

# Summary of meeting between Ministry of Justice and Catch22 Victim Services

15 May 2020

## 1. Background

Catch22 is currently commissioned to provide the following Victim Services:

- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Victim First
- Nottinghamshire Victim CARE
- Hertfordshire Beacon

## 2. The Catch22 approach

We've developed an innovative model for victim services that can be tailored to the needs of local communities:

- Our services are **centred around the victim** to empower them to cope and recover.
- We offer **every victim an allocated worker** to act as a single point of contact to simplify their journey
- We assess every victim's needs which informs their **individualised support plan**
- We provide **solution-focused** and strengths based support to victims of crime
- We use **restorative approaches** throughout our victim services and offer restorative interventions to victims to enable them to communicate with the person who has harmed them.
- We work **closely with local partners** (e.g. Police) and commissioners to provide the best support possible to victims
- We pro-actively bring organisations together to **share best practice** and improve the support available to victims.
- We **involve victims in the design** and continuous improvement of our services

- We engage with, and reach out to our communities to ensure we make our support accessible and also **champion the voice of the victim**
- We draw on Catch22's experience delivering a **range of services** including [child sexual exploitation](#), domestic abuse, [substance misuse](#) and [gangs](#).
- We hold ourselves to account by measuring the meaningful impact of our work. In 2019:
  - We supported **24,898 victims**
  - **96% of respondents** were satisfied with the support we provided
  - **99.7% of victims** we supported felt that their health, wellbeing and personal safety had been sustained or improved.

### **3. Adapting during lockdown**

With face to face contact extremely limited, we are seeing victims turn to social media for information – as well as getting information from posters and leaflets in places where they are going (e.g. supermarkets).

Catch22 victim services are therefore communicating with victims via social media, developing posters and flyers for use in supermarkets and providing over the phone and online support to victims.

### **4. Innovation in our services**

#### **4.1. Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Victim First**

##### **Victim First Champions**

Victim First designed and developed the initiative of creating 'Victim First Champions' within the LLR community. These champions are key individuals at other partner organisations who promote the Victim First service within their own services. They refer service users or support them to self-refer. The Champions share service user feedback or needs and offer suggestions on improving the service we provide. Our commitment to the champions is to keep them updated with developments within Victim First, invite them to regular briefing and networking events, add their service to our directory and refer service users to their services.

##### **Community Cafés**

Our aim is to ensure that the community has a voice in shaping how Victim First operates, and to learn from the experience of service users and other stakeholders. We designed, developed and now deliver a quarterly 'Community Café' event at various local cafés, where a number of service users who have received our support

are invited to share their experiences of being a victim and the support they received from Victim First. We treat the service user to a cup of tea/coffee with a slice of cake, which enables service users to feel that they have had a chance to speak and to be listened to. The outcome has been positive, with input from the group leading to improvements in the delivery of VF to ensure we are better meeting the support needs of victim. The café is also a great platform to involve service users in the design of Victim First. We have designed service user satisfaction survey questions, posters and leaflets with service users in the past.

### **Engagement with local universities**

We have set up fortnightly drop-in surgeries at Loughborough University and at the University of Leicester for students and staff members to speak with our Caseworkers if they have been victims of crime. This can be a one-off support session or it could be a self-referral, or advice session.

VF have been working with De Montfort University to conduct research to further explore victimisation and susceptibility to cybercrime with children who have experienced online crimes in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland who have come through to VF as a result of ANY online crime e.g. bullying, indecent images etc. Victim First will also work alongside the academics leading this research to co-write the findings.

### **Victim Personal Statements**

From July 2017, as a result of our joint work with Leicestershire Police through the Victim Code of Practice Group, we introduced an addition to our Needs Assessment and Support process to enable us to explore and offer support to victims relating to the VPS. We ask service users who have accepted enhanced support, 4 questions;

1. Were you offered the opportunity to complete a VPS?
2. If so, did you choose to complete a VPS?
3. If not, do you understand what a VPS is?
4. Would you like the opportunity to complete a VPS?

For service users who had not had the opportunity to complete a VPS, we help to facilitate the completion of VPS by advocating with the police officer in the case.

## **4.2. Nottinghamshire Victim CARE**

### **Working with universities**

The team is creating and delivering workshops for both Nottingham universities for students who've received antisocial behaviour warnings – this supports the local community by reducing student antisocial behaviour and also supports the university in lending our expertise to these sessions.

### **Victim Awareness sessions**

Supporting the Youth Justice Service in designing and delivering Victim Awareness sessions, including restorative justice. All sessions had positive feedback from those attending, commenting that they'd got a new perspective on how a victim must feel.

## **Community Points**

We have developed a county-wide network of organisations who work with us to support hidden victims and communities. As part of this, we have administered a grant scheme to which these organisations can apply. Last year we had 8 successful applicants undertaking projects. As part of this we have had exceptional feedback on the impact of this funding from them – for example as a result of our funding Redthread were able to provide practical support to vulnerable young people to help them better engage with their service following hospitalisation. Another organisation, Centre Place, employed a worker to hold special sessions with awareness raising and support for young LGBT people – this has increased hate crime reporting from this cohort.

### **4.3. Hertfordshire Beacon**

#### **Team of Case Managers**

Case Managers act as a single point of contact throughout a victim's journey. They conduct a needs assessment which then translates into an individualised expert support plan agreed with the victim and led by the victim.

The managers provide emotional support through helping the individual make sense of how they are feeling, normalising those feelings and challenging negative beliefs. This is alongside practical support through crime prevention advice, personal alarms and safety plans.

Case Managers are the 'voice' for vulnerable victims and act as their advocate with agencies such as housing, mental health and police. By taking a holistic approach, they signpost to other organisations who can help the victim.

Case Managers are trained as restorative justice facilitators and will undertake this process where appropriate and safe to do so - from shuttle, letter through to the conference.

#### **Watford pilot for gang and knife crime victims**

We are currently undergoing a pilot in Watford to give victims of gang and knife crime rapid access to our support. Watford was seeing an increase in these cases and reached out to us to help engage and support victims who are unlikely to report or access support due to fear of the perpetrator or their own criminal behaviour.

#### **Beacon Fraud hub**

In April 2019 we launched the Beacon Fraud hub with our police colleagues - contacting every victim in Hertfordshire who report to Action Fraud. We know we have prevented at least one suicide and funds recovered, that we know of, amount to £300,000.

## Domestic abuse

We have just entered into a project with the Constabulary's Domestic Abuse Investigation Safeguarding Unit to ensure all victims of domestic abuse get an offer of support from a service and ensure they are triaged appropriately and get the right support.

### **5. Next steps**

We will respond to the online Victims Code consultation questions via the online form. In summary:

**Q1. Do you think our proposal to restructure the Code into 12 overarching rights is the correct one? Please give reasons for your response.**

- Yes – this proposal would make it clearer and easier for victims to understand what support they are entitled to without jumbling this into different sections dependent on who should be delivering what.
- The one-page summary of the 12 key rights is also very clear and accessible.

**Q2. Do you agree that the rights we have identified cover the most important needs of victims? Please give reasons for your response.**

- Yes

**Q3. Do you agree that these rights cover the key stages of a victim's journey in the criminal justice system? Please give reasons for your response.**

- Yes. Although in section 4, it could be more explicit around victims being entitled to access victim support services at any time that is right for them following a crime, not just when the criminal investigation / court process has reached a conclusion.

**Q4. We have included more practical advice and information in the draft revised Code, do you agree with our proposed approach? Please give reasons for your response.**

- Yes. There is not too much practical advice as to make this overwhelming, but enough to enable victims and witnesses to better understand the criminal justice process and the support they are entitled to.

**Q5. Is there any important information that you feel we should also include?**

- Not from our perspective. As above, our view is that it is important not to add more and make this inaccessible to the public.

**Q6. Are you aware of any evidence or sources of information that would help us to understand and assess equality and economic impacts in greater detail? Please supply.**

- Only to consider publishing an 'Easy Read' version to make the code more accessible to children, young people and those with learning disabilities

Q6a. If you are aware, what do you believe would be the effect of this evidence/information on our proposals?

- As above

Q7. Do you have any further comments about the draft revised Code?

- It would be helpful to make clearer reference to how these Rights will be strengthened by the forthcoming Victims Law when publishing the revised Code?

- Should there be anything in there around accountability for services not delivering these rights?

- VPS – reassuring that victim support services can help victims with this – how will this work in practice e.g. submission of VPS, level of accountability etc.

For more information, please contact:

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