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"I got very mixed support. Some people get excellent support but for me, I had a mixed experience. So I felt I had to give something back and tell my story. It's important that we – the victims – play a role in getting a better service for all."

Male victim of anti-social behaviour

1 Executive summary

This report was researched and written by the victims' services advocates (VSA) project.

The VSA project was commissioned by the former Victims Commissioner in anticipation of the arrival of the police and crime commissioner (PCC) for Kent.

Introduced by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, elected PCCs will replace police authorities across England and Wales from November 2012.

This report aims to:

- summarise current support for victims in Kent
- identify what victims need from local services
- propose a course of action by the PCC to meet these needs.

1.1 The report was commissioned to look particularly at the needs of the following groups:

- victims of anti-social behaviour
- victims of domestic abuse
- victims of sexual violence
- victims of hate crime
- people bereaved by murder and manslaughter
- young victims of crime.

1.2 Five sources of information contributed to the findings of this report:

- a mapping exercise to identify current services for victims in Kent (see appendix 6 for a list of organisations mapped)
- the contribution of local organisations and stakeholders
- focus groups and interviews with victims of crime
- a review of statistical data, mainly from the British Crime Survey
- existing local evidence and research on victims of crime.

1.3 This information told us that:

1.3.1 Kent has a complex network of statutory and voluntary organisations working to help victims. The voluntary sector provides a lot of specialist support services and help is also available from a number of statutory agencies, in the main relating to anti-social behaviour, hate crime and domestic abuse. There are also a number of effective strategic and operational partnerships, with representation from all sectors. Despite a reduction in staff resources in many organisations, working together in the interest of victims and witnesses remains a key priority.

1.3.2 Victims told us that there is some good practice throughout Kent, in respect of their treatment in the criminal justice system and in the support available. They were also honest about the things that had not worked well and rather than simply complain, they were hugely keen to suggest improvements and ensure their experiences were not in vain.

1.3.3 Within the last two years, there seems to have been little local research undertaken which was relevant to our research; potentially due to the lack of available staff to resource such work in the current downturn. That said, national research and local knowledge abound, and we were able to draw out some immensely useful information to support our work.

1.3.4 The statistics provide evidence that crime in Kent continues to impact greatly on the community. However, when considering the British Crime Survey satisfaction data, 57% of those surveyed in Kent believe that the police are doing a good job in their area and 70% said

they have confidence in their local police.¹

1.3.5 The present financial uncertainty has clearly had an enormous impact on all the organisations we spoke to. Staff cuts see victim services stretched, yet providers are still striving to meet demand and ensure a quality service. Perhaps more than previously, there is a keenness to work collaboratively, to share resources and work together more effectively, in order to protect key support services to victims and witnesses.



1.4 Looking in more depth at the needs of Kent victims and witnesses in the key crime categories, we further identified that:

1.4.1 There is effective multi-agency work to reduce anti-social behaviour in Kent but funding cuts are already impacting on the ability of these services to deliver. Kent Police have introduced a harm-based approach, which is intended to 'wrap around' victims of anti-social behaviour, including those who are most vulnerable. The key will be publicity, to ensure that anti-social behaviour victims are equally able to benefit from this approach.

1.4.2 Kent has many specialist domestic abuse services. These are often underfunded and understaffed, with patchy provision of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates. Some services

¹ Victim Support analysis based on Home Office: Research, Development and Statistics Directorate and BMRB, *Social Research, British Crime Survey; 2010-11*, Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive (distributor). Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO and the Queen's Printer for Scotland.

are developing useful partnership working to adapt to the financial climate. Kent also has effective partnerships in place such as the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy Group. Kent Police have developed a new means of assessing domestic abuse referrals but there have been concerns over this model.

1.4.3 Many victims of sexual violence need long-term, specialist counselling yet it is currently inadequately resourced and Kent only has two Independent Sexual Violence Advisers. Kent is also the only county in the South East not to have a fully-functioning Sexual Assault Referral Centre, which falls far short of Department of Health recommendations.

1.4.4 There is a need for local investment in specialist services to those bereaved by homicide, particularly as counselling, for example, is often needed in the longer-term.

1.4.5 Victims of hate crime do not always know what hate crime is and what their rights are. Despite agencies such as Kent Police making concerted efforts to contact vulnerable communities, there is a need to engage more proactively with such communities, consulting them. Victims of hate crime want to be taken seriously, want regular police follow up, and want to be more involved in the criminal justice process.

1.4.6 Specialist services for young victims are limited and investment into this area of work is needed. Young people do not want to be judged and stereotyped. They need emotional support and want police to engage with them.



1.5 Taking into account the findings of this report and the duty on PCCs to obtain the views of victims of crime before setting

their policing plan, this report proposes the following actions to address the issues identified in this report:



1.6 Proposed actions

1.6.1 The PCC should lead a police and partnership process to ensure that there is a service which meets the needs of each individual victim. This includes meeting the needs of those who do not report to the police by ensuring that there is a non-police reporting service able to meet their particular needs. More efforts need to be made to contact victims and communities who experience access barriers to services and those who do not wish to report.

1.6.2 The PCC and police should improve engagement and consultation with victims. The PCC and criminal justice partners should make a measurable commitment to improve communication with victims and adhere to it.

1.6.3 The PCC should work with partners to ensure that support for victims is available from the outset, taking them through the entire victim's journey and beyond, when required. This will include working with other commissioners of services to agree prioritisation. This is about ensuring that the varying needs of each individual victim are respected and met.

1.6.4 The PCC should make it a priority to carry out more detailed work into the specific needs of vulnerable victims and the needs of victims' services across Kent. Building on the VSA project, the PCC should find every gap in service provision in Kent. This will mean working with stakeholders, reporting back on gaps and delivering actions to fill these gaps. A directory of victims' services is also

recommended to encourage further joined up working and access for victims to services.

1.6.5 The PCC should lead on a commissioning process for funding vital support organisations within the Police Force Authority. The PCC should work with other commissioners to securely fund services which are shown to provide support needed for victims. Key services for victims should exist equitably across the area.

2 Introduction

2.1. Police and crime commissioners

Introduced by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, elected police and crime commissioners (PCCs) will replace police authorities across England and Wales from November 2012. In London the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime took on this role from January 2012.

PCCs will be elected by the public to hold chief constables and their force(s) to account. PCCs will be responsible for setting the police force's strategic priorities, cutting crime and ensuring that policing is efficient and effective. PCCs will also be responsible for appointing the chief constable.

PCCs will be expected to work with a range of public, private and voluntary partners working in criminal justice, community safety and public protection. They will have a significant role to play in the commissioning of some local services² which may include services for victims of crime³.

PCCs will also have a specific duty to obtain the views of victims of crime⁴ before setting the local policing plan. This gives an unprecedented opportunity for victims to influence the services they get.

2.2. This report

This report was researched and developed by the victims' services advocates (VSA) project. The project was commissioned by the

former commissioner for victims and witnesses in anticipation of the arrival of PCCs, and delivered by Victim Support. Victim Support is the national charity giving free and confidential help to victims of crime, witnesses, their family, friends and others affected across England and Wales. This report was written for Kent and aims to:

- provide a picture of current support for victims in Kent
- identify what victims need from local services
- propose a course of action by the PCC to meet these needs.

The report seeks to present the views of victims and service providers in Kent.

While the project took great care to explore the full range of issues concerning victims' services in Kent and to consult a wide range of local stakeholders and partner organisations, it is acknowledged that there may be issues that the report has not been able to cover, given the timescales and scope. It is also acknowledged that, given the complexity of the subject area, in some cases issues are raised which do not have straightforward solutions. These will require close partnership working across systems and agencies to deliver change.

The report was commissioned to look particularly at the needs of the following groups:

- victims of anti-social behaviour
- victims of domestic abuse
- victims of sexual violence
- victims of hate crime
- people bereaved by murder and manslaughter
- young victims of crime.

Victims' services advocates were recruited to identify and research the needs of victims of crime, and to identify and research issues of

² Police and Crime Commissioners: Have you got what it takes? Home Office, 2011

³ At the time of writing, the government is consulting on proposals to devolve responsibility for commissioning local services to victims and witnesses to PCCs (Getting it right for victims and witnesses, Ministry of Justice, January 2012)

⁴ Introduced by The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

concern to those who provide services to victims.

This is one of 42 local reports, covering every police area in England and Wales.⁵ Delivery of the reports has been overseen by colleagues from the Home Office, which funded the project, and the Ministry of Justice. Ownership of all 42 reports sits with the Home Office.



⁵ Including the Metropolitan Police, but not the City of London Police, which is unaffected by the reforms.

3 What we learned

Five sources of information contributed to the findings of this report:

- a mapping exercise to identify the services that currently exist for victims in Kent (see appendix 6 for a list)
- consultation with local organisations and stakeholders
- focus groups and interviews with victims of crime
- a review of statistical data from sources including the British Crime Survey
- existing local evidence and research.

This chapter outlines what we learned from these different sources about what victims need from local services.



3.1. Mapping services to victims in Kent

The victims' services advocates (VSA) project undertook a mapping exercise to identify services for victims in Kent. This involved:

- desk based research into local services
- discussions with key local organisations – including police, local authority and third sector agencies – about services available
- feedback from local victims of crime.

What was in scope?

This was a time-limited project, spanning a 12 month period. The project focused primarily on services for:

- victims of anti-social behaviour
- victims of domestic abuse
- victims of sexual violence

- victims of hate crime
- people bereaved by murder and manslaughter
- young victims of crime.

It also included services for witnesses if offered as part of a combined victim/witness service.

We acknowledged at the outset that a single organisation may provide a range of individual services, so this exercise set out to map services, not organisations.

What was out of scope?

The research did not include services offering more generic support – for example services offering general support around housing, or drug and alcohol support. It is acknowledged however that some victims may not seek help from specialist victims' services, and therefore that we may not have included the full range of services accessed or required by victims.

Further research would be required to assess the full range of services used by victims, especially those in the most vulnerable circumstances, whom services can find harder to reach.

This mapping exercise should not be seen as comprehensive or exhaustive. It should also be noted that, as with any such exercise, the landscape can change rapidly. To the best of our knowledge, the information contained in this report was correct at the time of writing.

The landscape of services to victims in Kent

Kent is socio-economically diverse with relatively more affluent western areas and more deprived eastern areas. It is policed by Kent Police, who have three divisions. These are the North Division, West Division, and the East Division.

The county is administered by Kent County Council, and the unitary

authority area of Medway by Medway Council. Below Kent County Council are twelve district councils. Each district has a community safety partnership (CSP). These were established by the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998 to deliver partnership crime and disorder interventions for local areas.

Kent CSPs coordinate, at a county level, community safety initiatives and actions involving domestic violence, anti-social behaviour, hate crime and substance misuse. They either deliver services themselves or contract service providers to do so.

Kent also has a criminal justice board, which includes members from each of the criminal justice agencies in Kent, including Kent Police and the Crown Prosecution Service. The Kent Criminal Justice Board therefore represents many of the agencies which play a part in the victim and witness journey through the criminal justice system.

The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Kent Police are committed to compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, which sets out minimum requirements for updating victims of crime between 1-5 days depending on the trigger point and vulnerability of the victim. According to the 2010/11 British Crime Survey, however, 77% of people in Kent had never heard of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime before undertaking the survey.⁶ This is higher than the national average of 72%.

Kent Police User Satisfaction Survey

⁶ Victim Support analysis based on Home Office: Research, Development and Statistics Directorate and BMRB, *Social Research, British Crime Survey; 2010-11*, as above.

Like all police forces, Kent Police carries out a regular User Satisfaction Survey with victims and witnesses of crime. The User Satisfaction Survey for the rolling year ending September 2011 says that 95.9% are satisfied with how they are treated, 87.3% are satisfied with police actions, and 78.7% are satisfied with police follow-up. This data shows that for the rolling year ending September 2011, Kent Police was in the top ten police forces for satisfaction with actions and satisfaction with treatment. It was 13th out of 43 police forces for satisfaction with follow-up.⁷

User Satisfaction Surveys exclude people under 16 years old, however it should be noted that Kent Police engages with young people in many ways, including having a Youth Panel composed of 11 - 16 year olds. The Kent Police Authority also has a number of consultation methods underway to engage with young people, and already targets young people across Kent through a school programme, through social media and through summer road shows.



Summary of service mapping in Kent

The service mapping exercise revealed a complex network of statutory and voluntary organisations working to help victims in Kent. There are many services for victims of domestic abuse in particular, with police coordination of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), domestic abuse forums and excellent support services. As elsewhere in the country, there is patchy Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) provision, with often precarious

⁷ Kent Police also came out in the top ten police forces for rolling year ending September 2011 for satisfaction with making contact and overall satisfaction.

funding. As of March 2012, Kent had 23.9 IDVAs, provided by ten agencies.⁸

Sexual violence also has excellent support services. Kent's Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), however, does not meet Department of Health recommendations and there are only two Independent Sexual Advisers (ISVAs) for Kent, far less than the Department of Health recommend.

In general, victims' services in Kent are already suffering from funding cuts. Police Community Safety Units, for instance, which help victims of anti-social behaviour, are having to scale back vital services. Domestic abuse and sexual violence services are losing funding for services essential to the recovery of victims, such as self-help groups.



⁸ Please refer to Appendix 2 for further details on IDVA provision in Kent.

3.2 What victims in Kent told us

From autumn 2011 we held a series of focus groups and interviews with victims of crime in Kent. Some but not all had also been witnesses; some had had no contact with the criminal justice system at all.

We recruited people to the focus groups and interviews through:

- 'gateway' organisations, i.e. organisations whose services the victims' services advocate had already had contact with through the mapping exercise. Victim Support, as the host organisation for the project, was one such organisation
- partner organisations in the criminal justice system, especially the police
- advertising using bespoke publicity materials
- publicity in local media.

All participants had generally experienced the crime in the last two years. We sought to ensure from the outset that their feedback was based on recent experience and relevant to current services. The exception to this was some victims of sexual abuse who had experienced the crime up to five years previously but had received services relating to that experience more recently.

The project did not interview people bereaved by murder and manslaughter. Instead, the project has referred to the 2011 report by the then commissioner for victims and witnesses on the service landscape for people bereaved by murder and manslaughter⁹.

The project was also asked to consider the needs of young people as victims of crime. In many police force areas, there are very few specialist services for young victims. Evidence also suggests that young people are very reluctant to report crime in the

first place, making it more difficult to identify and respond to their needs. To ensure that young people, including young victims, had a voice in this report, the project visited a youth group and interviewed a group of young people about their perspectives on being a victim of crime and the kinds of services they would consider useful.

To avoid singling young people out within focus groups, the VSA did not ask individual young people whether or not they had been victims of crime. This means that it is not possible for us to say that the views expressed apply to young victims *per se*.

Further specialist research would be required in order to determine the specific service needs of young victims of crime.

What we learnt from victims in Kent

This report focuses on victims of anti-social behaviour, victims of four crime categories, and on the views of children and young people on children and young people as victims of crime. It recognises that there is room for further research on other types of victim, including those with a disability and those affected by mental health problems.

In the course of conducting interviews and focus groups with victims of different crime types and anti-social behaviour, common themes quickly emerged. The interviews and focus groups allowed victims to discuss a range of matters such as what they would like from the police, what support they received or would like to receive, and any experiences they had of the criminal justice system.



Listening and understanding

⁹ Review into the Needs of Families Bereaved by Homicide, Louise Casey CB, July 2011

A common theme that emerged is that victims want to feel listened to, understood and believed. Victims explained that where this happened, they felt valued, reassured and taken seriously. It also gave them more self-confidence as well as belief that the police would be able to help them. Where they felt this did not happen, they felt more vulnerable, frustrated, perhaps isolated and – in some cases – more prone to mental health difficulties. Victims also emphasised the importance of being immediately believed because it may have been very hard to report in the first place. Domestic abuse victims, for instance, discussed the complex dilemma of whether to report or not to report, emphasising that it can take weeks, months and even years for a victim of domestic abuse to report in the first instance.

Tailored support

Victims also feel that services need to consider the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour on each individual, and act accordingly. Victims of anti-social behaviour, for instance, spoke of the impact of years of such behaviour on them, and how it can affect every aspect of one's life, including the ability to work. Victims feel they should receive flexible, tailored support to support them from initial report through to when that need ends. They also want services to fully understand the complexity of crimes committed against them, for instance understanding that domestic abuse is not just physical; also to consider the needs of individuals from black, minority and ethnic backgrounds.

Communication

Another common theme that emerged was victims want to be able to rely on and trust services which help them. They want promises to be kept, want to be informed of support they are entitled to, want criminal justice processes explained to them, and want to be

regularly updated regarding their case. They also want to be able to access support easily and directly over the phone from the same person or people. Most of the victims spoken to did not feel they had been updated as much as they should have been and did not always feel that processes had been explained to them. Some spoke of promises being broken, for instance where a victim of anti-social behaviour was told a police car was en route, only to later be told that the car had not yet been sent.

Services working together

Finally, victims want services to work together to help them. This means ensuring that they refer victims between themselves, as with the police and specialist services, that they share important information and that they give consistent advice. Where this happened, victims felt more of their needs were met and felt reassured that something was being done to help them.

"You just want to be believed, respected and taken seriously. Getting these things right would automatically improve things massively for victims of crime."

(Male victim of race hate crime)



3.3 What the data tells us about victims and witnesses in Kent

A number of sources of data are used throughout this report to give a more comprehensive picture of crime in Kent. We have drawn on data from the British Crime Survey (BCS) to understand the true extent of personal crime, because the survey includes crimes that are not reported to, or recorded by, the police.

Police recorded crime is an important indicator of the

workload for local police forces and also includes crime categories that are not covered by the BCS, including homicide.

Crime in Kent

In 2010/11, there were 105,638 recorded crimes in Kent, or 63 per 1000 population. This compares to the national average of 76 per 1000 population.¹⁰ The 2010/11 British Crime Survey (BCS), which includes data on unrecorded as well as recorded crime, estimates there were 145,734 personal crimes in Kent, or 865 per 10,000 population.¹¹ The national average for this is 837 personal crimes per 10,000 population. The 2010/11 BCS also estimates that there were 175,510 household crimes in Kent, or 2,547 per 10,000 households.¹² This compares to the national average of 2,496 crimes per 10,000 households.

Perceptions of the local police and council

According to the British Crime Survey in Kent, 57% of people think the police are doing a good or excellent job. 56% of people also believe that the police are dealing with local concerns.

When questioned about whether the police and council are dealing with issues in their area, 46% of victims agreed or strongly agreed. When asked whether the police and council seek people's views about

issues in their area, 44% agreed or tended to agree. 43% of people in Kent agreed that the police and local council keep people informed about how they are dealing with issues that matter in their area.

Satisfaction with the police and the CJS

The BCS records overall confidence in the police, rather than satisfaction. 64% of victims in Kent say they have confidence in the police. 58% of victims think that the police do a good or excellent job in their area, as compared to 12% who think they do a poor or very poor job. 38% of victims say that the police can be relied on to be there when they need them. The survey also shows that high levels of people feel the police treat them with respect (80%) and treat everyone fairly (66%).

54% of victims were confident that the criminal justice system was fair. This fell to 39% of victims when looking at confidence that the criminal justice system, as a whole, is effective.

When asked what is the most important thing the criminal justice system could to improve their confidence, most people (26%) emphasised imposing tougher sentences. This was followed by tackling anti-social behaviour and minor crime (17%) and reducing the level of re-offending (12%).

When asked whether the criminal justice system takes into account the views of victims and witnesses 70% of respondents felt that it did. When asked whether the criminal justice system gives victims and witnesses the support they need, 58% of victims felt that it did.

Referrals from Kent Police to Victim Support

Victim Support (VS) work with local police to support victims and witnesses. Referral to VS used to be optional for victims, but now all victims of the crime

¹⁰ Victim Support analysis based on Home Office: Research, Development and Statistics Directorate and BMRB, *Social Research, British Crime Survey; 2010-11*, as above.

¹¹ Personal crimes relate to all crimes against the individual and only relate to the respondent's own personal experience (not that of other people in the household). An example of a personal crime would be an assault. Published BCS data for 'all personal crime' excludes sexual offences (except for 'wounding with a sexual motive') as the number of sexual offences picked up by the survey is too small to give reliable estimates.

¹² Household crimes are considered to be all vehicle and property-related crimes and respondents are asked whether anyone currently residing in the household has experienced any incidents within the reference period.

categories referred to VS are contacted and offered support. These categories include assault (and murder), sexual assault, domestic abuse and burglary. Referral rates vary between forces and work is currently under way to increase referrals to VS, as, for instance, only 40% of racial offences (assaults and harassment) in 2011 were referred to VS.



3.4 What partner organisations and stakeholders in Kent told us

This report could not have been produced without the generous contribution of service providers throughout the voluntary and statutory sectors in Kent, including criminal justice agencies.

Their contribution has been invaluable in:

- mapping service provision
- recruiting participants for focus groups and interviews
- obtaining evidence and research
- reviewing our findings and recommendations
- publicising the project and helping the victims' services advocates develop their network of contacts.

Feedback from different partner organisations and stakeholders, including service providers, was diverse. This reflected the different groups of victims they come into contact with, the different crimes those victims have experienced, and the different points in those experiences at which they come into contact with victims. However, some common themes did emerge.

It was apparent that the economic downturn has had an enormous impact on the ability for all sectors to deliver services to victims and this was a common

theme reiterated by most organisations.

The statutory sector felt that although there had been cuts to staff resources, there was still an expectation from partners and public to deliver the same level and quality of service. The voluntary sector was more focused on the future of services, the issues around a lack of sustainable funding affecting development, staff retention and the problem of offering long-term support with short-term money. The voluntary sector also raised the challenges they face in ensuring they meet the needs of clients before those of funders. As the agencies' goal posts move to accommodate change, it seems that there is often an expectation that the services they fund should amend their path in order to reinforce the statutory service, potentially at the cost of the support of victims.

Some statutory agencies considered there was sometimes a lack of effective collaboration within the statutory sector, impacting on partnership working. The voluntary sector considered that many statutory agencies lack knowledge and understanding of issues such as domestic abuse and hate crime, which impedes effective service delivery to the victim.

- people bereaved by murder and manslaughter.

After the initial mapping exercise, it was agreed that the project should also consider:

- victims of hate crime
- young victims of crime.

This chapter considers all the information gathered over the lifetime of the project and aims to draw some conclusions about the priority service needs of each of these groups of victims in Kent. These conclusions have been informed by existing evidence and research, both national and local.

4.1. Victims of prolonged antisocial behaviour

What is anti-social behaviour?

*"Behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator."*¹³

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) produced the 'Stop the Rot' report on anti-social behaviour in September 2010.

This stated that, "ASB is a blight on the lives of millions who are directly affected; on the perceptions of millions more for whom it signals neglect in their neighbourhoods and the decline of whole towns and city areas; and the reputation of the police who are often thought to be unconcerned or ineffectual".

Addressing anti-social behaviour incidents can be a long and drawn out process, requiring a coordinated approach from a range of agencies. Victims can find the process confusing if it is not properly explained, which may result in them losing confidence in the process.

4 The service needs of victims of crime

This project was initially commissioned to focus on:

- victims of prolonged anti-social behaviour
- victims of domestic abuse
- victims of sexual violence

¹³ Crime and Disorder Act 1998



Anti-social behaviour in Kent

Anti-social behaviour is a county wide strategic priority as well as a priority for each of the community safety partnerships across Kent. It covers a range of incidents and offences and for the purposes of this report, the BCS measures of perception of anti-social behaviour and recorded anti-social behaviour incidents were used.¹⁴ These figures provide an indication of levels of anti-social behaviour.

In 2010/11 there were 78,431 police recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour in Kent. This represents a 4% decrease in the level of incidents from 2009/10, compared with a national decrease of 8%.¹⁵

The 2010/11 BCS indicates that 13% people in Kent perceived there to be high levels of anti-social behaviour in 2010/11.

The user satisfaction survey carried out by Kent Police reported that 75% of victims who reported anti-social behaviour incidents to the police were satisfied with the police response.

However, the British Crime Survey, which surveys those who do and do not report to the police, identified that 44% of victims in Kent were confident that authorities in the area are effective at reducing anti-social behaviour. 37% of victims agreed that the police and local council seek people's views about the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in their area.

¹⁴ Victim Support analysis based on Home Office: Research, Development and Statistics Directorate and BMRB, *Social Research, British Crime Survey; 2010-11*, as above.

¹⁵ Ibid.

It would appear that in a climate where anti-social behaviour has reduced, the public still view it as a serious concern:

"Anti-social behaviour can have a terrible impact on people and it needs to be taken very, very seriously."



What else do we know about anti-social behaviour in Kent?

There are a number of organisations in Kent working towards the resolution of anti-social behaviour and some good practice has developed over recent years, which includes multi-agency action groups and increasing visible policing through Police Community Support Officers.

Kent's socio-economic make up is very diverse and – broadly speaking – West Kent is more affluent than East Kent. This is reflected to some degree in anti-social behaviour across Kent, with high problems of anti-social behaviour in East Kent in particular. Swale, for instance, has a large level of deprivation, a high level of social housing and a large youth population, some of whom will be adversely affected by reductions in direct service delivery by Kent Youth Service.

In 2010, HMIC undertook research into what works when dealing with anti-social behaviour. Its report 'Anti-Social Behaviour: Stop the rot' emphasised four factors, any one of which indicate significant risk where anti-social behaviour is involved but, when combined, may lead to very significant problems. These were repeat victims, illness and disability, people who are at home for lengthy periods, and areas of particular deprivation.¹⁶

¹⁶ HMIC, 'ASB: Stop the Rot', 2010

As in other parts of the country, these factors ring true in Kent.

Although demand for support against anti-social behaviour remains high, professionals have also noted that perceptions, or fear, of anti-social behaviour is greater than the incidents that happen. There is also a public discernment of young people as perpetrators of it, which combined with low tolerance for minor incidents, create tension in neighbourhoods.

Kent has also seen a relatively high influx of immigration from Eastern Europe and other countries, which has sometimes led to further tension in deprived areas, such as Dover.

Support for victims of anti-social behaviour

Kent Police's policing plan for 2011 - 2014 says:

"We are committed to effectively tackling anti-social behaviour to minimise both the harm it can cause and the adverse impact it can have on individuals, groups and communities. Guided by our recently updated Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy, we will be taking a new approach to its management over the coming year. This will be based upon assessing the level of harm that anti-social behaviour causes to individuals and communities and using this information to prioritise our attention where it is most needed." ¹⁷

Kent Police now assesses risk to a victim of anti-social behaviour as soon as they report, while also identifying repeat and vulnerable victims. This is in line with the 2010 HMIC report, which recommended a harm-based approach.

Kent Police also works closely with local and unitary authority

partners in district-level Community Safety Units to share data and intelligence, to try to find effective solutions to problems and to take joint action. Their neighbourhood policing teams are designed to act according to the needs of individuals and communities, particularly taking into consideration the needs of vulnerable people.

A common theme expressed by all Community Safety Units is how funding reductions are having a negative impact on their ability to deal with anti-social behaviour. Ashford, for instance, is concerned over how it will be able to afford to pay for repairs of CCTV equipment installed in one area, which has had particularly high anti-social behaviour problems. Sevenoaks is concerned over how it will be able to fund services to help young people and their families around anti-social behaviour. Swale's community safety officer, who delivered a series of projects to reduce anti-social behaviour, could not be funded after March 2012.

Feedback from victims of anti-social behaviour in Kent

Participants in the Kent Police Force Area had different views based on their individual circumstances. There was a clear understanding from those who were experiencing ongoing anti-social behaviour that the powers of the police to take action were very limited and that the onus of action fell on their landlords, who were mainly social housing landlords. Throughout the research, all participants emphasised the importance of being kept informed about what was going on and the importance of police managing expectations. A quick response to a call was deemed very necessary, firstly for peace of mind and to make people feel safe, but also to show the perpetrators that if they broke the law and the police were called they would come:

¹⁷ Kent Police and Kent Police Authority, 'Policing Kent 2011/2014', 2011

"We waited for the police and were then called and told no-one could come until the next day. It would be nice to have a report back from the police."

A consistent approach was felt necessary by nearly all participants researched. They felt that it could be a case of 'pot luck' on what action would be taken depending on the officer that was called to the scene and on what their level of knowledge of a) the local area and b) anti-social behaviour was.

Victims also repeatedly emphasised the importance of police seeing the 'bigger picture', which Kent Police's still-relatively-new harm-based approach now considers:

"I really feel that if there are victims, who are very vulnerable, there's a bigger picture that needs to be seen - if it's a huge campaign of anti-social behaviour against such vulnerable people."



Case study: male victim of anti-social behaviour

Soon after Kevin's new neighbours moved in, his quality of life began to suffer.

At first, music would be played all night and at a very high volume. Shortly afterwards, people would appear at his neighbour's. It was clear they were there to take drugs and to join in the nightly 'party'.

Kevin reported to the police and community safety officers turned up, warning the neighbours. This happened several times. He was also impressed by them, when they spoke with him:

"The officers that have come to my home have been lovely. And they've been kind, and they've listened, and I did feel that they were listening to what I was saying."

Kevin became frustrated, however, because nothing appeared to change and the police did not always get back to him:

"All the times I've been to the police it's been really necessary and when they don't get back to you, you think 'Now what do we do'."

He felt that each incident was logged separately and that, although he was offered helpful advice, these were "suggestions for one thing", rather than about "the bigger picture". At times, environmental health and the police both suggested he contact the other respective agency.

Eventually, Kevin managed to persuade other neighbours to complain as well. It was then that the police and local housing association officers became more involved and the anti-social behaviour stopped.

Today, Kevin just wishes that it had been stopped earlier and that he'd been given a "plan of what to do if it continues. Step one: we'll do this, and so on."

Case study: Ashford Community Safety Unit

Ashford Community Safety Unit delivers a wide range of services to people who report anti-social behaviour. It brings together police community safety officers, environmental health, housing officers and community wardens to assess and develop solutions. Support includes referrals to Joint Family Management Programme Officers, Parenting Early Intervention Programme Officers, and Youth Intervention Support Programme Officers.

The unit also actively engages with people across Ashford's community. It goes into schools, offering advice around victims of youth crime, and - via its Safety in Action programme - advice around issues including drugs and alcohol and anti-social behaviour. In 2011, 1000 Year 6 pupils

engaged with 9 different Safety in Action workshops. It also organises and funds diversionary activities with support from partners such as Kent Youth Service and Parish Councils, and members of the public are invited in to have property and cycle marking undertaken. Finally, it holds community engagements throughout the year, advising the public about issues such as home security and property/cycle marking.

Between 4th January 2011 and 21st December 2011, 2,858 ASB incidents in Ashford were reported to the police and 16 were reported to Ashford Borough Council. The unit has also had increasing self-referrals and housing provider referrals for mediation. At the same time, the work the unit carries out faces an uncertain future, as funding cuts come in and so many of its services, such as its mobile CCTV vehicle, largely, or exclusively, depend on this funding.

Conclusions

It is apparent that police and agency efforts are working effectively to reduce anti-social behaviour in Kent and that there is an intention to continue along this vein, however, not all the public are aware of this commitment, nor of much progress and this needs to be addressed if levels of confidence and satisfaction are to be raised. Most of the victims spoken to, for instance, spoke of the need for authorities to see the 'bigger picture' and to consider the impact on each victim, while Kent Police is in fact currently rolling out a 'harm-based' approach to tackling anti-social behaviour.¹⁸

¹⁸ The harm-based approach follows recommendations contained in HMIC's 'Stop the rot' report (2010). It encourages identification and greater understanding of cases where there is a risk of harm to individuals caused through criminal or nuisance behaviour.

It is also important that this approach ensures that reported incidents are not taken in isolation and that ongoing victimisation and hotspot locations are identified, thus ensuring that resources are targeted effectively and that victims get the support they need.

As with other crime areas, victims of anti-social behaviour need to have regular follow-up from agencies. They want to be able to rely on services as this makes them feel reassured. Regular contact can help to alleviate, or reduce the likelihood of, feelings of isolation and of mental health difficulties.

Community Safety Units have developed a variety of effective means of dealing with anti-social behaviour yet many are already feeling the effect of funding cuts and some vital services supplied by them have already been cut. This in turn may hinder the success of services in tackling the 'bigger picture' of anti-social behaviour.

Frontline staff responding to incidents of anti-social behaviour need to be aware of the services that are available to victims, how those organisations can help and how a victim can access their support.

Getting all of this right has the potential to hit anti-social behaviour hard. Victims will be more willing to report it, knowing they are justified in doing so and that services will 'wrap around' them. Public confidence will be improved. Perpetrators will be duly warned that anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated.

The key however, once this new approach is in place, will be effective publicity to ensure that the public are aware, understand and utilise this approach.

4.2. Victims of domestic abuse

What is domestic abuse?

'Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse [psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional] between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.'¹⁹

Domestic abuse is not a type of crime in itself but describes the context in which types of crime can occur. The types of crime most commonly 'flagged' by police as domestic abuse when victims are referred to Victim Support are actual bodily harm, common assault and harassment.

The British Crime Survey 2010/11 includes a self-completion module on intimate violence. This covers emotional, financial and physical abuse by partners or family members, as well as sexual assaults and stalking experienced by 16-59 year-olds.

Women are more likely than men to have experienced all types of intimate violence. Overall, 30 per cent of women and 17 per cent of men had experienced domestic violence since the age of 16. These figures were equivalent to an estimated 4.8 million female and 2.8 million 16-59 year-old male victims of domestic violence in England and Wales.²⁰

In addition 7% cent of women and 5% of men reported having experienced domestic violence in the last year, equivalent to an estimated 1.2 million female and 800,000 male victims in England and Wales.²¹

Much has changed in how the police and other agencies view victims of domestic abuse. The creation of multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) and independent domestic violence advisers (IDVAs) has led to improvements in the services victims receive.

The domestic abuse charity Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) estimates that for every £1 spent on MARACs at least £6 of public money can be saved on direct costs to agencies every year.²² This represents potential savings to the public purse of a national MARAC programme are over £740m annually, although it should be acknowledged there have been calls for further research to verify these figures.

The government's Action Plan to End Violence against Women and Girls, published in March 2011, contains 35 wide-ranging proposals, which require partnership working with and between government departments. It is too early to comment on the effectiveness of the action plan, but a review of IDVAs in 2009 estimated that there were less than half the number of trained advisers needed to give adequate coverage for all high risk cases in the UK. Research undertaken for this report indicates that there are still gaps. This is a continuing cause for concern.²³

A recurring theme in our conversations with victims of domestic abuse was that their first experiences with a support agency were a key factor in determining whether they would continue with any action that had

¹⁹ Home Office

²⁰ Victim Support analysis based on Home Office: Research, Development and Statistics Directorate and BMRB, *Social Research, British Crime Survey; 2010-11*, Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor]. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO and the Queen's Printer for Scotland.

²¹ Victim Support analysis based on Home Office: Research, Development and Statistics Directorate and BMRB, *Social*

Research, British Crime Survey; 2010-11, Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor]. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO and the Queen's Printer for Scotland.

²² CAADA, 2010

²³ Safety in Numbers - A Multi-site Evaluation of Independent Violence adviser Services, CAADA 2009

been initiated, and whether they would report any future incidents.



Domestic abuse in Kent

According to Kent Police data for 2010/11 on number of domestic abuse incidents reported to Kent Police, domestic abuse is most reported in Medway (3879 incidents), followed by Thanet (2616 incidents). Sevenoaks has the lowest amount of reported incidents (837 incidents).

The same data shows that in 2010/11, Ashford, Shepway, Dover, and Tonbridge & Malling had the highest percentage of repeat domestic abuse victims reported to the police. 25.3% of Ashford's reported domestic abuse victims, 24.5% of Shepway's, and 24.3% of Dover's and Tonbridge & Malling's were repeat victims. By contrast, Canterbury and Sevenoaks had the lowest number of repeat victims reported to the police: 22% of Canterbury's domestic abuse victims and 23.1% of Sevenoaks'.

Based on regional data from the BCS, the estimate for an area the size of Kent is that over 43,000 women and girls aged 16-59 have been a victim of domestic abuse in the past year.²⁴ These estimates also suggest that 54,000 women and girls aged 16-59 were victims of stalking in Kent in 2010/11.²⁵ Kent Police recorded 18,509 incidents with female victims in 2011/12.

It is important to acknowledge that, as elsewhere in England, there are also significant numbers of male victims of domestic abuse in Kent. Kent Police recorded 4,117 incidents with male victims in 2011/12. Kent also does not have a domestic abuse service for male victims only. There is room

for further research on this type of victim in Kent.

There are a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies in Kent dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse. However, service provision varies. Some areas have a variety of services in place, whilst others struggle to provide any specialist services. Traditionally the majority of domestic abuse services have been provided by voluntary sector agencies, with a shift occurring over the past few years from grant giving to commissioning. A significant amount of funding for domestic abuse services is secured for only 12 month periods at a time, for example, Community Safety Partnership funding. Only a few service providers manage to secure more medium / long-term 3-5 year funding, such as a Supporting People Grant, Comic Relief or National Lottery Grants. Agencies often have to pool their resources and expertise.



What else do we know about domestic abuse in Kent?

In 2011, a pilot Kent Domestic Abuse Partnership took place in Canterbury. This was undertaken with the view that establishing a domestic abuse multi-agency team would improve the current fragmented and confusing domestic abuse services environment. The pilot was to include an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA), a Domestic Abuse Outreach Worker, a Domestic Abuse Housing Officer, and a Police and Domestic Abuse Health Professional. The idea was that if the pilot was successful, over time, teams comprising the various professionals available in each area could be established across Kent and Medway if agencies are willing to work in this new collaborative way. The pilot, however, has not yet been formally evaluated. This is primarily

²⁴ Violence Against Women and Girls Ready Reckoner.

²⁵ Ibid.

because agencies struggled to commit staff to the project and to record outcomes, and because Kent Police pulled out of the project in November 2011 due to Kent Police's restructure.

Work with offenders is also of immense value in the fight to reduce domestic abuse incidents. The Kent Probation Service runs the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) which provides an opportunity for male offenders to challenge their behaviour in a peer group setting with a view to reducing the risk of them reoffending. The IDAP in Kent has 1.4 Women's Safety Workers.

Acknowledging that organisations are facing considerable difficulty due to budget reductions and funding cuts, the Audit Commission produced a domestic abuse self-assessment tool in September 2011.

²⁶ This enables partnerships to undertake an audit, to assess the situation in their area and identify the characteristics of a successful service, recognise local priorities and offer guidance on how to make practical changes. It suggests that organisations 'will want to show existing managers as well as new health and police commissioners how domestic abuse services can support mainstream statutory work and save money for partners as well as helping victims.'

Support for victims of domestic abuse

The Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy Group run by the Kent and Medway Domestic Violence Co-ordinator, brings together a range of statutory and voluntary agencies, including Kent Police. It has four ambitions: to reduce domestic abuse and change attitudes, to provide support to victims of domestic abuse, to protect victims of domestic abuse, and to continue to improve joint

working between agencies. In May 2012 it set up its own website, which provides domestic abuse general information and resources, and enables people to search for information on specialist services by postcode, town name or council area. There is also a domestic abuse co-ordinator in Swale district.

Since January 2012, all reported domestic abuse incidents are assessed by Kent Police's Central Referral Unit. High risk victims are dealt with by Combined Safeguarding Teams, medium risk victims are dealt with by Neighbourhood Policing Teams, and standard risk victims are signposted to non-police services. Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) operates across the area to deal with high risk cases and Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) support high risk victims. Kent also has local domestic abuse forums, which bring partnerships together to tackle local issues, domestic abuse one-stop shops, and three Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) at Maidstone, Margate and Medway.

Kent's provision of IDVAs is very patchy. All are in very high demand, sometimes sharing areas, with one in Medway, for instance, having 360 clients in March 2012. Provision does not fall in line with the government's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (VAWG) and funding is usually precarious, with three IDVA posts under threat at the time of writing.²⁷

There are also a range of different locally-based organisations who deliver support to domestic abuse victims. Funding streams for these organisations vary and very few have stable funding. These organisations provide essential support services to victims:

²⁶ <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nationalstudies/communitysafety/domesticabuseservices/Pages/Default.aspx>

²⁷ HM Government, 'Call to End Violence Against Women & Girls', 2011

"I could not have managed it without the support they gave me. They gave me the building blocks."

Feedback from victims of domestic abuse

Victims interviewed in the project had varying experiences with the police. Some victims were entirely satisfied how they were dealt with:

"The police were really supportive. They found me a refuge and contacted me a lot."

Other victims felt that they had a mixed experience:

"When I spoke to female police officers they were a lot more sympathetic and understanding than the male police officers I spoke to."

One clear message was, *"You need to be believed. You don't normally call the police the first time."*

From the research it is clear that victims want the police to turn up when they say they will, want action to be taken in an appropriate way, want the police to keep their promises and want to be kept informed.

All victims made it very clear that support is needed. There was variation as to when that support would be needed, depending on an individual's need, but a tailored service which provides support for victims should be available to victims from initial report to whenever that need ends, which is not necessarily when a court case ends.



Case study: female victim of domestic abuse

At first, Jane's marriage seemed very happy. The couple had a young baby and also lived with

Jane's daughter from a previous relationship. Then, gradually, her husband began to exert more and more financial control.

"He was doing nothing violent. He knew the line to tread. There was no arrestable offence."

Jane's husband stopped the heating and electricity. It became so cold in the winters that Jane's daughter began to suffer from chest complaints. Her baby son also got sick.

Any money left in the house would also disappear. Jane began to question her daughter and they argued, her daughter maintaining that they were being manipulated.

It became so bad that Jane's husband suggested she get checked by mental health services.

One day, Jane's GP referred her to a support service for women experiencing domestic abuse, and their children. The service helped Jane to realise the true nature of the situation she was in:

"They listened. They gave me charts to do and encouraged me to keep a diary. They advised me where to have letters sent to."

Jane's support worker helped her and her children to move into a refuge. The support worker also helped Jane access legal aid and supported her through a divorce case, which ended with the family courts granting divorce and recognising that Jane had experienced domestic abuse.

On the service which helped her, Jane says:

"They saved my life. I don't know how much it would have cost otherwise. My daughter would have ended up in a youth offending cycle and I would have had a nervous breakdown."

Case study: K-DASH – Kent Domestic Abuse Support and Help (previously known as Women's Support Service)

K-DASH is a registered charity that provides independent advocacy services for people at risk of domestic abuse within the Mid Kent and Medway areas. The service supports high-risk victims with an average of 12 weeks Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) and runs support groups to help survivors develop the skills to ensure they are able to live independently, free from domestic abuse.

K-DASH offers an open access service through a local helpline, one stop shops and drop-in centres. They support around 600 clients a year and provide training for multiple agencies on recognising the signs, and handling incidents, of domestic abuse.

Small independent providers are struggling to survive the current reductions in funding streams; however K-DASH has taken an innovative approach to these challenges by actively leading on improving and increasing access to its services through new ways of working. A Transition Fund grant awarded in 2011 has helped the charity to develop remote working, and improve its capacity for partnership working. As a result it has introduced new public access points across the area, such as One Stop Shops, and new IDVA services at Medway's Accident and Emergency department began in May 2012.

Working in partnership with other independent voluntary sector providers has also been critical to K-DASH. The organisation has led on jointly procuring a web-based client management system and has reduced overall costs for its partners as a result. The new client system not only helps senior staff to monitor qualitative outcomes and quality assure case work, but also enables the IDVAs to work flexibly, carrying out their duties at key access points where crucial intervention opportunities are

essential in reducing future incidents of domestic abuse.



Conclusions

There are many services throughout Kent for victims of domestic abuse and their families, however most of these are far from adequate in that they are often reliant on short-term funding, are understaffed and are unable to expand and develop in the current climate in order to meet the needs of victims. These services clearly have a tremendously positive effect on domestic abuse victims and victims spoke highly of the variety of services on offer, often particularly praising Independent Domestic Violence Advocates. Some services have developed innovative means of approaching the climate, for instance in developing remote working and working with other voluntary domestic abuse services to procure a web-based client management system. Domestic abuse incidents are also now assessed by Kent Police's Central Referral Unit.

Kent has effective partnership working, led chiefly by The Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy Group. There are also domestic abuse forums and regular Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences. Partnership working has also started to feel the impact of funding cuts. A pilot Kent Domestic Abuse Partnership in 2011, to establish a domestic abuse multi-agency team, struggled to receive staff from agencies because of competing demands and, in Kent Police's case, because of restructuring.

DA services and victims spoken with emphasised the need for all agencies to understand the complexity of domestic abuse and for referral and frontline staff to understand the magnitude of someone reporting domestic abuse

for the first time. As with other crimes, domestic abuse victims also explained that they need to be believed and need to rely on services. Otherwise, they too can succumb to feelings such as isolation. They need strong, effective support.

There is a large amount of research and literature on the needs of victims of domestic violence, and this report cannot fully reflect the evidence it provides. Further investigation of the issues highlighted here, and thorough consultation with both victims and local service providers from all sectors, will be essential for providing the police and crime commissioner with a comprehensive picture of the needs of victims of domestic abuse in Kent.

4.3. Victims of sexual violence

What is sexual violence?

In this report, 'sexual violence' refers to the full range of sexual offences recorded by the Home Office.²⁸

Sexual violence can affect people of all ages, genders, sexual preferences and cultures.

The British Crime Survey 2010/11 includes a self-completion module on intimate violence. This covers emotional, financial and physical abuse by partners or family members, as well as sexual assaults and stalking experienced by adults aged 16 to 59.

Nineteen per cent of women and two per cent of men reported having experienced sexual assault (including attempts) since the age of 16. In addition, around three per cent of women and one per cent of men had experienced some form of sexual assault (including attempts) in the last year.

For a variety of reasons, sexual violence often goes unreported.

The government response to Baroness Stern's 2010 review of how rape complaints are handled by public authorities in England and Wales observed that "despite progress in recent years, it is estimated that up to nine in ten cases of rape go unreported and 38 per cent of serious sexual assault victims tell no one about their experience."²⁹

Research such as the 2009 Rape Experience Review by then Victims' Champion Sara Payne highlights the importance to victims of the first response they receive when they disclose an offence, whether to the police or anyone else:

²⁸

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/counting-rules/count-sexual?view=Binary>

²⁹ The Government Response to the Stern Review, March 2011

"The women I spoke to were clear that if they are not treated with dignity when first reporting rape, it is unlikely they would continue to support a prosecution. Women felt that the attitudes and response of police officers need to change and rape needs to be treated more seriously; they wanted a greater investment in ensuring that the police provide a believing, sensitive and consistent response."³⁰

Since this review was undertaken, the number of rape crisis centres and sexual assault referral centres in England and Wales has increased. In Kent, the SARC is housed within the grounds of Darent Valley Hospital

Police and criminal justice responses to victims of serious sexual violence have increased considerably.

Nationwide, many forces now have specially trained police officers (STOs) to act as a link between the victim and the investigation team, and to attend court with the victim.

Many areas also have independent sexual violence advisers (ISVAs) who operate in a similar fashion to independent domestic violence advisers (IDVAs), but their numbers are far fewer.

In addition to these changes, all agencies recognise that there is still room for improvement.



Sexual violence in Kent

In 2010/11, there were 1,402 recorded sexual offences in Kent. This reflects no significant change on the number of incidents recorded in the previous year.³¹

³⁰ Rape: The Victim Experience Review, Sara Payne, November 2009

³¹ Victim Support analysis based on Home Office: Research, Development and Statistics Directorate and BMRB, *Social*

Under-reporting of sexual offences is well documented and it can be assumed that recorded crime figures do not offer an accurate indication of the number of victims of sexual violence in Kent. Based on regional data from the British Crime Survey, the estimate for an area the size of Kent is that over 18,000 women and girls aged 16-59 have been a victim of sexual assault in the past year.³²

In 2010/11, 56% of all sexual offences reported to the police were referred to Victim Support. This compares to approximately 55% nationally.

The BCS for 2010/11 also identifies that 84% felt that they would be treated with respect by the police, a reassuring factor for a survivor of sexual violence, when considering approaching the police to make a report:

"I was raped by my partner and I didn't contact the police because of the fear I wouldn't be believed."

Survivors' experiences of reporting crime have differed considerably in respect of the treatment they received from police. If survivors are to be encouraged to report and have confidence in the system, then more work is needed:

"I didn't feel that supported by the police. They took me to the hospital, got me to make a statement, then shut the door on me. But I know other women who had a better experience."

Research, British Crime Survey; 2010-11, as above.

³² British Crime Survey 2010/11 op. cit., and British Crime Survey, 'Ready Reckoner,' 2011. It is also important to acknowledge that, as elsewhere in England, many men experience sexual violence in Kent. There is room for further research on this subject.

What else do we know about sexual violence in Kent

Kent is now the only county in the South East without a 24/7 dedicated Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). Instead, male and female rape victims are subjected to forensic examination in two rooms in the Darent Valley Hospital (opened by police and examining doctors) or in vulnerable victims suites.

There is also an available emergency contact number that is published on their websites facility does not qualify as a SARC against Department of Health criteria, for instance it has no dedicated staff and has no permanent Crisis Workers to offer independent support to victims. Instead, crisis workers are only available at weekends. The centre is also not advertised, thus there are few self-referrals making access to post assault HIV prophylactics and STI tests. It is also difficult for victims to access unless they report to police, and there is limited access to a female forensic examiner.

Kent Police still make use of Victim Suites for some forensic examinations. These have been described by one stakeholder, prominent in sexual violence services in Kent, as "dark and gloomy".

The same stakeholder went on to say:

"The matter is not one of insufficient funds - there have always been insufficient funds - this is about priorities...is the appropriate care and support of rape victims a priority or not?"

Kent also has two ISVAs, which falls short of recommendations from the government's Violence Against Women (VAWG) strategy.³³

³³ HM Government, 2011, op. cit.

In addition, these ISVAs at times struggle to get referrals from the police, despite the 1,402 recorded sexual offences in Kent (as cited above). The ISVA service of Family Matters for instance, which covers six districts in North and West Kent, received 48 new referrals between 1st February 2010 and 31st January 2011 and received only 28 new referrals between 1st February 2011 and 21st January 2012. Kent also does not follow government recommendations to have an ISVA supporting children and young people specifically.



Support for victims of sexual violence

Most adult rapes are investigated locally by the Reactive Crime Teams, who are responsible for investigating all serious crime in that area. 'Stranger' rape, for example, which are those cases involving an assailant unknown to the victim, are generally investigated by the Major Crime Department.

Kent Police's Public Protection Department (PPD) deal with child abuse, vulnerable adult abuse and domestic abuse. A decision on whether to follow the Crown Prosecution Service lead and the HMIC recommendation to create a dedicated rape investigation unit is currently under consideration.

The Kent and Medway Sexual Assault Operations Group, which includes Kent Police, the CPS, Family Matters and East Kent Rape Line discusses issues relating to rape and the associated support provision, and the Kent and Medway Sexual Assault Strategic Group was set up to create a SARC in line with Department of Health criteria. Now that funding cuts are required by Kent Police, however, it is unlikely that a full SARC facility will be developed in the next 3-5 years. This has been confirmed by the Kent Criminal Justice Board.

There are three sexual violence services in Kent but they are in high demand and provide a variety of services such as helplines and counselling. Family Matters and East Kent Rape Line each have one ISVA, covering, respectively, West Kent and East Kent. Family Matter's ISVA supports both adult and children and young people survivors of rape and sexual assault. Action for Children runs the North Downs Project and the Oak Tree Project, which support children and young people up to the age of 18 years, who have been sexually abused or who are presenting sexually concerning behaviour.

Feedback from victims of sexual violence

A theme from the research is that of survivors having a mixed experience with the police.

"They were lovely, they were gentle, they were professional. It made me feel that I was gonna be safe, that I was gonna be believed, and that something would be done, but then after about a month there wasn't any contact with me whatsoever."

Survivors explained that they want to be informed, even if to say nothing has changed. They also praised the work of ISVAs:

"I think there need to be loads more ISVAs. They're a lifeline."

Regarding current SARC provision, one victim said:

"The doctor at the SARC was lovely. It was straight through the main hospital. Everyone could see you. It was intimidating. It was in a little room. You go in with police officers and everyone's looking at you."

The same survivor went on to express what other survivors said:

"Rape doesn't happen from nine to five. You need someone there and then. If it happens at ten at night you want to be taken somewhere you can be interviewed that's nice, relaxed and"

comfortable. Not a police station."

It is clear that sexual violence survivors need a SARC which follows the department of health recommendations, is comfortable, is available 24/7 and has independent Crisis Workers to explain options, procedures and support the survivor.



Case study: female victim of sexual violence

Rachel was referred to the Family Matters ISVA service when she was 17. She had been seen by a highly experienced Forensic Examiner, who noted on the referral form that in all of her years as a practising medical doctor, she had never seen injuries sustained from a sexual attack as horrendous as those seen with Rachel.

On top of this, Rachel has both physical and learning disabilities. Her Asperger's Syndrome made it very difficult to express her feelings and emotions, or understand concepts like vulnerability, risk, or danger. Her physical disabilities often caused her huge pain, difficulties with mobility, and severely compromised her independence - a source of much anguish to Rachel, who wanted nothing more than to live a normal life.

At first, Rachel was very uncommunicative but through slow, gentle, collaborative work, Rachel's ISVA found a way for Rachel to accurately express herself through photography. Gradually, Rachel began to produce photography projects to explain how she was feeling. These projects led to discussions which helped Rachel feel more confident in expressing herself verbally.

Today, Rachel's verbal communication has dramatically improved and she is much more independent as she is able to

understand which actions and behaviours may constitute risk and vulnerability.

Once only considered suitable for completely dependent living arrangements, Rachel is now to enter supported living accommodation:

"I know I'll always need my family around me, but at least I can look forward to shutting the door and getting some peace from them - at least until the next day!"



Case study: Family Matters

The Gravesend-based charity Family Matters is one of the UK's largest providers of specialist therapy and support for victims of childhood sexual abuse and rape of all ages across the county of Kent and 4 boroughs in South East London.

Started by survivors of sexual violence in 1990, it has grown and developed a support system born out of the needs of its users. It is open to all - men and boys, women and girls and is uniquely delivered by outreach. Its 30 or so specially trained therapists travel to a network of by-the-hour rented 'High Street' type venues to provide 12 session contracts of therapy that seek to promote independence and at the same time be accessible and often anonymous.

Family Matters also provides an Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) service offering non-therapeutic support for rape victims across North and West Kent and Medway. This includes risk assessment to avoid regarding victimisation, emotional support, housing, compensation and advocacy communicating with all elements of the Criminal Justice System including court support.

Family Matters also runs a helpline - taking some 2,500 calls

a year across the UK, and most recently it has been providing out-of-hours, on-call Crisis Workers at weekends to improve the support of rape victims visiting the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) at the Renton Clinic.

Last year Family Matters therapists and the ISVA service saw 920 clients, 734 of those in Kent alone. 107 rape clients were aged between 13 and 16.



Conclusions

The survivors who participated told us how it was months, and years in some cases, before they could return to their work or studies, or go out and enjoy socialising again. Many had not shared what had happened with close family or friends. Clearly, sexual violence causes considerable isolation and without the opportunity to talk through their experience, this will continue. This explains why survivors see long-term specialist counselling as extremely important to their recovery, yet it is currently inadequately resourced, and Kent has only two Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVA).

Kent is also the only county in the South East without a dedicated Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). The current SARC falls short of Department of Health recommendations in many ways including not having permanent Crisis Workers, not being available 24/7 and not being advertised. Kent Criminal Justice Board has also confirmed that it is unlikely that a full SARC facility will be developed in the next 3 - 5 years.

As with other crimes, survivors emphasised the need to be able to rely on the police. This includes receiving regular follow up contact, which was not received by some of the victims spoken with.

Sexual violence is highly under-reported in Kent, as in other parts of the country. It is clear that if survivors are to be encouraged to report more and if Kent seriously intends to meet the needs of sexual violence survivors, then there must be greater ISVA provision and a fully resourced SARC which meets Department of Health standards.

4.4. People bereaved by murder and manslaughter

What are murder and manslaughter?

Murder and manslaughter are defined as:

- murder
- manslaughter
- infanticide.

This report also considers the needs of those bereaved as a result of culpable road traffic incidents.

The local data available on services for those bereaved by murder and manslaughter, including services for those bereaved as a result of culpable road traffic incidents, has been limited because most services we mapped deliver on a national rather than on a local basis.

For example, the charity Brake is a national provider of emotional support, information, help and advocacy to people bereaved and seriously injured in road crashes. This is delivered through a UK-wide helpline and via partnerships with police family liaison officers, who distribute Brake's support packs for people bereaved in road crashes, *Advice for family and friends following a death on the road*.³⁴ Brake's packs and helpline offer emotional comfort, guidance on practical matters, and signpost to further sources of support, including locally available help.

We have tried to include all services accessible to victims in Kent, but may have missed some of them.

We did not hold focus groups or interviews with people bereaved by

murder and manslaughter. Instead, the project has referred to the 2011 report by the former Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses, Louise Casey, on services for secondary victims of murder and manslaughter.³⁵ This called for, among other things:

- a dedicated casework service to help [bereaved families] with practical problems and support families in the early weeks and months following a bereavement. Where aspects of a case include complex and specialist areas of law, there should be arrangements in place for families to access additional assistance.
- trauma and bereavement counselling as necessary.
- an offer of peer support through a national network of peer support/self help.
- age-appropriate services for children.³⁶



Murder and manslaughter in Kent

In 2010/11, there were 7.1 homicide offences per million population in Kent, compared to 11.5 offences per million population in England and Wales.

What do we know about murder and manslaughter in Kent?

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) were established on a statutory basis under Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004), which was brought into force on 13th April 2011. The statutory requirement for initiating and undertaking a DHR is now the responsibility of the Community Safety Partnership in which 'the victim was normally resident' or where 'the victim was

³⁴ These packs are produced by Brake and funded by the Ministry of Justice for use by families bereaved by road crashes in England and Wales. Support literature for bereaved children, serious injury victims, and those affected by road death in other parts of the UK is available from Brake.

³⁵ Review into the Needs of Families Bereaved by Homicide, Louise Casey CB, July 2011

³⁶ Review into the Needs of Families Bereaved by Homicide, Louise Casey CB, July 2011

last known to have frequented.' To conduct a Domestic Homicide Review, it is necessary to appoint an Independent Chair.

Where there is a sudden bereavement, the family left behind can find themselves with the additional worry of finance. It may be that the victim brought income into the home which will now stop, affecting day-to-day living, or that there had been no thought previously about making provision for funeral costs. Many funeral directors now request a large deposit, or in some cases payment in full, before they will collect the body.



Support for people bereaved by murder and manslaughter

Kent Police has a team dedicated to the support of people bereaved through murder and manslaughter and other serious crime.

The Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) has the responsibility of constructing and monitoring the family liaison strategy throughout the course of an investigation and a Family Liaison Co-ordinator will ensure strategic and tactical support to the SIO and Family Liaison Officer (FLO).

The FLO will have direct interaction with the individual or bereaved family, ensuring that they are kept informed and updated about the case and they work closely with the SIO to ensure families are treated appropriately.

Victim Support's Homicide Service is a nationally managed service made up of five teams based in five locations around England and Wales. Each team consists of a team leader, five case workers and a support worker.

The Homicide Service supports adults and children who are

affected by murder, manslaughter and infanticide, though they are not able to take referrals of road death.

Every homicide in the area is notified to the Homicide Service and when they have consented, the FLO will arrange for the bereaved individual or family to meet with the Caseworker.

On receiving a referral from the police Family Liaison Officer, a Homicide Caseworker carries out a needs assessment and work begins to support the bereaved in a range of ways. Often the help at the start is very practical: help with the funeral, meetings with the police, child care, and benefits, typically reinforced by emotional support as the relationship between the bereaved and the caseworker develops. The Caseworker can also commission a number of specialist interventions such as trauma support and support for bereaved children.

The Homicide Services and Cruse Bereavement Counselling have a service level agreement in respect of the referral of clients with additional needs.

Cruse Bereavement Counselling provides a service across Kent. However, having established a service level agreement with the Homicide Team, they will support those referred anywhere within England and Wales. Adults and children suffering bereavement can access counselling from a team trained to support following homicide.

In respect of support to those bereaved through road death, Victim Support in each district has specially trained volunteers who are able to provide support to the individuals or families affected, for as long as needed.

There are a small number of national organisations who also provide support to people bereaved through homicide, providing help by way of peer support and trauma care, for example.

The provision of specialised counselling for those bereaved by homicide is very limited, particularly in respect of children and young people. As counselling in such cases can be needed in the long-term, places are usually very limited and long waiting lists are commonplace. Private counselling can be very costly, particularly over a long period and, as families may potentially have lost income due to the death, this can simply be unaffordable.

Cruse Bereavement Counselling survive solely on donations from service users, and though a less expensive alternative to a private counselling service, can still prove costly to the individual or family, particularly where an income has been lost. Cruse identify that the high cost of training counsellors prohibits taking on more in order to meet demand.



Conclusions

Cases of homicide are relatively infrequent in Kent, however, the fact that it is not a prolific crime does not negate the need for investment in services to meet the needs of those left behind. As such, commissioning does need to be apportioned to the few services which are able to help in these circumstances, ensuring that when they are needed, they are able to meet the demand and provide services for as long as required.

ignore it because it's not worth it. But when they threw the brick - that's too far."³⁹

Hate crime does not only affect the targeted individual. It affects victims' families and the wider community, and can lead to further violence and aggressive behaviour.

Hate crime was included in the victims' services advocates project's work when our initial mapping of local services showed that providers across England and Wales were concerned that victims of this crime were still under-recognised and under-supported. A particular issue that emerged from our focus groups and interviews across England and Wales was that the boundaries between antisocial behaviour and hate crime can be blurred. It is important that victims are treated according to their individual needs, rather than according to a crime category which they appear to fit into.

It is hoped that some of these issues will be addressed by the Home Office hate crime action plan, 'Challenge it, Report it, Stop it' published in March 2012. This outlines the new national strategy for tackling hate crime by focussing on prevention, early intervention and improving the response to victims. Aiming, among other things, to achieve better multi agency working to identify and support victims, and to reduce the grey area between anti-social behaviour and hate crime, the strategy includes the following actions:

- working with police forces, councils and housing providers to improve handling of public calls about anti-social behaviour, to identify possible hate crime and victims at risk

4.5. Victims of hate crime

What is hate crime?

*"Any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic."*³⁷

In 2007, the police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the National Offender Management Service) and other agencies that make up the criminal justice system agreed a common definition of monitored hate crime to cover five 'strands,' in particular - disability, gender-identity, race, religion/faith and sexual orientation. Primarily, this was to ensure a consistent working definition to allow accurate recording and monitoring.³⁸

Hate crime can have a huge impact on victims - not only because of how the incident itself has affected the person, but also because bringing the offenders to justice can involve the victim having to reveal very personal and private aspects of their life.

"They were calling me the usual names like 'speccy' and I tried to

³⁷ Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime. HM Government, March 2012

³⁸ Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime. HM Government, March 2012

³⁹ Quote from victim (Equality and Human Rights Commission report, 'Promoting the safety and security of disabled people', 2009).

- publishing risk assessment tools that allow police and other call handlers to identify victims of hate crime earlier in the reporting process
- engaging with communities at risk of hate crime to raise awareness of the law on hate crime, and increase reporting
- putting Safeguarding Adults Boards on a statutory footing, to increase the awareness, detection and prevention of abuse and exploitation of adults in vulnerable circumstances.

In 2010, 47, 229 hate crimes were recorded by police forces in England and Wales. Of these:

- 38,670 were racist crimes;
- 4,736 were based on sexual orientation;
- 1,959 were religious hate crimes;
- 1,512 targeted disabled people; and
- 352 targeted transgender people.⁴⁰

Hate crime is believed to be under-reported.⁴¹

Hate crime in Kent

In 2010/11, Victim Support received referrals from Kent Police for 40% of recorded victims of racially and religiously aggravated assault and harassment.

Hate crime can be reported to the police as well as to an anonymous 24/7 pan-Kent non-police hate crime reporting line. The Kent Police website provides useful information for victims of Hate Crime, including on Kent's reporting options. These also include a police text service for persons who are deaf or speech-impaired. The website also includes a link to the website of

True Vision, a national hate crime service owned by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). The True Vision website allows victims of hate crime to complete an online reporting form anonymously, if a victim wishes.

Kent Police are also signed up to Mencap's 'Stand by me' police promise, which shows that they are committed to standing by people with learning difficulties and ending disability hate crime. They also launched a hate incident reporting line, specifically for hate incidents.

The majority of hate crime victims who participated in the research said that taking hate crime seriously was most important concerning how the police dealt with reports. Victims who felt their report had been taken seriously said that they had felt confident that the matter would be dealt with; whereas victims who considered they hadn't been taken seriously felt that the police would take no action and were left feeling isolated:

"I felt trapped in a corner and as if my case didn't matter that much. I wanted it to be taken seriously."



What else do we know about hate crime in Kent?

Services which support victims of hate crime and hate incidents have said that hate crime and hate incidents are under-reported and under-recorded in Kent. One stakeholder suggested that this is because of reasons such as the 'features' subject of a hate incident not being seen as protected characteristics, or the victim/family/witnesses not being aware of reporting procedures or lacking the confidence to report an incident.

⁴⁰ ACPO (2011) Recorded Hate Crime Data for 2010 for England, Wales and Northern Ireland: http://www.report-it.org.uk/files/acpo_hate_crime_data_for_2010.pdf

⁴¹ Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime. HM Government, March 2012

Service providers also said that there is a need for hate crime and hate incident reports to reflect the true picture of incidents in Kent. They emphasised that the quality, accuracy and relevance of the information reported and recorded should enable more effective action to be taken against wrongdoers, be it punitive, restorative or educational. This would in turn lead to fewer incidents and less individual reoffending.

One stakeholder informed us that Kent Learning and Development has been working with Kent Police and other relevant organisations to develop a hate crime / hate incident awareness training package, which can be delivered to statutory and voluntary services and other public groups.

The object of the training is to reduce the potential for hate crime and hate incidents in Kent by increasing people's awareness and understanding of hate crime and hate incidents and the negative impact that such behaviour has on victims, their families, other individuals and communities. The intention is to educate and inform people so that they will change their perceptions and views, thereby reducing the occurrence of hate crime and hate incidents whilst increasing people's confidence to challenge and report such behaviour. It is thought that those who would most benefit from the training will be the victims and potential victims of hate crime and hate incidents and those closely associated with them. Kent County Council cannot at present, however, afford to provide this training.

Support for victims of hate crime

The Kent Police Strategic Independent Advisory Group (SIAG) has members appointed for their specialist knowledge, experience and/or links with particular minority groups or other special interests. Part of its remit is to build community confidence, and

in recent years it has focused upon areas such as hate crime and disability.

Kent Police have centrally controlled public protection teams who deliver partnership working and interventions around areas including hate crime. Community Liaison Officers reach out to marginalised groups and individuals, encouraging people to report hate crimes or incidents to the police or to Kent's county-wide anonymous Hate Crime Reporting Line.

The force also has Diversity Action Groups, which implement the diversity objectives of The Equality Standard for The Police Service. Some of these have representation from statutory organisations, such as Kent County Council.

The Disability Action Group works on areas such as confidence to report hate crime. There's also a Disability Involvement Forum, which allows people with a disability, carers of persons with a disability or members of groups that represent disabled people to discuss matters including disability hate crime and dealing with disabled people as victims and witnesses of crime.

The Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Action Group's action plan has included recommendations made by Stonewall's British Gay Crime Survey around hate crime, as well as recommendations based on an LGB needs assessment of Kent.

The Gypsy and Traveller Action Group helps ensure that the force engages with Kent's gypsy and traveller communities, for instance working with Kent County Council engaging with young people from these communities.

The People and Culture Action Group aims to help people of diverse religions and beliefs, people from minority and ethnic backgrounds, immigrants and asylum seekers.

The Keeping Safe Group works on behalf of the Kent Learning Disability Partnership Board to help raise awareness of hate crime, to educate and train people and to ensure people with learning disabilities can be safe in Kent.

Kent also has a number of local support groups for its minority communities, such as the Tunbridge Wells Filipino Association.



Feedback from victims of hate crime

A common theme from interviews with hate crime victims is that they want to be taken seriously and they want to be involved in decision-making around the perpetrator:

"I believe that whatever the police do, whatever action they take, the victim should be part of it. They should act to protect the victim."

Some victims thought highly of mediation or of restorative justice:

"I give us my view, give us his own view, we solve everything rather than they deal with the matter on my behalf and they say to me, 'We've dealt with the matter.'"

Other victims, however, explained that the impact of the crime on them had been so great that they would not want to meet the perpetrator again and would not believe restorative justice was sufficient:

"I kept breaking down. I kept crying. I became very isolated."

All victims felt that the police were "very helpful" after incidents, with most thinking, *"If in the future it should happen again, I would call the police."*

However, all hate crime victims also need regular follow-up from the police and emotional support to reassure them and make them feel they belong again, and for some of the victims spoken with, this had not been the case:

"After the incident happened, I had no support from anyone. I had no-one come round to my house to see me and I was entirely on my own."

Victims also emphasised that they feel many vulnerable black, minority and ethnic individuals and groups would not report to the police, sometimes because of lack of understanding of their rights and perhaps because of fear of repercussions in their communities. They felt that the police should do more to make themselves more accessible to communities and improve efforts to reach them.



Case study: male victim of race hate crime

Afolabi was walking home from his job at a newsagent when a man called out racist abuse at him.

Turning around, Afolabi was confronted and intimidated by a large middle-aged man who told him to get out of the UK and who made threatening gestures at him.

Feeling distraught, Afolabi quickly got away, went home and called the police. He was visited shortly afterwards:

"The police officer who saw me was very polite. The policeman was great; he was good at his job."

With renewed confidence, Afolabi waited for a positive outcome.

Weeks later, a letter arrived, explaining that the matter had been dealt with and the perpetrator had apologised.

Afolabi felt he had not been taken seriously and that the impact of the crime had not really been understood by the police. Reflecting, he felt that, *"I would have loved it if they'd asked me if I'd like to press charges or not"*. The matter had not been discussed with him.

Afolabi would like to have been involved in the process more:

"An apology would have gone down well, discussing things. If he'd said, 'I never meant to say such things, I was angry or something, I'm very sorry, I won't say that again.' Just a handshake and then we sit down in that peaceful atmosphere."

Today, Afolabi feels he would call the police again but is wary having been, he feels, dismissed. He would also have liked to have been offered emotional support to deal with the impact on his sense of belonging.

Case study: the Keeping Safe Group

The Keeping Safe Group, (formerly the Hate Crime Focus Group), works on behalf of the Kent Learning Disability Partnership Board.

The aim of the Keeping Safe Group is to ensure people with learning disabilities feel as safe as possible in Kent. It looks to achieve this through working with partners to help raise awareness of learning disability issues including hate crime. The group also works at achieving creative solutions in, and for, mainstream public services.

The group has been meeting for approximately 5 years and meets every two months. Public services and people with learning disabilities work together to look at issues and to explore ways to support local services to address these issues. Partners can share any problems that have recently occurred and the group decides on the best way to deal with these. The group also provides an

opportunity for members to share individual experiences and concerns. The information is also taken and shared with the district groups, and issues are looked at from a local angle as well.

The partners of this group include people with learning disabilities, Kent Police, Valuing People Now, KCC Community Safety Unit, Kent Fire and Rescue, Public Transport Operators, advocacy services and service providers such as the Skillnet Group.

Stuart Beaumont, Head of KCC Community Safety, and Sam Holman jointly chair the group. Sam has a learning disability and is also the chair of the Gravesend District Partnership Group.

Vulnerability on public transport is very often a concern at the group meetings. Like many of the issues the group has worked on, changes to public services cannot always be achieved at a local or Kent level and may need changes to legislation; members have been involved in lobbying at a local and central government level.

The group itself is not funded; however Kent Police & all community safety partnerships in Kent contribute towards the county-wide non-police hate crime reporting line. Contribution is £2,000 per district.



Conclusions

As in other parts of the country, hate crime and hate incidents are under-reported in Kent. Victims spoken with emphasised that they feel this may be because vulnerable black, minority and ethnic individuals and groups do not necessarily know their rights. Victims also explained they do not know what hate crime is. Agencies such as Kent Police do, however, make concerted efforts to access

communities, to help people report hate crimes and hate incidents, and there are numerous groups devoted to different communities.

It is clear that victims also want to be taken seriously and want to be involved in decision making around the perpetrator. Some are also keen on restorative justice. Some victims spoken with felt that they had not been involved at all. Also, as with other crime types, victims explained that they need regular follow-up in order to feel reassured and taken seriously. Victims need to be able to rely on agencies so that they can belong again - hate crime has a big impact on a victim's confidence and sense of belonging and not being taken seriously can leave a hate crime victim feeling very isolated.

The potential to support hate crime and hate incident victims in Kent is being impacted on by the current climate around lack of funding. A multi-agency training package on hate crime and hate incident awareness, as developed by Kent Learning and Development for instance, would likely have a positive impact on reducing the potential for hate crime and hate incidents but Kent County Council cannot at present afford to provide this training.

4.6. Young victims of crime

The British Crime Survey estimated that there were 878,000 crimes affecting 10-15 year-olds in England and Wales in 2010/11. Of these, two-thirds (576,000) were violent crimes (77 per cent of which resulted in injury to the victim, mainly minor bruising or black eyes). Most of the other third (275,000) were thefts of personal property. A much smaller number of children (27,000) experienced vandalism of personal property.

Over a third of all reported rapes (36%) are against children under 16 years old,⁴² and one in six teenage girls reported intimate partner violence.⁴³

Indirect victimisation is also common among children and young people. In a recent study, almost one in five young people (22% of girls and 13.5% of boys) said they had experienced cyber bullying.⁴⁴ Given the widespread use of social networking, this type of crime can be especially difficult to police or prevent.

Though many young people are affected by crime, they are less likely than adults to report it, seeing it more 'as a fact of life'.⁴⁵

A 2011 study of young people's experience of the police and criminal justice system by the charity Catch 22 found particular barriers to young people reporting crime, including:

- lack of trust in the police
- tensions between young people and the police

- fear of being perceived as 'a grass' or fear of retaliation.⁴⁶

Crime perpetrated in school can be difficult to identify and to address as teachers are not always trained to deal with issues beyond bullying. Young people can be vulnerable to further abuse and repeat victimisation if they speak about what has happened to them. Those in same sex relationships are reluctant to report for fear of homophobia from classmates or teachers.⁴⁷

Victim Support's 2007 report, *Hoodie or Goodie*, highlighted the fact that young victims and young offenders are often one and the same. This report recommended that policy-makers and practitioners should, with young people, create more initiatives to build young people's confidence in adult authority figures, particularly in relation to reporting crime and getting support.⁴⁸

Without a clear idea of the protection available, young people will often keep quiet.⁴⁹ When they do speak up about their experiences, they are more likely to tell their peers than an adult. Although peer support and counselling schemes have been established in a number of UK schools, their remit does not always extend beyond bullying.⁵⁰

Catch 22 found⁵¹ that young victims need help in three main areas:

- feeling unsafe after reporting a crime
- dealing with living around the offender after the crime

⁴² Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls, Home Office, November 2010

⁴³ NSPCC, 2009

⁴⁴ O'Brien, N., Moules, T. and Walker, S. (2011) *The Impact of Cyber Bullying on Mental Health* London: NSPCC and Anglia Ruskin University

⁴⁵ NSPCC, 2009

⁴⁶ Catch 22 (2001) *What works: Developing a welfare approach to supporting young victims*. London: Catch 22

⁴⁷ NSPCC 2009

⁴⁸ Victim Support (2007) *Hoodie or Goodie* London: Victim Support

⁴⁹ Firmin, C. (2011) *This is it, This is my life: Female Voice in Violence* London: ROTA

⁵⁰ NSPCC 2009

⁵¹ Catch 22 (2001) *What works: Developing a welfare approach to supporting young victims*. London: Catch 22

- lacking confidence and feeling unable to trust others.

It recommended that a variety of support be made available to young victims, from updates and information from the police to intensive mentoring and counselling.

Children and young people as victims of crime in Kent

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a shared responsibility and a high priority for Kent agencies. It includes protecting children from abuse and neglect and ensuring that they grow up safely, having the best life chances to enter adulthood successfully.

Children and young people who engaged with the research overwhelmingly felt they were negatively stereotyped by the police. As a result, they did not consider that they would be keen to engage with the police if they were the victim of crime. Some also considered that this would prevent them from reporting a crime if they witnessed one, though in many cases this related also to not wanting to be seen as a 'grass'.

"People think adults are more mature. They're just going to think teenagers trash the place. The police aren't going to treat young people with more respect."

Additionally, they felt it fairly unlikely that the police would take their report seriously or actually deal with the case if it just involved young people.



What else do we know about children and young people in Kent?

From NSPCC data the number of children in England subject to a child protection plan (that is, identified as at risk of serious

harm) has risen steadily from 2007 (27,900) to 2011 (42,700). This reflects the significant increase of awareness of abuse and perhaps more of a risk-averse approach from professionals.⁵²

A recent inspection by Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI) and HMIC found young people were not being properly supported within the criminal justice system:

*"Their experience is sometimes good, sometimes reasonable but too often poor, with some of the poorest experiences occurring in the most serious cases. Young people are being left to flounder in an imperfect system".*⁵³ It found that special measures were often not properly provided, or failed to be considered at all. Although a report had been published in 2009 suggesting ways that young victims and witnesses could be supported when giving evidence, the recent report discovered that most of the recommendations had been ignored.

Support for children and young people

The respective Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Boards are responsible for coordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Kent. Both are multi-organisational, with the Medway board including, for instance, Medway Council, all Medway health bodies, Kent Police, Medway schools, voluntary organisations and other agencies. Kent Police also work closely with Kent's Local Children's Partnerships and with the Kent Children's Trust.

Both boards also have websites, which bring together information on safeguarding children for children and young people, their

⁵² NSPCC, 'Child protection registers statistics', 2011

⁵³ HMCPSI and HMIC, 'Joint Inspection Report on the Experience of Young Victims and Witnesses in the CJS', February 2012

parents and carers and for staff working with children and young people and their families.

Kent Police also engage with young people in various ways, for instance, they have a Youth Panel, composed of 11-16 year olds. The Kent Police Authority also has a number of consultation methods underway to engage with the young (and old). The Authority runs a countywide school programme that targets 11-15 year olds to find out their views on policing in the local area. Young people are also consulted through social media via the Authority website and as part of the summer road shows that last year saw 3000 people having their say.

There are a number of organisations across the area which provide support for young people who either go missing or who are at risk of sexual exploitation. These charities provide invaluable support for young people. Catch 22, for instance, runs 16Plus, a service which provides support for young people in Kent leaving care between the ages of 16 and 21 (or up to 24 if they are still studying). Catch 22 says that 85% of care leavers who use the 16Plus service are in education, training or employment. It also runs a Vocational Skills Centre in North Kent, which supports young people who have been or are at risk of being excluded from school and who wish to learn practical skills and undertake motor vehicle qualifications.

Feedback from children and young people

The main theme that came out of focus group research with young people in Kent is that they want to be taken seriously and not judged and stereotyped:

"I don't feel we are listened to as much as adults. If we're in the streets you get loads of people walking away and phoning up

the police and saying it's a gang."

They went on to say:

"You get some young people who have been praised for doing something great. There are people outside who don't see that."

There was also discussion around creative ways of engaging with young people, many of which Kent Police do already. These included meeting young people in schools, at youth clubs and at community centres.

Another common theme that emerged is the need for emotional support after a crime, although there was ambivalence over where this would be sought, with some young people saying *"friends and family"* and a minority citing other agencies.

It was also interesting that these young people all thought the police were stretched, for instance, thinking that *"The police have got more important things to do"* with regard to reporting anti-social behaviour.

When asked whether they would report a crime to the police, there was no clear consensus on whether they would or not, with one young person saying *"It would depend on the crime"*, another saying *"It's a waste of time"* and another again thinking that the police would be too busy to help:

"There's bad cases out there and they're not gonna focus on you."



Case study

In order to put some context into the discussion, the group of young people were given a scenario, so they could think about how they would deal with that type of incident if it happened to them. This scenario is used below, however the actions expressed

after the scenario are those that the young people would take or expect to happen.

'Alex is standing at a bus stop when a group of youths approach him/her and knock Alex to the ground, causing him/her to have an injury and their mobile phone taken.'

The group was then asked what action they would take and what support they felt they would need. They said that they would want the people responsible to be caught, and to get their phone back. They were also quick to point out the initial problem of not being able to phone anyone, as their phone had been stolen, and there seem to be fewer public phones available to be used by the public to make calls.

Most of the group thought they would call the police but some were wary of doing so. They thought it would be helpful to be kept informed of what is happening and thought it was important that the police took account of their individual differences.

Some of the group felt that emotional support might be unnecessary, 'prolonging' the feeling of being a victim; however, most of the group thought they would seek emotional support. The group did not know any specific emotional support groups but thought of turning to family, friends, teachers, the police, youth workers and The Samaritans. They also thought medical help might be needed, and thought it was important that the area of the crime had good street lighting and CCTV. Finally, they thought education in schools could be helpful and engaging with young people in places they feel safe, such as youth clubs, could be helpful in teaching children and young people how to be streetwise and mindful of their safety.

Conclusions

Specialist services for young victims are limited and investment into this area of work is needed.

The Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Boards also carry out excellent work to support the welfare of, and safeguard, young people in Kent.

Young people spoken with felt strongly that they are judged and stereotyped. They emphasised that they want to be taken seriously and valued as much as adults. They acknowledged that some young people cause crime but felt that many young people also achieve much, which is not necessarily as widely known. So, they felt that perceptions of young people are often skewed.

Victims also made it clear that they need emotional support after a crime. Some felt they would call the police and other agencies, while others felt that they would speak with friends and family.

Young victims additionally explained that they would like the police to engage with them by approaching them in places they feel respected and secure, such as youth clubs and community centres. It should be acknowledged that Kent Police do already engage with young people in various ways, such as through a Youth Panel composed of 11-16 year olds.



5 Delivering services to victims

5. Issues identified and what can be done to address them

Police and crime commissioners (PCCs) have a duty to obtain the views of victims of crime before producing their policing plan.

They also have the potential to play a key role in championing the needs of victims in their local area.

This gives victims an unprecedented opportunity to have a real voice in influencing and shaping the services they receive at local level.

This report builds on the considerable work already done by partner organisations in Kent. It gives a snapshot rather than a forensic examination of the service needs of victims in Kent, and there is room for further research.

We hope that this evidence will encourage the incoming PCC for Kent to understand and respond to the needs of victims in Kent, and to prioritise their needs accordingly. We propose the following actions to address the issues identified in this report:

Proposed actions

"Support has to be victim centred, not driven by targets or put to the hot topic of the month. That's my concern about services being decided by the police."
(Female victim of domestic abuse)

5.1 The PCC should lead a police and partnership process to ensure that there is a service which meets the needs of each individual victim. This includes meeting the needs of individual victims who do not report to the police by ensuring that there is a non-police reporting service able to meet their individual needs.

Victims generally receive services based on what crime type they have suffered. This overlooks vulnerability and victims' individual needs, which could be identified earlier. It is important that impact of the crime and repeat victimisation are taken into account.

More efforts need to be made to contact victims and communities who experience access barriers to services and those who don't wish to report.

5.2 The police should keep victims updated, keep them informed of the progress of their case, and should be fully conversant in how best to communicate with diverse individuals and communities and with victims of different crime types.

The PCC and police should improve engagement and consultation with victims. This could include working with partner organisations where appropriate and utilising innovative communication methods such as Facebook, as has already been tried with young people in Kent.

This recommendation is about the PCC and criminal justice partners doing more than just monitoring compliance with the national standards of the Victims Code of Practice in Kent. It is about them making a measurable commitment to improving communication with victims and adhering to it.

5.3 The PCC should work with partners to ensure that support for victims is available from the outset, taking them through the entire victim's journey and beyond, when required. This will include working with other commissioners of services to agree prioritisation.

This is about ensuring that the varying needs of each individual victim are respected and met. Each individual responds differently to a crime and it is essential that services are able to support them as and when they need that support. It is

therefore vital that support services exist from incident, to recovery, to court, and beyond.

5.4 The PCC should make it a priority to carry out more detailed work into the specific needs of vulnerable victims and the needs of victims' services across Kent. Although this project revealed many examples of excellent service provision, it also revealed many gaps. The project was also time-limited and it has not been possible to assess the needs of every type of victim and of every service. It is highly likely that there will be other gaps. The PCC should find every gap in Kent.

This will mean working with stakeholders to constantly and consistently gather and update information on active services and their coverage, by area, crime type and victim demographic.

It will also mean reporting back regularly on where gaps have been found and making it clear what actions will be taken to fill these gaps.

The VSA project has also highlighted the range and diversity of services available to victims across Kent. There is no comprehensive, updated, publicly available directory of services and it is recommended that there should be one, to encourage further joined up working and access for victims to services.

It should also be noted that while many of the services victims need and are likely to need will require the commissioning of funds, there is also willingness amongst partners to work collaboratively and share resources in the best interests of victims.

5.5 The PCC should lead on a commissioning process for funding vital support organisations within the Police Force Authority. The PCC should work with other commissioners to securely fund services which are shown to

provide support needed for victims.

Support services for all victims should exist equitably across the area.

There is a patchwork of services depending on which area the victim lives in, such as IDVA provision and anti-social behaviour support. Any commissioning role the PCC has could give an opportunity to improve service provision across the whole area.

6 Appendices

Appendix 1: Methodology

The Kent VSA used a variety of research methods and data to investigate issues explored in this report and address the overall aims of the project. These comprised qualitative and quantitative elements and involved conducting primary research and drawing on existing research (secondary research).

Five methods of enquiry were employed:

1. Mapping victim services in the local Kent

The first exercise we undertook in this project was to 'map' existing services available to victims in Kent. This was done to establish a baseline understanding of the local service landscape and to build a network for the victims' services advocates to draw on throughout the rest of the project.

We mapped provision for victims in each of the crime categories considered by this report, and further separated these into the sub-categories of:

- statutory sector
- voluntary sector
- structures/partnerships (to include representative bodies such as local criminal justice boards or regular meetings of different agencies with a service focus, such as MARACs).

We mapped services rather than organisations, in recognition of the fact that the same organisation can offer a range of services. We only mapped services that explicitly supported victims as victims, rather than those that supported a wider client group in which victims might be highly represented. This was decided in recognition of the limited time and capacity of the project but it is acknowledged that by defining the scope of the exercise in this way, some services may be missed, particularly for those victims who do not report crime. Drugs and alcohol services are a possible example of this. We mapped services for witnesses of crime mainly where witnesses were also victims.

We sought information on services including:

- geographical coverage
- summary of services offered (including who provides support to whom and whether there is a focus on a specific crime type)
- any restrictions on services available (e.g. only offer support to 11-15 year olds)
- client group
- referral routes
- number of clients supported
- local issues of concern
- sustainability (e.g. how long are they are funded for)
- current funding source.

Not all the services mapped were willing to provide all the information requested; this was particularly true of questions around funding.

The mapping exercise was conducted by a mixture of phone and desk-based research, with some meetings. It was mainly collected between June and August 2011 and ongoing updating of the maps continued on an ad hoc basis for the remainder of the project period.

Many local stakeholders and organisations requested copies of the maps. The project steering group agreed in January 2012 that the maps could be circulated with the more sensitive pieces of information, such as funding information and 'local issues of concern' removed.

All services contained within the map were asked to confirm that the data contained about their services before the maps could be published. The maps are due to be published by the end of May 2012, again, with information on funding or 'local issues of concern' removed.

There were a number of limitations to this element of our research, including:

- **time-sensitiveness:** the maps were initially baselined in early September 2011, since which time many services will have emerged, developed or reduced their activities, or ceased to operate, therefore the map can only offer a 'snapshot' in time and will quickly become out of date
- **representing the full range of services:** because completing the maps placed a call on the time of those services we contacted, or relied on information available online, it may have favoured larger organisations with the capacity to assist us or those with an online presence. This may mean that smaller organisations were not mapped
- **significance of apparent 'gaps' in provision:** many of the service providers we spoke to talked about gaps in provision, citing that there was no service for a certain group in the local area. We were cautious not to draw conclusions about supply versus demand on the basis of this anecdotal evidence alone, recognising that factors such as the level of need in a local area, provision in neighbouring areas and the specific needs of victims with certain characteristics should be considered in drawing such conclusions.

A textual analysis of conclusions from the mapping exercise in Kent can be found at appendix 6.

2. Consultation with stakeholders and organisations

Following the mapping exercise, we consulted stakeholders and colleagues in service delivery organisations to access feedback on the needs of experiences of a wider range of victims. We wanted to talk to representatives from these organisations because, as they work with large numbers of victims every year, they are able to:

- form opinions based on the experiences of a wide range of service users
- note patterns, gaps and needs
- understand the limitations on services' ability to meet these needs - from a service provider's perspective
- explain what has been tried before, and what they would like to see tried in future, based on a realistic understanding of current political trends and financial constraints
- explain what works for victims and what doesn't
- offer strategic proposals for solving the problems experienced by victims.

We found it particularly valuable to consult stakeholders and organisations supporting victims we struggled to recruit to focus groups and interviews for qualitative research. Talking to professionals was one way of ensuring that victims we found harder to reach could be represented in the research. Many of these organisations offered additional help in signposting us to others which could provide additional information.

We consulted stakeholders and organisations individually throughout the project, and collectively towards the end, in drafting the proposed actions listed in chapter five of this report. We held a 'roundtable' discussion with stakeholders seeking their feedback on the draft text of these and making amendments in response to their feedback. One of the limitations of this approach was that not all stakeholders invited to contribute were willing or able to, and, where a consensus did not appear, not all could have their views represented in the final proposed actions or wider body of the report. Therefore managing expectations was key to this element of our research.

3. Review of existing research and reports

We reviewed a selection of existing literature exploring the experiences of victims and provision of victim services. The aim of this was to gain greater knowledge and understanding of the issues and to identify how the project fits with and compares to the existing body of knowledge.

We generally only considered literature published since 2008 to the present day. Where there was a lack of recent data on certain issues (female genital mutilation, for example), we have referred to the most up to date sources. This decision was taken to ensure that the literature identified remained relevant to the current experiences of and services for victims. The time constraints of the project also meant that we had to limit our review to literature from a relatively short time period. Literature we reviewed included local and national research reports from statutory and voluntary sector agencies, as well as academic bodies; it also included the published strategies, action plans and force plans from government departments and agencies including the Home Office and individual police forces.

The search for literature was completed electronically using online search engines such as Google. In addition organisations identified in the mapping of victim services in each police area were consulted about research or publications they were aware of or had produced themselves. Hard copies were also made available to us by stakeholders.

In total 27 reports were identified and cited in this report.

This review was limited in scope as it did not use a range of search strategies to identify literature. It is therefore likely that many relevant publications were not identified. In particular the review omits empirical research not freely available online e.g. studies published in academic journals requiring subscription.

4. Secondary analysis of the British Crime Survey 2010/11 dataset

We analysed data from the British Crime Survey 2010/11 in order to understand the scale of need and the perceptions of victims and non-victims in Kent.

The data set used was the British Crime Survey 2010/11, non-victim user form.

Access was through the Economic and Social Data Service via special licence⁵⁴ and analysis was completed following the BCS user guide,⁵⁵ using SPSS software.

We extracted data against a selection of questions in the British Crime Survey which would tell us what victims in Kent thought of the police, the criminal justice system, and other services.

We analysed the data using the following methods:

- cross-tabulation of public perception data at the Kent level
- calculation of average incidence rates for key crime categories at the Kent level

We did not carry out significance testing of BCS data. Therefore the figures are quoted based on observed difference rather than proven statistical significance.

5. Qualitative semi-structured interviews and focus groups

The aim of the qualitative element of the research was to explore the experiences and perspectives of individuals who had been a victim of one of the crime categories in the last two years. This was done by conducting 1-1 interviews and focus groups with victims of crime in Kent.

The focus groups conducted with children and young people differed slightly from the other four crime categories as participants were not required to have been a victim of crime in the past two years. This option was taken firstly because there are very few dedicated services for young victims of crime from which participants could be recruited and secondly because, when talking to groups of young people per se, such as youth groups, we did not want to single young people out as victims. Most importantly, we did not want the lack of dedicated young victims' services to prevent young people having their voices heard in this research.

As a consequence the topic guide was not designed to focus on personal experiences but instead used scenarios to draw out opinions and perspectives in a sensitive and safe way. More detailed information about the part of the project is found in Appendix 2.

Rationale for the approach:

We used a variety of methods of research to enable us to examine the issues through a number of different lenses and achieve a deepening and a widening in understanding. We wanted to ensure that we triangulated our findings from these different research methods and data to give our findings validity.

There were also more pragmatic reasons for using a variety of methods. The project's aims could not be addressed using a single method of inquiry. For example, while qualitative interviews with victims provided information about their individual experiences, opinions and access to services, these did not provide an effective and systematic method for mapping all the existing services in Kent. Similarly, consulting professionals about the needs and experiences of victims would provide some information about the needs and experiences of victims, however this

⁵⁴ <http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/bcs/>

⁵⁵ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/user-guide-crime-statistics/user-guide-crime-statistics?view=Binary>

would be from the perspective of the professional rather than victims themselves. It is also worth noting that, as is the case with all projects, the research methods were in part shaped by the time and resource constraints of the project.

Appendix 2: Qualitative semi-structured interviews and focus groups with victims

The following provides more detail about the qualitative element of the research which was designed to explore the experiences and perspectives of victims of crime.

The approach:

The aim of the qualitative element of the research was to capture the experiences and opinions of victims in the five crime categories: victims of anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, sexual violence and hate crime and young people affected by crime – whether or not they had been victims themselves. The use of an in-depth qualitative approach enabled participants to raise issues that were important to them, drawing on their own experiences and using their own words. The data collected through a qualitative approach is useful for understanding individuals' perspectives on particular issues and the meanings that they attach to their experiences and behaviour.

The limitations of qualitative research have been well documented. While qualitative research can provide rich, in-depth data, it can also be small in scale and dependent on context. Because of this, generalisations cannot be made about the experiences of the wider population on the basis of this research. In addition qualitative research can be seen as more subjective than quantitative data both in terms of data collection (researcher influence) and data analysis. We hoped to overcome these limitations to some extent by the use of different methods to explore the issues of concern to this study i.e. consultation with professionals as well as victims, analysis of the 2010/11 British Crime Survey, review of relevant literature and mapping existing services for victims.

Design of research tools:

A semi-structured topic guide was developed in consultation with Victim Support's research manager. This helped to ensure that key issues were explored with each participant and gave interviewers the flexibility both to adapt their style to meet the needs of individual participants and to probe and explore issues in detail and with sensitivity. The topic guide was piloted with five participants initially to test out questions, gain feedback and make appropriate modifications. A copy of the topic guide used is provided at Appendix 4.

Conduct:

Originally the project planned to use focus groups as the sole qualitative method for investigation. This decision was in part influenced by the time constraints of the project, whereby it was envisaged that the use of focus groups would enable the project to reach a greater number of victims in a restricted time period allocated for fieldwork. In addition the use of focus groups was decided upon because the method for recruiting participants was primarily via gateway organisations and it was felt that it would be beneficial to make use of pre-established groups, as these would have the advantage of being able to provide victims with support before and after a focus group should they require it. It was also felt that the group dynamic of a focus group would enable participants collectively to develop creative ideas to put to police and crime commissioners.

Early on in the data collection stage it became clear that the data collection methods needed to be flexible to account for the needs of victims and ensure everyone who wanted to participate could do so. For

example many prospective participants were not comfortable taking part in a focus group for a variety of reasons (e.g. nervousness about speaking in groups, not wanting others to hear about their experiences etc) however they were happy to participate in a face to face interview. Others were unable to gather easily in one central location due to the limitations of geography, particularly in rural areas. The needs and requirements of the participants therefore dictated the use of a combination of focus groups and interviews.

For similar reasons, while the majority of interviews were conducted face to face with the interviewer, some were conducted over the telephone in order to meet the needs of the participant and facilitate the participation of those who were unable or unwilling to participate in a face to face interview. For some a telephone interview enables more control over the situation and provides a certain anonymity and privacy not available in a face to face interview.

With the permission of the participants, the interviews/focus groups were recorded using a digital recording device. Where permission was not granted the researcher took notes. The recordings were retained for a maximum of ten days and during this time the interviewer inputted information into the framework developed for sorting the data prior to analysis. The reason for this was to ensure that no data captured on the recording devices that could potentially identify participants was retained unnecessarily. In addition, between recordings being made and the data being entered into the framework analysis, recording devices were kept in locked cabinets so that the data they contained could not be accessed.

Criteria for participation:

Except in the case of children and young people, criteria for participation were that:

- the prospective participant had been a victim of at least one of the crime types in the last two years (except in the case of historic sexual abuse, victims of which often do not access services or report the crime until many years after it took place), and
- the prospective participant was aged over 18 years.

We decided to focus on experiences that occurred in the last two years to ensure the relevance of those experiences to the existing provision of services in the local area and to avoid difficulties and inaccuracies in recall. The age restriction was put in place as it was agreed early on in the project to focus on the experiences of children and young people as a distinct part of the project and to reflect the additional ethical, safeguarding and welfare considerations of working with those under the age of 18 (see more information about children and young people below).

Sampling:

The aim was to reach a minimum of five participants in each local police force area in each of the crime categories. Inclusivity of participants across diversity strands was attempted by applying the conclusions of an equality impact assessment conducted at the beginning of the project.

Recruitment of participants:

Participants were recruited primarily through gateway organisations that were already providing or had provided support to the participants. This was partly dictated by pragmatic considerations (e.g. the gateway organisations already had access to the individuals that the project was

looking to consult and could identify those who met the participation criteria) and partly due to ethical considerations (e.g. the gateway organisations were there to provide support to the participants after the research was completed and already had an understanding of their needs.) Host organisation Victim Support was also treated as a gateway organisation and trained Victim Support staff and volunteers offered immediate emotional support to participants drawn from both Victim Support networks and beyond. Participants were also recruited through local organisations and stakeholders. The interviews and focus groups took place between October 2011 and March 2012.

Ethical considerations:

The wellbeing and safeguarding of participants were paramount in the conduct of the interviews and focus groups. Key elements of the ethical approach taken included:

- providing prospective participants with the information needed to make an informed decision about whether to take part or not
- recording participants' decisions to take part via a consent form and providing them with the opportunity to withdraw consent
- explaining carefully to participants the steps taken to maintain confidentiality and the limitations to preserving confidentiality in accordance with Victim Support policies
- maintaining participant anonymity by removing all information that could potentially identify an individual
- minimising distress to participants during fieldwork e.g. conducting interviews and focus groups in a private and safe space; researcher sensitivity to the needs of participants, having a trained Victim Support staff member or volunteer available during the fieldwork to provide support if and when required etc.
- making referrals to specialist support services should further support be required by the participants
- recruitment of interviewers (victims' services advocates) with experience of working with victims of crime and/or other vulnerable groups
- the provision of detailed guidelines, briefings and training sessions to all researchers to prepare them for the role and taking into account areas of possible sensitivity (specific training was delivered to prepare VSAs for working with children and young people and victims of sexual violence)
- mandatory safeguarding training and Criminal Records Bureau checking of all interviewers before they could conduct interviews or focus groups.

Children and Young People

We took a different approach to researching the experiences of children and young people firstly in recognition of the fact that there are few dedicated services for young victims around the country.

We wanted to make sure that we did capture the views of children and young people but did not consider it to be within the capability of the project to recruit one-off focus groups specifically of young victims of crime outside the support systems that a gateway organisation, such as a youth group, would provide. We therefore contacted existing groups and requested the opportunity to hold a focus group as part of an existing, planned session.

We did not want to ask the young people to talk about their personal experiences or indeed to single young people out as victims in a group

environment so we used a fictional character 'Alex' as a point of discussion and asked the young people to explain how Alex might feel as a victim of crime.

An amended topic guide was used for these sessions and can be found at appendix 3. This was developed with the advice of specialist young people's workers within Victim Support. Findings from the research with young people were captured on a separate framework to that used for adult participants and therefore data from the young people cannot be compared with that from the adults in a meaningful way.

Analysis:

The analysis of the interviews and focus groups was undertaken using a framework analysis approach. This approach was chosen as it offered a transparent and systematic method for analysing qualitative data which enables the research to stay focussed on the specific priorities of the study. The transparent procedural approach of framework analysis is valuable as it would allow another researcher to repeat the process in order to verify findings. It is also a relatively straightforward approach which could easily be explained and adopted by all the researchers working on the project and which did not require the use of complex and expensive computer assisted qualitative data analysis software.

The first stage involved the researchers familiarising themselves with the data (through reading notes and/or listening to recordings) and then systematically sifting, summarising and sorting the data from each interview or focus group into a pre-designed thematic framework. The framework comprises a series of subject charts in Excel. The broad theme headings that made up the thematic framework used for this research were:

- impact of victimisation
- support needs of victims
- experience of the police, experience of other criminal justice system agencies
- experience of other agencies
- barriers and facilitators to accessing support, and
- recommendations.

These broad themes were broken down further into sub-themes and there was also space within the framework for researchers to record information that did not fit into these themes but might still be important to the study. This meant that emerging and unexpected themes could be identified and recorded.

Researchers also recorded verbatim quotations from participants in the framework. Basic context information about each interview or focus group was recorded including whether it was a focus group or interview, the number of people participating, the crime type area and basic demographic detail.

Once the data was summarised and sorted in the framework then in depth analysis was conducted. Like all qualitative data analysis this was an iterative process and involved the researcher:

- reviewing the summarised data
- systematically, comparing and contrasting the different accounts, experiences and perspectives
- searching for patterns, contradictions or connections within the data
- seeking explanations for patterns and associations

- making interpretations grounded in the data.

Each crime type area was analysed separately initially to identify the concerns and issues specific to that victimisation experience. Where time was available all victim crime types were analysed together to identify where there were issues and concerns relevant to all victims interviewed.

Limitations of the qualitative research

As with all research this approach had certain limitations. Some of these were inherent in the methodology and others related to the specific response achieved for this study. Some of the limitations have been considered here:

- **Recruitment:** this was largely through gateway organisations and therefore may not have reached those victims that had not accessed services at all and may have the greatest needs/most unmet needs
- **Diversity of sample:** because of the small numbers of victims involved, we aimed to be inclusive rather than fully representative of all victims locally who had experienced each crime type. Generalisations about all victims representing a particular diversity strand cannot therefore be drawn on the basis of this research
- **Complexity of hate crime as a crime category:** because hate crime can be motivated by hostility on the basis of multiple diversity strands, it was not possible, with the small sample interviewed by this research, to gain the views of people affected by all types of hate crime. In Kent, we spoke to victims affected by racist and disability-motivated hate crime. We were not able to speak to victims of homophobic, religiously-motivated, or transphobic hate crime, so this research can only give a partial picture of the impact of hate crime locally.
- **Combination of interviews and focus groups:** because, led by the needs of participants, we conducted our research in a combination of group sizes, there is a risk of overstating data captured in interviews as it is more detailed and in depth
- **Retrospective views and past experiences:** because we were reliant on the recall of victims, there is a risk that this recall can be flawed, especially if events took place some time ago
- **Interviewer effect:** as with any research captured in person, there is a risk that interviewers will represent victims' views through a filter of their own personal perspective
- **Social desirability:** particularly in a group setting, there may be a risk of participants saying what they think is socially acceptable rather than what they really think.
- **Bias of self-selection:** those who have had negative experiences with services may have been more motivated to take part, especially if they were likely to feel more strongly or want to have the opportunity for redress. Victims who had had more positive experiences may have felt less inclined to come forward
- **Only one part of the story:** because we didn't hold focus groups asking the same questions of agencies providing services to victims, we were unable to capture the same level of detail from their perspective about the challenges and difficulties facing agencies or the criminal justice

system in meeting the needs of victims, However it was beyond the scope of this project to investigate this in detail as our priority was capturing the voice of victims.

Appendix 3: Children and Young People topic guide

Topic Guide – VSA research (CYP)

Materials needed:

- Flipchart and pens
- Flashcards
- Post it notes
- Parental and young people consent forms (distributed by gateway organisations)
- Dictaphone
- Incentives e.g. pizza.

o Introduction

The group leader should introduce the VSA to the group, set ground rules and be on hand for any challenges that may arise throughout the session. Ground rules should be provided by the gateway organisation where possible; if they do not already have a list of ground rules then VSAs should use the ground rules document in the CYP toolkit.

"Good Afternoon/Evening. Thank you all for letting me take some of your time. I would like to start by introducing myself and explaining a little about the work I am doing which I hope you will be able to help me with.

My name is [insert name] and I am Victims' Service's Advocate for Kent. Part of my role is looking at what help and support there is available for victims and witnesses of crime and looking at ways that things may be improved for those affected by crime. I am here today to get your thoughts and opinions on policing and crime to help feed into this work.

This is connected to a big change that is coming up in how police are run – Police & Crime Commissioners (PCCs), who will be elected in November 2012 in each of the 42 police force areas in England & Wales.

PCCs will be responsible for setting what the police in the local area should focus their efforts and money on. They will also be responsible for deciding whether to start or support other services relating to crime, including services/support for victims of crime.

We want to try and make sure that one of the things they focus on is looking after victims. So part of my job is to write a report in a few months time on what the PCC should do to support victims of crime – including young victims.

Please be aware that I am not here to talk about any experiences personal to yourself, I am just looking at how you feel about some of the issues identified by victims and witnesses of crime. If over the course of the session you do wish to discuss something personal then please do discuss with the group leader after the session [confirm this with group leader].

Finally, anything that we do discuss will be in confidence and we will not be using anyone's names in the report we write. The only time we will break confidentiality will be if we believe you or someone else is in danger of harm. Please also respect the confidentiality of each other and do not disclose what is discussed in this focus group to others. "

- **Opening the discussion - 5 minutes**

- **Ice breaker:** Ask young people to introduce themselves - their name and what they enjoy doing in their spare time (or similar)
N.B. This should be facilitated by the group leader with the VSA as participant

- **Support needs - 15 minutes**

- **Case Study: Alex**

- This is Alex (VSA draws picture of a boy on flip chart)
- How old is he? (elicit feedback and write down answer on flip chart)
- What does he like to do? (elicit feedback and write down answer on flip chart)

- **VSA reads:**

- Alex was out with some friends one evening. Whilst waiting at the bus stop with a friend a group of lads came up to them and demanded their phones and money.
- Alex refused and when he did one of the lads punched him in the face badly cutting his lip.
- Alex and his friend handed over all their money and phones and when the lads had gone they ran to a nearby phone box to call the police.

Q. What would they need from the police?

Prompts could include:

- Regular update on progress
- Signposting
- Sensitive to your needs
- Quick response.

Q. What other support might they need?

Prompts could include:

- Emotional support
- Specialist support
- Medical help
- Safer community (lighting, CCTV etc)

Q. Where could they get that support from?

Prompts could include:

- Local organisations
- Family and friends
- GP

Agree/Disagree - 10 mins

- Everyone stands in the centre of the room and **Agree** and **Disagree** signs are placed on either side of the room
- The facilitator reads out a specific point of view from the **CYP statement flashcards** on policing and crime e.g. "There is no point reporting abusive neighbours; nobody does anything about it anyway!"
- Ask people to move according to how far they agree or disagree with the statement; and ask why

What things do you think would help young victims of crime like Alex? - 5 minutes

- Make a list of things the young people think the PCC should do to help victims of crime. Include things such as 'better communication with the victim' and 'provide more funding to local organisations' etc
- Once the list is compiled split the young people into groups (max of 4 per group) and give each group a few post-it notes, then ask them to put down the three things they personally would like to see the PCC focus on. They can use items from the list or think of their own
- Collect them in, make a definitive list of main priorities on the flipchart and elicit a response from each group as to why these things are important

Conclusion

- Thank young people for their time and contribution
- Ask if there are any final questions or comments
- Ask if the young people are interested in seeing the report / being kept informed of progress - advise this will be available via the gateway organisation
- Communicate that a report will be available from May 2012

Closing the discussion (optional) - 5 minutes

A closedown activity (similar to the opening icebreaker) is recommended to close down the discussion.

N.B. This should be facilitated by the group leader with the VSA as participant.

A closedown activity example is as follows:

- Ask everyone to stand in a circle.
- Each person says what they had for breakfast
- The next person then repeats what has already been said and adds their own For example: "This morning I had 1) an apple 2) a bowl of cereal and 3) an xxx for breakfast"
- This continues until everyone has had their go; the VSA should be the last person in the sequence

Appendix 4: Adult focus group topic guide

Materials needed:

- Flipchart and pens
- Consent forms
- Dictaphone
- Change for reimbursing travel.

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Introduction – 10-15 minutes

Introduce yourself

- Go over VSA project and purpose of focus groups:
- This is connected to a big change that is coming up in how police are run – Police & Crime Commissioners (PCCs), who will be elected in November 2012 in each of the 43 police force areas in England & Wales
- PCCs will be responsible for setting what the police in the local area should focus their efforts and money on. They will also be responsible for deciding whether to start or support other services relating to crime, including services/support for victims of crime
- We want to try and make sure that one of the things they focus on is looking after victims.
- This research is being done as part of a project to identify what victims in each area need in terms of services and support, so that the PCCs can know where they should focus police resources in relation to services and support for victims
- What you tell us in this group will be used to make a briefing paper for the incoming Police & Crime Commissioner for your area, aimed at highlighting what victims most need and influencing them to act to better meet that need

Confidentiality

Explain that:

- All the information provided will be treated confidentially – it will be kept secure and only be seen by members of the VSA research team. It will not be shared with other VS staff, the gateway organisation (if relevant) or anyone else
- They will not be identified in the report – we may cite their experience or views and quote them in the report but we would not use their name, and would change any details which might identify them
- Participants should respect the confidentiality and anonymity of each other and not disclose what is discussed in the focus group to others
- Emphasise the limits of confidentiality i.e. if someone shares something which suggests a vulnerable adult or a child is at risk, or they are at risk, the researcher has an obligation to share this information the relevant Victim Support manager, who may have to inform social services

Practical issues

Explain that:

- The focus group will last around 2 hours
- There will be a 5-10 minute break half-way through
- Travel expenses will be reimbursed at the end

- They do not have to answer questions if they do not want to
- They can leave at any time and for whatever reason
- They will be given information about support services available (where applicable) and the name and contact details of a volunteer who will be available to talk to them about any issues or queries they have. If needed they are also on hand if they should wish to go out and talk to someone
- Ask permission to record the interview
- Housekeeping - fire procedure, toilets etc
- Ask them to give each other a chance to speak, respect each other's views and try not to talk over each other

Consent

- Check if they have understood the above
- Hand out consent forms and ask to sign
- Emphasise that consent can be withdrawn at any point and they would need to inform the researcher if they wanted to do so

1 Opening the discussion - 15 minutes

Icebreaker: ask people to introduce themselves - their name and what they had for breakfast (or similar). Ask participants to each tell a little bit about their experience of being a victim of crime: explain they can share as much or as little as they want but would be useful if they included whether the crime was reported to the police and, if it was, what the outcome of the investigation was (e.g. no-one caught - case dropped, offender charged - sentenced).

2 Support needs for dealing with the police and CJS - 30-40 minutes

First, we want to look at the service that victims of [relevant crime type] get from the police - what do victims need from police and why?

EXERCISE 1: WHAT VICTIMS NEED FROM THE POLICE

Draw line down piece of flipchart with header 'WHAT' on one side and 'WHY' on the other.

We want to find out from you what you think it is most important that police do when dealing with victims of [relevant crime type], and why.

So first, what is most important about how the police deal with victims of [relevant crime type]?

MODERATOR INSTRUCTION: Note in the 'WHAT' column, if participants also say why it is important, note in 'WHY' column.

PROBE:

- Responding to report of crime quickly
- Taking incident seriously
- Taking (quick) action to investigate
- Explaining process / next steps
- Keep victim updated and informed about what they were doing
- Being understanding and responsive to concerns of victim
- Treating victim with consideration and respect
- Linking victim to other support services

Why are these things important?

MODERATOR INSTRUCTION: Note in the 'WHY' column. Ask if the police did do any of these things in their case, and if they did, what was valuable about it for them.

PROBE:

- Reassurance
- Understanding of process / what to expect
- Able to access other support
- 'Closure'

Ask if the police did not do these things in their case and, if they didn't, what effect that had on them.

PROBE:

- Worsens distress
- Felt alone/isolated/unsupported
- Emotional wellbeing deteriorates/self-doubt/stress/possibly ill mental health
- Made fear for safety
- Affected trust/confidence/loss of respect in police
- Made less likely to report crime or engage with police in future

Ask each if they could say which of these things are the most important for victims of [relevant crime type] overall (in their view).

So we now have a list of things that victims of [relevant crime type] want or need from police: how well do you think police in this area meet these needs?

What could they do to improve?

PROBE:

- Manner - more understanding, respectful etc
- Information and communication with victim - updating on progress and outcome, explaining process and next steps etc
- Linking with other services - e.g. referring to information and support services like VS

Independent organisations are sometimes able to help victims deal with the police e.g. by explaining what rights/entitlements they have as victims and how the process works, or by helping to get information from police officers such as updates on their case.

Did you have any independent support to help with the police? Would you have found it useful to have this in your experience of dealing with the police? (or perhaps you did get it?)

PROBE:

- How do you think such support might have helped you in dealing with the police?

Do you think victims of [relevant crime type] generally would benefit from this type of support to help deal with the police and other criminal justice agencies? PROBE:

- Why/why not?

Does anyone have experience or views of other criminal justice agencies that they want to share e.g. CPS, courts?

PROBE:

- Good points
- Bad points

BREAK - 5-10 minutes

3 Support needs for dealing with impact of crime - 30-40 minutes

In the next part we want to look beyond the police at what victims of [relevant crime type] need to deal with the impact on their lives. We know that being a victim of crime can have all sorts of effects on your life: it can be traumatic and affect your emotions and confidence; it can affect your employment, your finances, your health; and, as well as dealing with strictly policing matters, the Police and Crime Commissioners will be able to do something about these things as well, through commissioning services and support for victims.

EXERCISE 2: SUPPORT NEED

On flipchart make 4 columns headed 'WHAT', 'WHY', 'WHEN', 'WHO'.

We want to find out from you what aspects of your life being a victim of [relevant crime type] had the biggest impact on, and what type of help you needed to deal with it.

Ask each person in turn to say what, if anything, they most needed help with in terms of dealing with the impact of the experience on their life. Note in the 'WHAT' column. *NOTE: prompt, using support type list if necessary*

PROBE:

- Why was this needed? - note in the 'WHY' column
- Was there a particular point that it was needed? - note in the 'WHEN' column

Ask each: what forms of help do you think is most important for victims of [relevant crime type] overall?

So we have what, why and when. What about 'who'? Who would you want this type of support from?

PROBE:

Is there a certain organisation or type of organisation that's most appropriate or best placed to provide this support?

Which, if any, of the following do you think are important for *these* types of services (services identified by the participants in the previous question):

- To be independent of police or government
- To be specialists in supporting victims
- To be specialists in supporting victims of [relevant crime type]
- To be specialists in supporting people from under represented communities e.g. with disabled people, people with mental health problems, people from an ethnic minority group
- Have legal knowledge/knowledge of how system works

Is this type of help available in this area?

Were you aware it was available?

Would you know how to find out about it?

PROBE if yes:

- How? - leaflet, website, word of mouth etc

Do independent services link up well enough - so if you were supported by an independent service did it link in with other support services to assist you?

Was the quality of the support good enough?

- Why/why not?

4 Overall messages on victim needs - 10-15 minutes

Finally, we want to see if we can distil what we've discussed into some key messages to take to the PCCs.

If you could tell the new PCC one thing about what they should be doing for victims of [specific crime type], what would that be?

If you could tell the new PCC one thing about what they should be doing for victims generally in Kent, what would that be?

5 Conclusion - 5 minutes

- Thank participants for their time and contribution
- Ask if there are any final questions or comments
- Give out information sheet and reiterate that follow-up support is available

Ask if people are interested in seeing the report / being kept informed of progress - take contact details of those who are. Communicate that a report will be available from May 2012

Appendix 5: List of victims consulted

The VSAs consulted the following victims when researching this report:

Anti social behaviour

1 x focus group: participants 5 men; 5 women

Hate crime

4 x interviews with victims of racially motivated hate crime: participants
4 men

Domestic abuse

2 x focus groups with women: 11 participants

Sexual violence

4 x interviews with women

Children and young people

1 x focus group: participants 8 young men, age 16-17; 1 young woman, age
17.

Appendix 6: Mapping Summary of local organisations and stakeholders mapped

1. Breakdown

The following is a breakdown of the mapping exercise we undertook and represents the picture of service provision we found across Kent at that time. We endeavoured to map all services providing direct support to victims or witnesses of crime, but we will have missed some.

We also recognise there are many other more general services that would provide support to victims in a less targeted way. Youth services, church groups and general support for older people are examples of services we did not map as their target service users do not explicitly include 'victims of crime'.

Furthermore, the funding climate means many services we mapped will have since changed in scope, been cut or maybe even grown. This should be borne in mind in drawing conclusions on the basis of our mapping.

We mapped 40 direct support services to victims of crime. In addition, we mapped partnerships and/or consortium arrangements that provide support to victims. These include:

- Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy Group
- Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board
- Kent Community Safety Partnerships
- Kent Criminal Justice Board
- Kent Domestic Abuse Forums
- Kent Safeguarding Children Board
- Kent Voluntary Sector Emergency Group
- Medway Safeguarding Children Board
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)
- Specialist Domestic Violence Courts Group
- The Keeping Safe Group
- The Local Performance and Delivery Group.

Please note that the position of the person we spoke to varied and so the views given were not necessarily the view of the service or organisation.

Of the services we mapped, we spoke to 22 on the phone about their main issues of concern, both for their service users and their organisations. The position of the person we spoke to varied and so the views given were not necessarily the view of the organisation. The following tables provide a breakdown of organisations we spoke to.

2. List of organisations mapped

The following is a list of all the organisations we mapped; those in **bold** we spoke to in more depth either face-to-face or by telephone.

Action for Children

Amicus Horizon

Canterbury Women's Refuge and the Rising Sun Domestic Violence and Abuse Service

Casa Refuge and Floating Support Catch 22 16Plus

Cruse Bereavement Counselling

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

East Kent Rape Line

Family Matters

Golding Lifeline
 Home Start – Shepway New Beginnings
 Hyde Housing
**K-DASH – Kent Domestic Abuse Support and Help
 Keeping Safe Group**
 Kent Advocacy Service
 Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy Group
 Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board
 Kent Community Safety Partnerships
Kent County Council
Kent Criminal Justice Board
 Kent Domestic Abuse One Stop Shops
 Kent Domestic Violence Forums
Kent Police Authority
Kent Police
Kent Probation
Kent Safeguarding Children Board
 Kent Safe Schools Project
 Kent Sanctuary Schemes
 Kent Voluntary Sector Emergency Group
Medway Safeguarding Children Board
 MHS Homes Group
 Neighbourhood Watch
 New Romney Counselling Services
North Kent Women's Aid
Oasis Domestic Abuse Service
Ravi Refuge
 Refuge
Rubicon Cares
Shepway Lifeline Domestic Abuse Service
 Specialist Domestic Violence Courts Group
 The Dove Project
Tunbridge Wells Bangladeshi Welfare Association
Tunbridge Wells Filipino Association
Victim Support Homicide Service
Victim Support Kent
 West Kent Domestic Abuse Helpline and Advocacy Service
 West Kent Lifeways
 West Kent Women's Refuge
 Winston's Wish.

3. Overview of support and services

Overview of support for victims of crime in Kent

Victim Support provides volunteer support to anyone affected by crime, whether or not the crime has been reported; this includes victims and witnesses, their friends, family and other people caught up in the aftermath. Practical and emotional support and information are provided over the phone and in person by a victim care officer.

Support services for victims of anti-social behaviour

There are no voluntary sector services in Kent aimed specifically at helping victims of anti-social behaviour. Instead, community safety units across Kent provide a wide variety of services for their local communities, many of which support victims of anti-social behaviour.

The concerns of anti-social behaviour support organisations

Staff in the units we spoke to were concerned about how funding reductions are negatively impacting on their ability to deal with anti-social behaviour. Some services provided by units, which have been making a positive impact, have already been cut.

There is broad concern across the units in relation to youth crime, underage drinking and a lack of youth facilities. Teams also typically deal with anti-social behaviour relating to drugs, neighbour nuisance and environmental crime.

All teams spoke of high levels of perception of anti-social behaviour, where, in fact, anti-social behaviour is typically decreasing in Kent.

Units in East Kent were particularly concerned about what effect ongoing high unemployment might have on anti-social behaviour in their areas.

Units also emphasised that Kent has anti-social behaviour difficulties related to tension around a high immigrant population.

Support services for victims of domestic abuse

As elsewhere in England, provision of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) is patchy in Kent. Most IDVAs in Kent are based with services specifically for victims of domestic abuse. Some are also based with local citizens' advice bureaus.

As of March 2012, Kent's IDVA provision was:

- Oasis Domestic Abuse Services: 3.5
- Maidstone Citizen's Advice Bureau: 1
- K-DASH: 8.4
- The Rising Sun Domestic Violence and Abuse Service: 2
- Kent Advocacy Service: 1
- North Kent Women's Aid: 1
- Swale Domestic Violence Forum: 2
- Refuge: 1
- The Domestic Abuse Volunteer Service: 2
- Medway Citizens' Advice Bureau: 2.

Kent has a wide variety of voluntary services, which support victims of domestic abuse. The majority of these support female victims only. There is no service solely for male victims of domestic abuse. Ravi Refuge supports BME/Asian Women only.

The concerns of domestic abuse support organisations

Most domestic abuse support organisations are concerned about funding cuts. Many are already reliant on short-term funding. IDVAs rely on particularly precarious funding and at the time of writing 3 IDVAs faced job losses.

Organisations are also keen to emphasise the need for all agencies to understand the complexity of domestic abuse and for referral and frontline staff to understand the magnitude of someone reporting domestic abuse for the first time.

Support services for victims of sexual violence

Kent has three organisations devoted to victims of sexual violence – Family Matters, East Kent Rape Line and Action for Children. Action for Children supports children up to the age of eighteen. These organisations provide a variety of services such as helplines and counselling.

Family Matters and East Kent Rape Line each have 1 ISVA, covering, respectively, West Kent and East Kent. Family Matter's ISVA supports both adult and children and young people survivors of rape and sexual assault.

The concerns of sexual violence support organisations

There is major concern about current Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) provision. This currently falls short of Department of Health recommendations.

Kent also falls short of recommendations from the government's Violence Against Women (VAWG) strategy in only having two ISVAs.⁵⁶

In addition, these ISVAs at times struggle to get referrals from the police, despite the 1,402 recorded sexual offences in Kent in 2010/11 according to the BCS.⁵⁷

There is also concern that Kent does not follow government recommendations to have an ISVA supporting children and young people specifically.

Support for people bereaved by murder or manslaughter

The homicide service is a nationally managed service made up of five teams based in five locations around England and Wales. Each team consists of a team leader, five case workers and a support worker. There is a National Homicide Manager, completing the team of 36. On receiving a referral, a homicide caseworker carries out a needs assessment and work begins to support the bereaved person in a range of ways. Often the help at the start is very practical: help with the funeral, meetings with the police, child care, and benefits, typically reinforced by emotional support as the relationship between the bereaved and the caseworker develops. The caseworker can also commission a number of specialist interventions such as trauma support and support for bereaved children. The homicide service was the first service that Victim Support developed and rolled out as a national, rather than regional, service.

In addition, the organisations Cruse Bereavement Counselling and Winston's Wish were mapped in Kent. It should be noted, however, that these organisations provide general bereavement counselling, rather than a service specific to those bereaved by murder and manslaughter.

Support services for victims of hate crime

All efforts were made to contact organisations which support victims of hate crime in Kent. However, it was only possible to map two of these, in addition to the 24/7 pan-Kent non-police hate crime reporting line, run by Shepway Lifeline. These organisations are:

⁵⁶ HM Government, 2011, op.cit.

⁵⁷ Victim Support analysis based on Home Office: Research, Development and Statistics Directorate and BMRB, *Social Research, British Crime Survey; 2010-11*, as above.

- Tunbridge Wells Bangladeshi Welfare Association
- Tunbridge Wells Filipino Association.

It should also be noted that these organisations provide general support to members of their respective communities, rather than services dedicated to support victims of hate crime specifically.

Further research is required to map hate crime services in Kent.

The concerns of hate crime support organisations

Due to the low number of mapped organisations specifically for victims of hate crime, it is not possible to draw conclusions on the concerns of such hate crime organisations across Kent. However, concerns from statutory organisations, which support victims of hate crime, include concern about the impact of funding cuts on the potential of services to support hate crime and hate incident victims in Kent.

Support services for young victims of crime

There are several services which support young victims of crime in Kent which have been mapped. These are crime-type specific and do not exist for each crime type. It should also be noted that the vast majority of these do not solely help young victims of crime. There are some exceptions, such as Action for Children, for instance, which runs two projects in Kent, supporting children and young people up to the age of 18 (as above).

Concerns of organisations working with young people

There are few specialist services for young victims and investment into this area of work is needed. Further research is required to focus upon the specific concerns of organisations which work with young people in Kent.

Appendix 7: Glossary

Anti-social behaviour – Defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as “behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator.” Anti-social behaviour includes conduct that is and is not

already covered by existing criminal offences, such as criminal damage and harassment.

British Crime Survey (BCS) - a systematic victim study, currently carried out by BMRB Limited on behalf of the Home Office. The BCS asks people aged 16 and over living in households in England and Wales about their experiences of crime in the last 12 months. These experiences are used to estimate levels of crime in England and Wales.

Black and minority ethnic (BME) - a term used to describe any minority race, nationality or language & culture in the UK.

Criminal Justice System (CJS) - the system of practices and institutions of governments directed at upholding social control, deterring and mitigating crime, or sanctioning those who violate laws with criminal penalties and rehabilitation efforts, includes policing, courts and corrections services.

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) - the Government Department responsible for prosecuting criminal cases investigated by the police in England and Wales.

Domestic abuse - Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) - a collective term for a range of procedures which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is sometimes referred to as female circumcision, or female genital cutting.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) - independently assesses police forces and policing across activity from neighbourhood teams to serious crime and the fight against terrorism.

Independent domestic violence adviser (IDVA) - provide proactive independent support to victims; involving the assessment of risk, safety planning and facilitating effective partnership working within multi-agencies, throughout the victims engagement with the criminal justice process.

Independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) - An independent sexual violence adviser offers confidential advice and support to both males and females who have been the victims of sexual violence.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) - an acronym that collectively refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

Multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) - meetings where information about high risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies. By bringing all agencies together at a MARAC, a risk focused, coordinated safety plan can be drawn up to support the victim.

Police and crime commissioner (PCC) - elected by the public to hold chief constables and the force to account; effectively making the police answerable to the communities they serve. Police and crime commissioners will ensure community needs are met as effectively as possible, and will improve local relationships through building confidence and restoring trust. They will also work in partnership across a range of agencies at

local and national level to ensure there is a unified approach to preventing and reducing crime.

Police force area – the area for which a designated police force has responsibility for providing policing services and enforcing criminal law.

Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 – legislation setting out reform for police accountability and governance, including the creation of the MOPC and replacing police authorities with directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners.

Sexual assault referral centre (SARC) – specialist services for people who have been raped or sexually assaulted. Provides medical care and forensic examination following assault/rape, counselling and in some locations, sexual health services. SARCs are mostly able to assist in the immediate aftermath of an assault but do not offer long term services that are provided by Rape Crisis Centre.

Sexual offences investigation team (SOIT) – specially trained officers, who have to attend a rigorous training course. They ensure that the immediate physical, mental and welfare needs of the victim are met. They will explain the criminal justice process and gather evidence and information from the victim to support the investigation.

The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (VCOP) – code which governs the services to be provided in England and Wales by organisations in regards to victims of criminal conduct which occurred in England and Wales.

Victims' services advocate (VSA) – individual employed by the victims' services advocates project to research and promote the service needs of victims of crime in preparation for the introduction of elected police and crime commissioners and, in London, the MOPC.

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