

Victim Services and Victim Care

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**ACCOUNTABILITY
AND ASSURANCE
BOARD**

24 October 2025



1. *DIBEN AC ARGYMHELLIAD* | PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for information, assurance and scrutiny.
- 1.2 There are no recommendations made requiring a decision.

2. *CYFLWYNIAD A CHEFNDIR* | INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Central to our mission is improving the trust and confidence of our services within the Gwent communities. We are committed to improving, and ensuring we are connected, inclusive and caring, listening to victims with purpose and being responsive to their needs.

The force recognises a requirement to standardise and provide consistency of service through the Quality of Investigations and care it provides for victims of crime. The Quality of Investigations and Victim Care Change Programme has been launched, overseen by the newly appointed Detective Superintendent with responsibility for Investigations and Victim Care.

PCC's priorities of protecting the vulnerable and putting victims first forms the basis of much of the change programme.

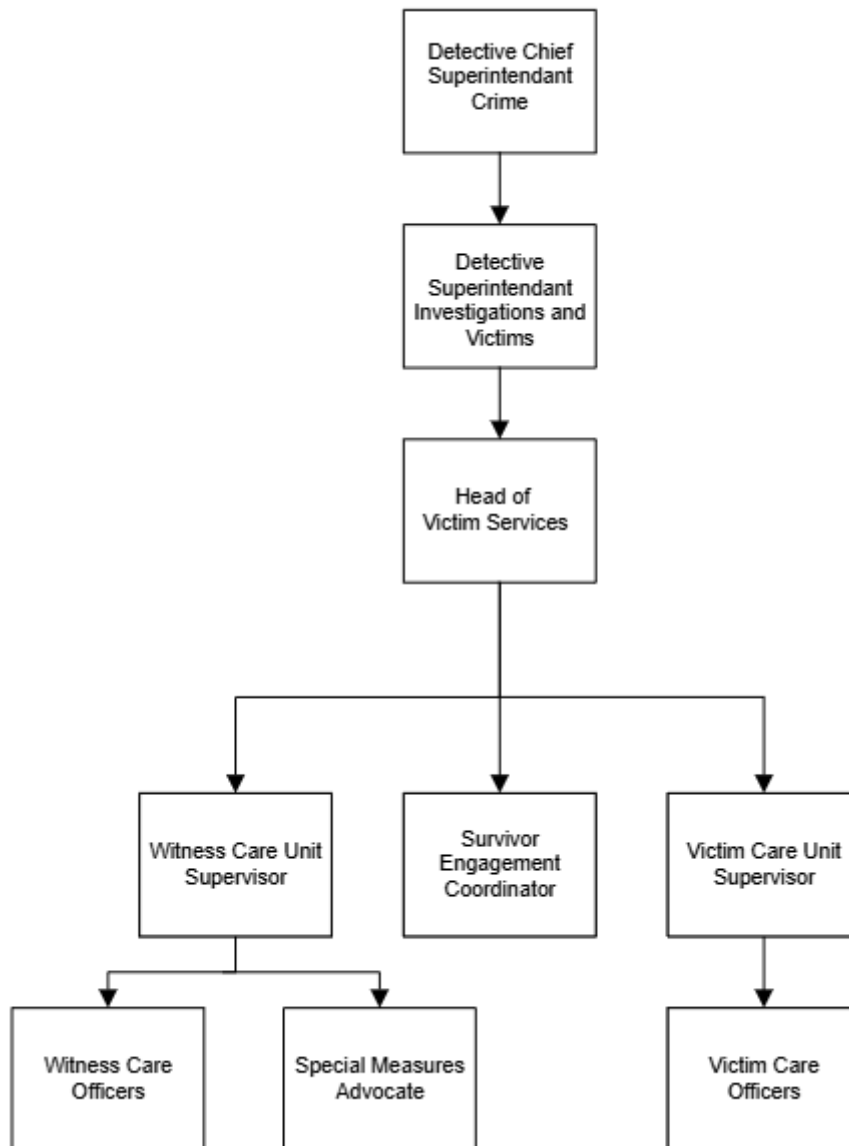
A Head of Victim Services was recently appointed in June 2025 and will hold a key position in delivering high quality service, ensuring victims needs are met, their needs are prioritised, and they are listened to, throughout their criminal justice journey.

The Head of Victim Services leads the delivery of Victim and Witness Care Units on behalf of the PCC, developing and maintaining strategy for Gwent Police with the aim of improving victims and witnesses' journey through the criminal justice system. This includes collaborating with the Local Criminal Justice Board and advance the shared priority, 'Supporting Victims and Witnesses: Ensuring quality support is provided to victims and witnesses that meets their needs and improves their experience of the criminal justice system.'

The Victim and Witness Care Units provide victims and witnesses with information, support, and guidance throughout the criminal justice process, in accordance with the requirements of the Victims Code of Practice and Witness Charter.



2.2 **Organisational Structure** Victim Services, Investigations and Victims strand of the Crime Pillar:



2.3 **Positive performance**

Head of Victim Services is strategically placed within the Investigations and Victims Strand of the Crime Pillar. This includes a lead role in the Quality of Investigations and Victim Care Change Programme, aligning national and local priorities into a force-wide action plan. This is a programme that has collaboration with other area leads to improve practice and ensure accountability across the force.

An all-Wales working group has been set up to develop a standardised approach for reporting compliance with the Victim's Code of Practice, ahead of anticipated Ministry of Justice reporting in 2026, as part of the implementation of the Victim and Prisoners Act 2024. This forum will ensure victims needs are met consistently, Pan Wales, with opportunities for

accurate performance management within internal force structures and across the whole of the Principality.

The Survivor Engagement Coordinator remains a valued and respected position within the organisation, with over 265 survivors referred to provide feedback 2024 – 2025. The Survivor Engagement Coordinator ensures that victims' perspectives and lived experiences inform and guide the development of our services.

The Survivor Reference Group continue to meet regularly to share lived experiences that inform improvements in victim care across the VAWDASV sector. Over the past year the group have shared their insights to support practice and policy including officer virtual reality training, OPPC's Police and Crime Plan, family court processes and digital awareness campaigns in healthcare.

The Special Measures Advocate continues to review investigations and work with our Criminal Justice Partners to ensure special measures are utilised appropriately to support victims at Court.

The force daily management meetings enable senior leaders to monitor daily operational performance, address critical issues quickly and coordinate resources effectively. The 'DMM – Victim Care Unit Alert Pilot' escalates appropriate occurrences from DMM to the VCU Supervisor for increased supervisory ownership and action as required. The pilot is in its early stages, but initial results are promising. Of the 39 cases escalated so far, 39% led to changes in Victim Care Unit responses, such as early identification and prioritisation of enhanced cases, more timely allocation and victim contact, as well as improved collaboration with Operational colleagues.

The innovative Domestic Abuse (DA) triage monthly meeting continues, with interest from other forces hoping to adopt the same. The meetings assist in identifying investigative gaps, with the aim to address these in readiness for trial, to achieve positive outcomes for victims. Agencies involved in this process include Gwent Police Victim and Witness Care Units, Crown Prosecution Service, Special Measures Advocate, IDVA Service and Gwent Police File Management Unit. This has been recognised by NPOCC as best practice and shared nationally.

The Victim Care Unit gave an average of 861 monthly investigative updates to victims in 2024–2025, improving access to information and supporting trust and confidence in the investigative process. In turn, this ensures right 6 of the VCOP is maintained.

3. MATERION I'W HYSTYRIED | ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The force recognises through feedback from victims and partners, as well as performance data, that we are inconsistent in complying with Right 6 of VCOP and keeping victims regularly updated and at key stages of their investigation. Keeping victims informed and reassured throughout the investigation process is essential to building trust and confidence. As part of the Quality of Investigation and Victim Care Change Programme, we will be taking action to embed clear expectations around regular, meaningful



updates into investigation standards, supervision, training and performance frameworks.

Improving data to evidence performance and compliance is an area of focus within the Quality of Investigation and Victim Care Change Programme, with efforts directed toward establishing effective systems to monitor and assess compliance.

- 3.2 Victim Satisfaction Survey – The volume of responses is relatively low, with 328 total responses received January to December 2024. There is an opportunity to expand our victim satisfaction survey and make it more accessible to our communities. A benchmarking process is underway to determine best practice methodologies for victim satisfaction surveys, including question sets, methods of delivery, strategies for community engagement and approaches to implementing change. Support from the OPCC has been secured to work collaboratively on this piece of work, recognising the role the OPCC has in ensuring community needs are delivered.

The Victim Satisfaction Survey is sent to all crime victims, where it is deemed safe, and does not distinguish whether the Victim Care Unit has been involved. The Victim Care Unit are exploring potential approaches to establishing a framework for collecting and utilising victim feedback regarding their experiences to help improve the service delivered. The unit currently send out a Victim Information Pack, which explains we welcome feedback and signposts to the Survivor Engagement Coordinator or the Gwent Police website. The pack encourages individuals to seek Victim Support, out explaining how their services are vital in a victims journey, how to request a Victims Right to Review and the opportunity for compensation.

- 3.3 Scrutiny panels exist in force, with the purpose of reviewing investigative quality and victim care. A feature of feedback from victims who have been supported by specialist officers, such as Sexual offences Liaison Officers see consistently better feedback than victims who are supported by other departments within the organisation.

- 3.4 The Victims Meeting is held quarterly and chaired by the Detective Chief Superintendent for Crime. This board seeks to secure and scrutinise the effective delivery of a consistent and good quality service for victims and witnesses. The board reviews current delivery and performance and agree any changes to the delivery of victim services to ensure it meets the requirements set out within the Victim Strategy, Police and Crime Plan, Victim's Code of Practice and Witness Charter. The meeting incorporates feedback from victims obtained through satisfaction surveys and the Survivor Engagement Co-ordinator. The meeting is the mechanism used by the force to embed a victim centred policing culture, ensuring officers and staff within Gwent Police can collectively and effectively support this.

The governance around victim care is being strengthened through the Quality of Investigations and Victim Care Change Programme, specifically the Performance and Compliance guiding principle.

- 3.5 The Head of Victim Services is a member of the Local Criminal Justice Board's 'Supporting Victims and Witnesses' subgroup, which brings together a group of key contributors to be able to deliver improvements in

line with the priorities identified in the Gwent CJSB Justice Strategy 2025 – 2029.

- 3.6 The Victim's Code of Practice recognises that individuals who have been persistently targeted are more likely to require specialist assistance. The Victim Care Unit seeks to identify repeat victims as early as possible using systems, data checks, and officer awareness. This approach aims to prioritise allocation, ensuring timely contact and needs assessment by a victim care officer, resulting in the appropriate ongoing support. Efforts are being made to improve data quality and case flagging so that repeat victimisation is accurately recorded and monitored. A project is underway to look at robotic processing, utilising technology to deliver efficient and effective notification of repeat victims.

The force recognises there are improvements to be made when supporting victims through the criminal justice process. The Quality of Investigations and Victim Care Change Programme is seeking to deliver these improvements, specifically through the Victim Care Guiding Principle. This guiding principle is conducting an end-to-end review of victim care, ensuring a consistent approach, tailored to victims' needs is delivered throughout the significant stages of the criminal justice process.

- 3.7 A new performance management tool is in creation, under the performance and compliance guiding principle of the change programme. This will seek to provide valuable and granular insight into the care victims are afforded with the ability for Gwent Police to learn from consistent themes, address poor behaviour and recognise good performance.

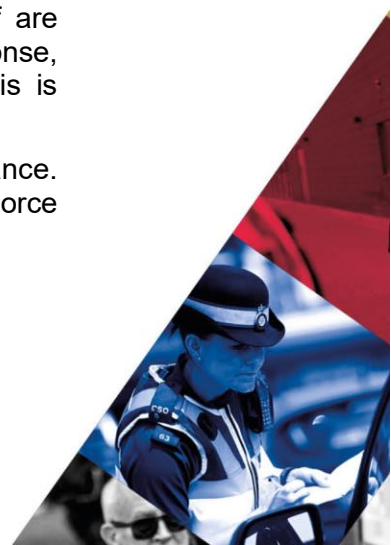
- 3.8 The Victim Care Policy was reviewed and updated, effective from 23/12/24. It clearly outlines the responsibilities for all in providing victims of crime and antisocial behaviour the best possible service from the first point of contact.

4. CYDWEITHIO | COLLABORATION

- 4.1 A Victim Services / OPCC review of Victim Satisfaction Survey is currently underway.
- 4.2 The Victim Care Unit continue to maintain effective partnerships, working together to support victims throughout the criminal justice process, responding to 1335 queries from partner organisations such as IDVA, ISVA and Victim Support 2024-2025.

5. CAMAU NESAF | NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Continued delivery of the QI&V Change Programme, ensuring all staff are equipped with the knowledge and tools to listen with purpose, be response, ensure victims' rights are prioritised and their needs are met. This is monitored through OEB governance.
- 5.2 Consolidate and agree an all-Wales reporting standard for VCOP Compliance. This is monitored and reported into the Victims and Witnesses Task Force and monitored by the LCJB.



- 5.3 The next steps will be for the engagement strategy to supersede any individual victim care policies. This is due to the engagement strategy identifying and prioritising victim care as one of its three core pillars. This is by design, seeking to place victims at the forefront of investigators minds, ensuring investigators listen with staff.
- 5.4 Victim and Witness Care Units practice in accordance with the force Welsh Language Standards Policy, which outlines the responsibilities and processes for complying with the Welsh Language Standards as set out by the Welsh Government under Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. Victim and Witness Care Unit must ensure that working practices are in accordance with the Welsh language standards and that individuals' rights are always upheld. This is also in accordance with Victim Code of Practice, 'To be able to understand and to be understood', which includes being offered a service in Welsh.
- 5.5 All communications from the Victim Care Unit include Welsh translations, such as texts, leaflets, information packs, and letters. Welsh language training is required for all Gwent Police employees, who answer calls with a Welsh greeting and offer service in Welsh.
- 5.6 The Vulnerability Training Group is established to develop, coordinate, and oversee the delivery of training related to vulnerability across the force. This includes safeguarding, exploitation, domestic abuse, mental health, Serious Organised Crime and other areas where individuals may be at increased risk of harm. The Survivor Engagement Coordinator attends this meeting and is a key contributor to shaping the training of officers and staff, ensuring a victim-focused and trauma informed approach.
- 5.7 The Victim Care Unit has a positive relationship with the force Learning and Development Team, specifically the officers responsible for training the new police constables in line with the Policing Education Qualifications Framework. The Head of Victim Services delivers an input to all new recruits, which includes victim voice, victim's rights and trauma. The PC Entry Route Trainers will soon visit the Victim Care Units as an opportunity gain a better understanding of the unit's functions and explore how we can collaborate with officers to better support victims. This information will then be shared with new recruits as part of their training.
- 5.8 The Victims meeting provides the governance where victim care is discussed, and individuals are held accountable for performance. This accountability ensures leaders within the organisation are aware of current performance and can address areas under their responsibility of where they need to improve.
- 5.9 The force recognises performance metrics for VCOP compliance, and the qualitative review of service provided to victims is an area where they need to improve. This was reported upon within the most recent HMICFRS PEEL Inspection report.
- The Quality of Investigations and Victim Care Change Programme seeks to address this by consolidating all AFI's and recommendations in force as well as securing best practice nationally to help inform our future delivery of service. The performance and compliance guiding principle of the change programme are committed in creating and delivering a performance

framework to provide consistent and meaningful performance data, as well as qualitative assurance including case analysis and feedback from victims.

- 5.10 Further metrics from external stakeholders, such as the Criminal Justice Performance Pack allows Gwent Police to recognise criminal justice outcomes, the quality of case files submitted and timeliness of the criminal justice process. This provides a holistic view of the victim's journey throughout the entirety of the process.
- 5.11 The engagement strategy sets out the clear expectations for victim care. The delivery plan, currently being implemented through the QI&V Change Programme seeks to embed a number of core principles and associated performance indicators to provide appropriate awareness and scrutiny of the service delivered.

6. YSTYRIAETHAU ARIANNOL | FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial considerations to be made in this report. However, these are being closely monitored as the projects mentioned in this report progress.

7. YSTYRIAETHAU PERSONEL | PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Staff engagement and consultation is key to all of the change and improvement programmes and is being actively led by those engaged in the programmes.

8. YSTYRIAETHAU CYFREITHIOL | LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The Victims Codes of Practice is a statutory obligation, placing a legal implication on Gwent Police to deliver the rights of the victims, held within. By failing to comply with these rights, there is a risk firstly of providing inadequate service to victims but also failing to comply with our legal duty.

9. YSTYRIAETHAU CYDRADDOLDEB A HAWLIAU DYNOL | EQUALITIES & HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 This report has been considered against the general duty to promote equality, as stipulated under the Strategic Equality Plan and has been assessed not to discriminate against any particular group.
- 9.2 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.



10. **RISG | RISK**

- 10.1 Organisational: Through failing to deliver a consistent service to victims, there is a risk of trust and confidence being lost within the communities we serve and the partners with whom we collaborate.

11. **BUDD Y CYHOEDD | PUBLIC INTEREST**

- 11.1 In producing this report, has consideration been given to 'public confidence'?
Yes
- 11.2 Are the contents of this report, observations and appendices necessary and suitable for the public domain? **Yes**
- 11.3 If you consider this report to be exempt from the public domain, please state the reasons:

12. **AWDUR YR ADRODDIAD | REPORT AUTHOR**

- 12.1 Sammie Lea-Parfitt, Head of Victim Services

13. **PRIF SWYDDOG ARWEINIOL | LEAD CHIEF OFFICER**

- 13.1 DCC Nicky Brain

14. **ATODIADAU | ANNEXES**

- 14.1 None.

15. **CYMERADWYAETH LLYWODRAETHU A BRIF SWYDDOG | GOVERNANCE BOARD AND CHIEF OFFICER APPROVAL**

- 15.1 This report has been presented to the **VAWG, Vulnerability & SOC Board**
Meeting chaired by: **DCC Nicola Brain**
Meeting date: **29th July 2025**
Actions or amendments arising from meeting: ***DCC Brain requested that the paper is uploaded to Teams site for reading / comments. Actioned 29.07.25.***

This report has been presented to the **Scrutiny Executive Board**

Meeting chaired by: **DCC Nicola Brain**

Meeting date: **5 August 2025**

Actions or amendments arising from meeting: **None**

- 15.2 I confirm this report has been discussed and approved at a formal Chief Officers' meeting.
- 15.3 I confirm this report is suitable for the public domain for the reasons stated in 11.2.

Llofnod | Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Morgan', written over a light blue grid background.

Dyddiad | Date: 14 August 2025

