the quality of the engagement. Performance metrics should also include measures of how well criminal justice bodies obtain feedback from victims and how well they use this to assess the quality of engagement and improve the quality of services. By 31 March 2025, the Ministry of Justice should implement these performance metrics and reporting systems across criminal justice bodies.</p> <p>Recommendation 3 By 31 December 2024, the College of Policing should work with the National Police Chiefs’ Council and chief constables to develop minimum standards for the completion of victim needs assessments. These should include standards for timeliness of completion and clarity on the information to be recorded.</p> <p>Recommendation 4 By 30 September 2024, the National Police Chiefs’ Council and the Crown Prosecution Service should agree minimum standards and consistent processes for how witness care units or functions communicate with</p>

the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and victims to help effective, agile and timely information-sharing so that victims' needs are met.

Recommendation 5
By 31 December 2024, the National Police Chiefs' Council should work with His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service to make sure all eligible victims are referred to the Victim Contact Scheme.

Recommendation 6
By 30 September 2024, the Probation Service should provide training on the work of the Victim Contact Scheme to all probation practitioners and those in training. The learning should include: what is involved in the Victim Contact Scheme; and how probation practitioners work with victim liaison officers to keep victims safe.

Areas for improvement

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's acknowledgement

The inspection concluded that high workloads and competing demands meant the services couldn't invest the time and attention needed at every stage of a case and officers and staff didn't have the skills and knowledge to give a good service to victims. This echoes my experience of the Local Criminal Justice Board where I have first-hand experience of the focus on complying with the Victim Code instead of meeting the needs of victims. We have made progress in accessing data from criminal justice bodies and improving processes to measure this but we still struggle to accurately assess the quality of services to victims and act to improve it. The ways of measuring how well CJ bodies comply with the Victims' Code remains inadequate.

I agree that some aspects of the services the Police, CPS and the Probation Service provide to victims are process-driven and there is a lack of accurate data from local CJ Boards to feed into a national picture so I welcome the recommendations to support agencies in delivering useful information and maintaining a victim focus at all times.

This inspection has been reviewed at our Local Criminal Justice Board and there is a clear appetite from all partner agencies to continue local improvements to support victims. The Board remain impatient to review the formal MoJ metrics in order to make sure our current processes will deliver what is required. Partners have been asked what work they currently undertake or can undertake in order to support the delivery of the recommendations at a local level. The force Victim & Witness Board has been presented with the same ask. New pieces of work will be added to the delivery plan and monitored accordingly.