



Strategy Performance Board

2022

1. PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATION

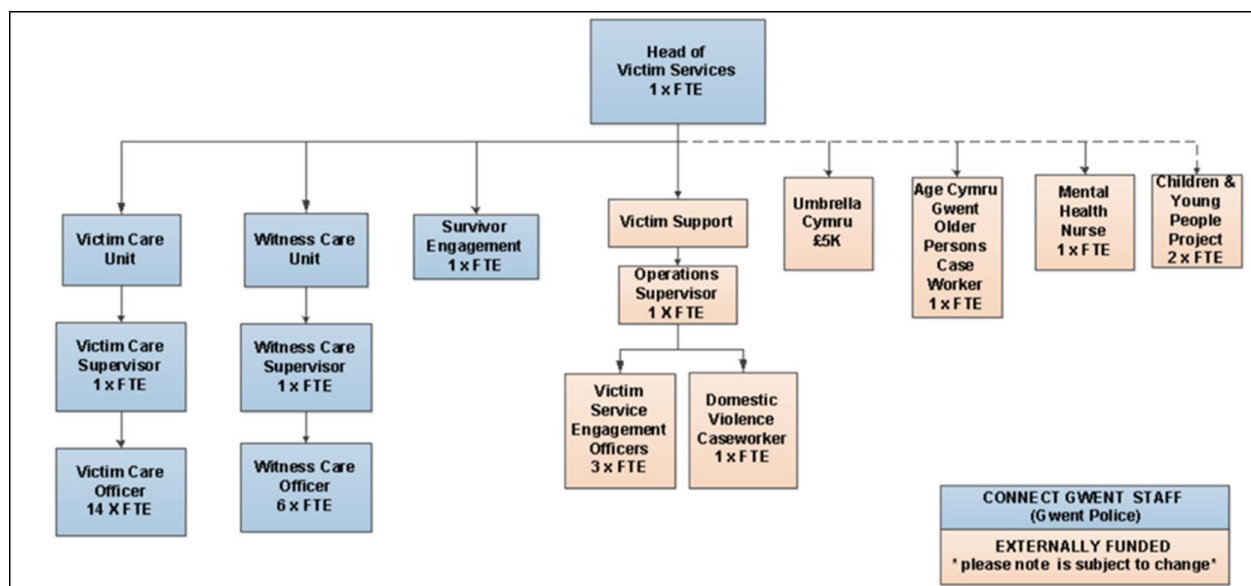
1.1 The purpose of this report is for monitoring and information.

1.2 There are no recommendations made requiring a decision.

2. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Victim Services has developed considerably over the last year following the development of the Victim Care Unit.

The service area consists of both Gwent Police staff and external agencies who collaboratively support and advocate for victims and witnesses of crime:



Victim Care Unit: Victim Care Officers (VCO's) are responsible for contacting victims of crime to complete a thorough needs assessment and refer for tailored support where required. They are also responsible for completing a regular contact schedule with victims where needed and adhering to this throughout the criminal justice journey while continually reassessing need and ensuring the victim receives their entitlements as per the Victims Code. VCO's work collaboratively with front line officers and partner agencies.

Witness Care Unit: Witness Care Officers (WCO's) are responsible for contacting victims and witnesses post charge after the first hearing stage of the court process. They ensure victims and witnesses have all the support and information they require to achieve best evidence in court and provide their key stage updates as per the Victims Code. WCO's work collaboratively with officers, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the courts and partner agencies.

Survivor Engagement: The Survivor Engagement Co-Ordinator (SEC) engages with survivors of domestic and sexual offences, using their lived experience and feedback to improve the forces response to these crimes. The SEC also leads on all our victim engagement, including the survivor network and Victim Reference Group. The SEC



works with the Local Policing Areas (LPA's) and the Learning and Development department to ensure improvement and that the victims voice is always at the centre of all we do.

Connect Gwent: is a multi-agency victim support service that aims to provide a range of services to people impacted by crime to support them to cope and recover. Connect Gwent is made up of externally commissioned support services. Commissioned support services are funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) via the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Victim Services Grant.

Connect Gwent receives referrals from multiple sources, such as self-referrals, schools, and other partner agencies.

Being a multi-agency service allows those being supported to access the most relevant and appropriate support according to their needs. Support may be provided by a single agency within Connect Gwent or by agencies working together in a coordinated way.

External commissioned services within Connect Gwent are:

Age Cymru Gwent – An Older Person's Support Worker who provides specialist support to victims over the age of 50.

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board – A Mental Health Nurse who provides specialist mental health and wellbeing support, including supported access to community health services.

Umbrella Cymru – provides specialist support to people who require support relating to their gender or sexual identity.

- Umbrella Cymru also currently provide the Interim Children and Young People Victim Service which provides specialist support to children and young people impacted by crime.

Victim Support – Provide a range of services / teams:

- **Victim Support and Engagement Team** – provides ongoing support to all those affected by crime
- **Domestic Abuse Case Worker** - provides specialist support to victims of domestic abuse



3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

In July 2021 the Victim Care Unit was implemented, changing our previous model and improving the service to victims of crime by providing a single point of contact throughout their criminal justice journey.

As with any change there has been continuous problem solving to improve and meet demand while ensuring victims are at the heart of all we do. We have continuously reviewed processes and consulted with the Victim Reference Group, key department areas, partner agencies and with the Victim Care Officers to ensure the model adapts to current need and priorities.

4. VICTIM CARE UNIT PERFORMANCE

4.1 Overview

From April 2021 to April 2022 Victim Services received a total of 52,855 referrals. Before the Victim Care Unit was implemented Victim Support provided the intake and assessment function of Connect Gwent, since the process changed in July we are able to provide a more detailed breakdown of figures.

4.2 Victim Care Unit 12/07/2021 – 31/03/2022

Since the opening of the unit:

Total victims referred into service	38173
Enhanced Victims	10795
Standard Victims	27378
Successful initial calls	6565
Needs assessments completed	5472
Victim information packs sent	17460*

*compliance of sending written acknowledgement of the crime was impacted by restrictions of the pandemic. It also needs to be considered we cannot send a letter to victims of domestic and sexual offences without explicit consent.



Business Benefits:

Success Measure	Baseline	Compliance
Improved compliance with VCOP – provide victim with written acknowledgment that a crime was reported	11%	64%
Improved compliance with VCOP – assess the need of the victims	55%	83%
Improve victim satisfaction – treated by service	85%	VCO - 99% OIC – 94%
Improve victim satisfaction – Kept informed	46%	95%
Improve victim satisfaction - view of service as a whole	75%	80%

5. WITNESS CARE PERFORMANCE

The pandemic has put considerable strain on the Witness Care Unit, however they have continued to provide an impeccable service to victims and witnesses of crime.

The case management system the Witness Care Unit use doesn't provide detailed performance data; we therefore measure their performance through the number of victims/witnesses the CPS ask to be warned for trial against how many attend and their VCOP compliance.

Below is the monthly average workload of the Witness Care Unit:

Live Cases	799
Victims/Witnesses Supported	6770
Trial	279

Attendance Figures:

Court	Required	Attended	Percentage
Crown	746	732	98%
Magistrates	912	818	90%

VCOP Compliance (key stage updates):

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
95%	100%	83%	92%

6. SURVIVOR ENGAGEMENT

The Survivor Engagement Co-ordinator role has been active since November 2019 and is well established in the force and its governance structures. In that time improvement has been made in both the force culture and response to domestic and sexual offences with the learning shared nationally.

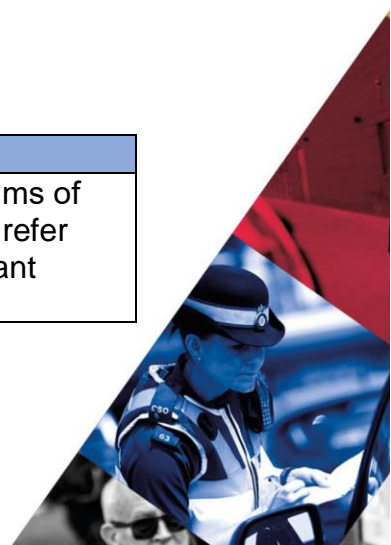
The Survivor Engagement Co-ordinator continues to engage with survivors through self-referrals, agency referrals and police referrals, but to ensure we are capturing feedback alongside force priorities and initiatives we have set up the following standard work flows:

Sexual Offences:

Work Flow	SEC Process
VCU/WCU	Both Victim and Witness Care Unit's will advise victims of domestic/sexual abuse the opportunity to engage with the SEC and refer those necessary on through an email with the relevant information
RASSO DS's	Will send over 3 cases each to be contacted by the SEC for feedback on their criminal justice journey. Key area's: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Police no further action (NFA)– assess effectiveness of NFA letter and joint visit with Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA)• Full criminal justice journey – assess journey in it's entirety• Outcome 16
ISVA's	Hold a regular meeting with ISVA's and Crisis Workers to gather professional feedback, with particular emphasis on trends/themes
Adverse Case Reports	Review ACR on a regular basis to assess post charge attrition, working with Victim Services and partner agencies to discover any service gaps, and attempt to gather qualitative feedback from the survivors themselves.
NFA Scrutiny Panel	Agreement in place to make contact with Victims from cases being presented in order to enhance the process of improving the service in its entirety. This is then feedback during the meeting and learning or recognition sent to officers and supervisors.

Domestic Offences:

Work Flow	SEC Process
VCU/WCU	Both Victim and Witness Care Unit's will advise victims of DA/SV the opportunity to engage with the SEC and refer those necessary on through an email with the relevant information



Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Team (DAST)	SEC to be given access to the spreadsheet holding info of victims who have been issued victim safety packs to gather feedback on the effectiveness of these. This will also provide opportunity to assess other areas of police involvement
DVPO/N	SEC has access to spreadsheet to contact victims and assess the victim's perspective of the effectiveness of DVPN/O's
Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA)	Hold a regular meeting with IDVA's to gather professional feedback, with particular emphasis on trends/themes
Adverse Case Reports (ACR)	Review ACR on a regular basis to assess post charge attrition, working with Victim Services and partner agencies to discover any service gaps, and attempt to gather qualitative feedback from the survivors themselves
NFA Scrutiny Panel	Agreement in place for SEC to make contact with Victims from cases being presented in order to enhance the process of improving the service in its entirety. This is then feedback during the meeting and learning or recognition sent to officers and supervisors.

7. CONNECT GWENT

Although the model changed, the Connect Gwent multi-agency hub remain an integral part of Victim Services and provided life changing support to victims and witnesses of crime.

The Victim Care Officers complete a thorough needs assessment with victims of crime to ensure an appropriate referral for tailored support is made to our partner agencies.

Referrals received by partner agencies:

Age Cymru	100
Mental Health Nurse (ABUHB)	179
Victim Support	2360
Umbrella Children and Young Person Project	294

The below outcome information is obtained from initial and closing assessments through which people are asked to rate themselves in relation to the outcome area in order to measure distance travelled and the impact of support provided by Connect Gwent. The data presented below reflects the outcomes reported by all partner agencies combined:

Outcome Indicator	Number of People Reporting Improvement
Better able to cope and recover	702

These assessments are only completed with those who engage with long term support

Case Study

Background of Circumstances

A.V is an 83 year old female who became a victim of attempted murder at home in March 2022.

The offender broke in through a window and stabbed A.V twice to the chest.

A.V lives alone, is deaf and has no family.

Referral

The SGT in this case made direct contact with the HoVS as recognised this was a complex case that needed immediate intervention.

HoVS tasked an experienced VCO to make contact with A.V power of attorney, social services and A.V herself through her preferred method of contact (text) to co-ordinate care and advocacy moving forward.

A.V was referred to Victim Support, Age Cymru and ABUHB Mental Health due to her presenting needs. An emergency CMM was called to ensure a streamlined approach.

Outcome

A.V engaged well with all services via text until her release from hospital and has since been receiving home visits. All agencies report she is managing very well and has started to make it back to church.

Practical and emotional support remain ongoing and all agencies describe A.V as stoic and an inspiration.

8. DEVELOPMENTS AND IMPROVEMENTS

This year has been a challenging one in Victim Services; there have been changes in management, an accommodation move with ongoing work, working through the pandemic and changes to the structure of the department with the introduction of the Victim Care Unit.

Over the last few months the model has settled down and allowed us to consider how we improve and develop the service further as below:



Restructure Pilot	The Victim and Witness Care units will be restructuring to fall in line with the LPA's and will become an East and West team, enabling a locality specific approach. The purpose is to further bolster front line policing by forming improved relationships with officers, key departments and partner agencies within the local authorities with a particular focus on repeat victims and preventing further serious harm.
Special Measures Advisor	Gwent Police will be participating in a national pilot and creating a Special Measures Advisor role who will quality assure and increase the amount of MG2s submitted by become a single point of contact and expert in special measures available. This pilot will drive up the usage of all measures including the new Safe Link Sites with the hope of minimising attrition.
Connect Gwent	Now the restrictions of the pandemic have eased Connect Gwent can re-start attending community events and raising awareness of both independent support and Victim Services as a whole to articulate to the public there is suitable support available to meet their needs. Support is key to engagement with the criminal justice process and therefore successful prosecutions.
External Victim Working Group	To fully manage expectations when providing referrals and ongoing contact to victims and witnesses we need to have a clear understanding of our partner agencies capacity, work flow, project and any changes or updates. As with the internal working group with key department areas an external working group will be created to ensure a collaborative approach and they we are all kept informed of each other's development and how this impacts victims and witnesses.
Attrition	A priority is to minimise attrition and increase successful prosecutions by ensure victims and witnesses feel supported and comfortable to achieve best evidence. We plan to map out the full criminal justice journey, including external support to identify potential gaps and opportunities to improve. The Survivor Engagement Co-ordinator and the feedback from those within the adverse case reports will bolster this work to ensure the victims voice remains the centre of any potential change and improvement.



9. COLLABORATION

9.1 N/A

10. NEXT STEPS

10.1 Continue to review and develop VCU and wider Connect Gwent processes and procedures to ensure effectiveness and continued development and improvement.

10.2 Monitor and scrutinise VCU and Connect Gwent performance information to ensure victims receive effective support.

10.3 Increase the number of self and other agency referrals via an Engagement and Communication Plan.

11. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

11.1 N/A

12. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS

12.1 N/A

13. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

13.1 N/A

14. EQUALITIES & HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

14.1 This report has been considered against the general duty to promote equality, as stipulated under the Joint Strategic Equality Plan and has been assessed not to discriminate against any particular group.

14.2 In preparing this report, consideration has been given to requirements of the Articles contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998.

15. RISK

15.1 N/A

16. PUBLIC INTEREST



- 16.1 In producing this report, has consideration been given to 'public confidence'?
Yes
- 16.2 Are the contents of this report, observations and appendices necessary and suitable for the public domain? **Yes**
- 16.3 If you consider this report to be exempt from the public domain, please state the reasons: N/A
- 16.4 Media, Stakeholder and Community Impacts:

17. REPORT AUTHOR

- 17.1 Elizabeth Lowther - Victims' Lead

18. LEAD CHIEF OFFICER

- 18.1 T/ACC Mark Hobrough

19. ANNEXES

- 19.1 Documents embedded

20. CHIEF OFFICER APPROVAL

- 20.1 I confirm this report has been discussed and approved at a formal Chief Officers' meeting.
- 20.2 I confirm this report is suitable for the public domain for the reasons stated in 16.3.



Signature:

Date: 10/08/2022



