

victim support
find the strength



Impact report
2012-13



Alice* had suffered antisocial behaviour for a year from a neighbour who banged on the walls, shouted abuse and intimidated her in the street.

She could not sleep, felt unsafe in her own home and her mental health was deteriorating. When we met Alice she believed her complaints were going nowhere. We acted as a single point of contact co-ordinating support from the police, housing and other agencies. We got Alice extra help from healthcare specialists and a community law partnership. This gave her the confidence to begin a civil action. When Alice got a court date we supported her emotionally and practically, giving her a personal attack alarm and locating items needed as evidence. Our caseworker arranged an advance visit to court and booked Alice a room to wait in, away from her neighbour on the day of the hearing. Following the case, the neighbour was evicted. Alice says we gave her a voice and never let her down. She now wants to volunteer and help other victims of antisocial behaviour herself.

* Not her real name

Foreword

It will soon be 40 years since the first Victim Support group was founded in Bristol.

This year, perhaps more than in any of the last 40, has seen an unprecedented level of change. From elections of police and crime commissioners in November 2012 to the latest Comprehensive Spending Review to policy changes to the way victims services are commissioned, any one of these could have distracted us from the vital work that our staff and volunteers do in every community across England and Wales.

However, whenever we hear back from people such as Alice or any one of the million or so other victims or witnesses who have been referred to us in the last 12 months, we know that each of our 5,600 volunteers and 1,500 staff are focused on the work they do best – supporting victims and witnesses.

We know that Victim Support makes a huge difference to people's lives. More than nine out of ten victims and witnesses are satisfied or very satisfied with the service they receive from our staff and volunteers, whose time and effort is worth an estimated £21 million a year.

People are often worried about going to court and frightened by the prospect of giving evidence. However, they know when they talk to our Witness Service volunteers that they are dealing with people who are caring, knowledgeable and who give up their time for free because they care passionately about supporting victims and witnesses.

It's the same in the victim care teams where our staff and volunteers offer free and confidential support to victims – both those who have been referred by the police and other agencies, and those who self-refer. It is vital that people who need help when they are at their most vulnerable know they can trust someone to help them.

Alice says we gave her a voice and never let her down. We restored her trust in the criminal justice system. While changes will never stop and new demands will be placed on our teams, we will go on helping victims and witnesses find the strength to cope and recover for at least another 40 years.



Enid Rowlands
Chair



Javed Khan
Chief Executive

About us

Victim Support is the charity that contacts more than a million victims and witnesses each year. We have a local presence in every community across England and Wales. We give a voice to victims and witnesses within the criminal justice system and beyond.

Since 1974 we've been helping people affected by crime to find the strength to carry on and face the future with hope. We support people both emotionally and practically, helping them to cope and recover after crime.

This can range from helping to get victims extra security or re-housing them, through to accessing medical treatment and supporting families as they cope with the aftermath of the murder of a loved one. We often support people through challenging and traumatic times and, led by them, help get their lives back on track.

We are also there to help victims, witnesses and their families in every criminal court across England and Wales. Our Witness Service supports more than 204,000 people in the run up to a trial and during the court process, helping them to feel informed and supported so that they can give evidence confidently and ensure that justice is done.

We do not do this alone. We work with many organisations, including statutory agencies such as the police, housing departments and healthcare workers to help get the best deal for victims and witnesses. Our partnerships over the last year have included work with the NSPCC, Mind, the National Fraud Authority and the General Medical Council. We continue to innovate and

recently secured £1.4 million from the Department for Education to deliver a two year programme to support young people who have experienced domestic violence.

Supportline, our national helpline, has recently celebrated 15 years of helping victims and witnesses. The event was marked with the help of anti-knife crime campaigner and Victim Support's new Ambassador, Brooke Kinsella MBE (pictured here).

We have been shortlisted for two prestigious Charity Times Awards: Charity of the Year, in recognition of our high quality work in helping hundreds of thousands of people recover from the effects of crimes and give evidence in court, and Campaigning Team of the Year, for our '5 Promises to Victims and Witnesses' campaign. We are advising the Home Office and Ministry of Justice on how to tackle sexual violence against children and women after we helped young and vulnerable witnesses give evidence in high profile abuse cases.

At Victim Support, we touch many lives and many communities. This Impact Report, and the full Trustees' Annual Report that accompanies it, shows how we have helped victims, witnesses and their communities across England and Wales throughout 2012-13.

- More than 1 million crime victims were referred to us this year for support.
- We supported more than 204,000 witnesses through the process of going to court.
- We targeted our resources at those victims most affected, through detailed needs assessments, and making 68,000 support visits and 434,000 phone calls.
- 95% of victims and 97% of witnesses we supported said they were satisfied or very satisfied with our help.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black and white dress, stands outdoors holding a large white sign. The sign features the Victim Support logo and a pledge to support victims and witnesses. The background shows a building with a window.

victim
support

**I PLEDGE TO
SUPPORT
VICTIMS &
WITNESSES**

Supporting victims in local communities

Our core service contacted more than one million victims of crime to find out what help they needed. The figures below reflect the breadth and depth of support we provided and how valuable victims found it.



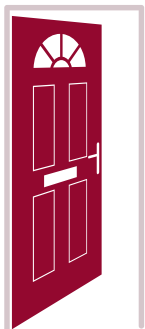
433,526

victims received a call providing initial support and assessing needs



545,775

letters were sent to victims to offer our services



67,786

victims were visited



48,797

victims were helped with security issues



73,299

victims were provided with emotional support

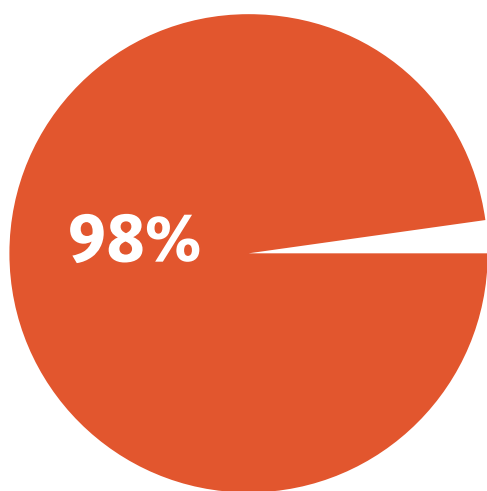


33,100

victims were provided with detailed information

"I have huge admiration for the volunteers in Victim Support. Being a victim of crime is a horrible experience and their work helps victims come to terms with what has happened and move on with their lives."

Chris Grayling, Secretary of State for Justice



... of victims would recommend Victim Support to other people



... of victims found our service easy to access



95% of victims were satisfied with the service they received



... of victims we helped said we met their needs

Our volunteers

Most of the help we provide to victims and witnesses is delivered through our teams of volunteers.

We calculate their time alone is worth £21m to communities across England and Wales.

Of course, their true value is far greater because they restore people's faith in human nature and their trust in the criminal justice system.

Victims and witnesses know the help they receive is from local people who are there for them because they want to be.

Our volunteers are the living proof that a community cares. That knowledge helps many people begin to find the strength to recover from the effects of crime and antisocial behaviour.

In recognition of their generosity and energy, we received The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Volunteering Award.



The future of volunteering in our organisation has never been brighter, with nearly a third of volunteers now under 35 and nearly a fifth under 25.

They benefit from the immense experience of our long serving volunteers like Mohammed Saddique, who this year won the Charity Staff and Volunteers Lifetime Achievement Award for 37 years service.

Our volunteers are trained and managed by our staff, whose support is essential as volunteers deliver our services. Staff also help volunteers continue to develop skills and nurture relationships with other charities and partners.


Their enthusiasm, commitment and dedication to our cause and the communities they come from are, quite simply, priceless.

5,600
active volunteers

£21m
estimated value of volunteers' time

1,500
employees

£743k
fundraising income generated by staff and volunteers

A young man with short brown hair and glasses is sitting in a grey office chair, reading an open book. He is wearing a blue and white plaid button-down shirt and dark blue jeans. The background is a blurred office setting with light-colored walls and a window.

Nearly a third
of our volunteers
are **under 35**

Nearly a fifth
are **under 25**

posed by model

Homicide service

It's three years since our homicide service was launched and it continues to go from strength to strength.

This year, bereaved family and friends of 422 of the 517 homicides across England and Wales were referred to us for support (82% of cases).

At the time of writing the homicide service was supporting 2,893 people including 1,436 taken on this year.

The homicide service is now integral to the national response to murder and manslaughter and its excellence has been showcased in the critically-acclaimed Channel 4 documentary *Murder Workers*.

The service has now been expanded to include:

- Optional restorative justice
- One-to-one consultations with specialist lawyers
- Measuring how we help the bereaved.

When Catherine Wells-Burr was murdered by her partner, his former girlfriend and her uncle, her grieving family faced the trauma of sudden bereavement and a high profile investigation.

It was at this point that our homicide service stepped in and took over many distressing tasks. They closed Catherine's student loans, liaised with the coroner about her body and helped arrange her funeral. During the nine week trial, caseworker Audrey Carson helped the family cope with distressing evidence and media attention. The service paid half the family's hotel bill so they could attend court every day and watch Catherine's murderers be convicted and jailed for life.

Catherine's mother Jayne Wells-Burr said: "Our world fell apart and changed from how we knew it, to knowing it would never be the same again.

Victim Support's homicide service, and in particular Audrey Carson, our caseworker, came into our lives right from the early days and gave us invaluable support.

Audrey helped us with the practical things such as getting a 'letter of administration' in place, as Catherine, like many young people, didn't leave a will.

She answered questions that were on our minds and reassured us when times were sad and confusing.

Victim Support's homicide service has inspired us to set up the Catherine Wells-Burr Foundation to raise awareness of their invaluable services, which some days gave us the strength to carry on, especially in our darkest hours."

Witness Service

Our Witness Service is the most comprehensive, professional and established service in the world for people giving evidence in court. Our specially trained staff and volunteers provide dedicated support to witnesses and victims of crime in every criminal court in England and Wales.

Every day we are there, on hand giving personal help and practical guidance covering all aspects of practice and procedure, to demystify the court process and allow people to give the best possible evidence. This ensures that justice is delivered effectively and smoothly. We arrange pre-trial visits so witnesses know what to expect and we provide private rooms where they can wait to be called into court; these are located away from the offenders.

Going to court can seem daunting and giving evidence can be difficult, especially when recalling traumatic events. We understand these concerns and take pride in the fact that our staff have the skills, experience and empathy to help people cope.

This year we:

- Supported 204,871 witnesses at court
- Arranged 28,071 pre-trial visits
- Helped 53,714 other people such as friends and family of witnesses.

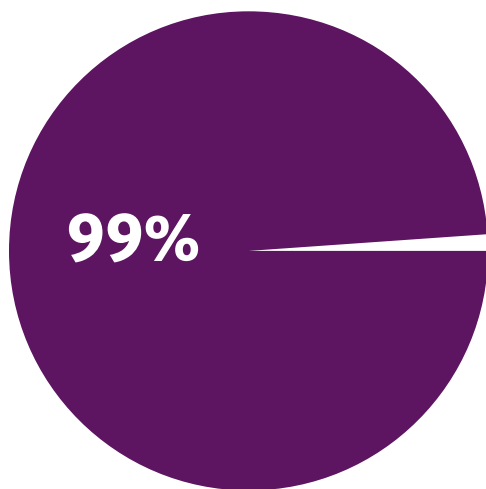
Vulnerable and intimidated witnesses need extra support which we help to arrange by ensuring 'special measures' such as screens in court or giving evidence by videolink are available to them as options. We run the Young Witness Service in England and Wales from seven centres, helping children as young as four give evidence. We hope to roll this service out across the country in the future.

This year our staff and volunteers helped victims in several high profile cases of child sexual exploitation. Our expertise is recognised by the Ministry of Justice, and they have asked us to help pilot pre-recorded evidence for young and vulnerable witnesses.

- We supported 39,825 vulnerable and intimidated witnesses, including 12,693 young witnesses
- 97% of witnesses who came to court and gave evidence said they were either satisfied or very satisfied with our service.

"Charities such as Victim Support are pivotal in making sure the criminal justice system better recognises the rights of victims; I commend its continued hard work and dedication to the cause of victims up and down the country."

Keir Starmer QC, Director of Public Prosecutions



... of witnesses would recommend the Witness Service to other people



... of witnesses found our service easy to access



97% of witnesses were satisfied with the service they received



... of witnesses we helped said we met their needs

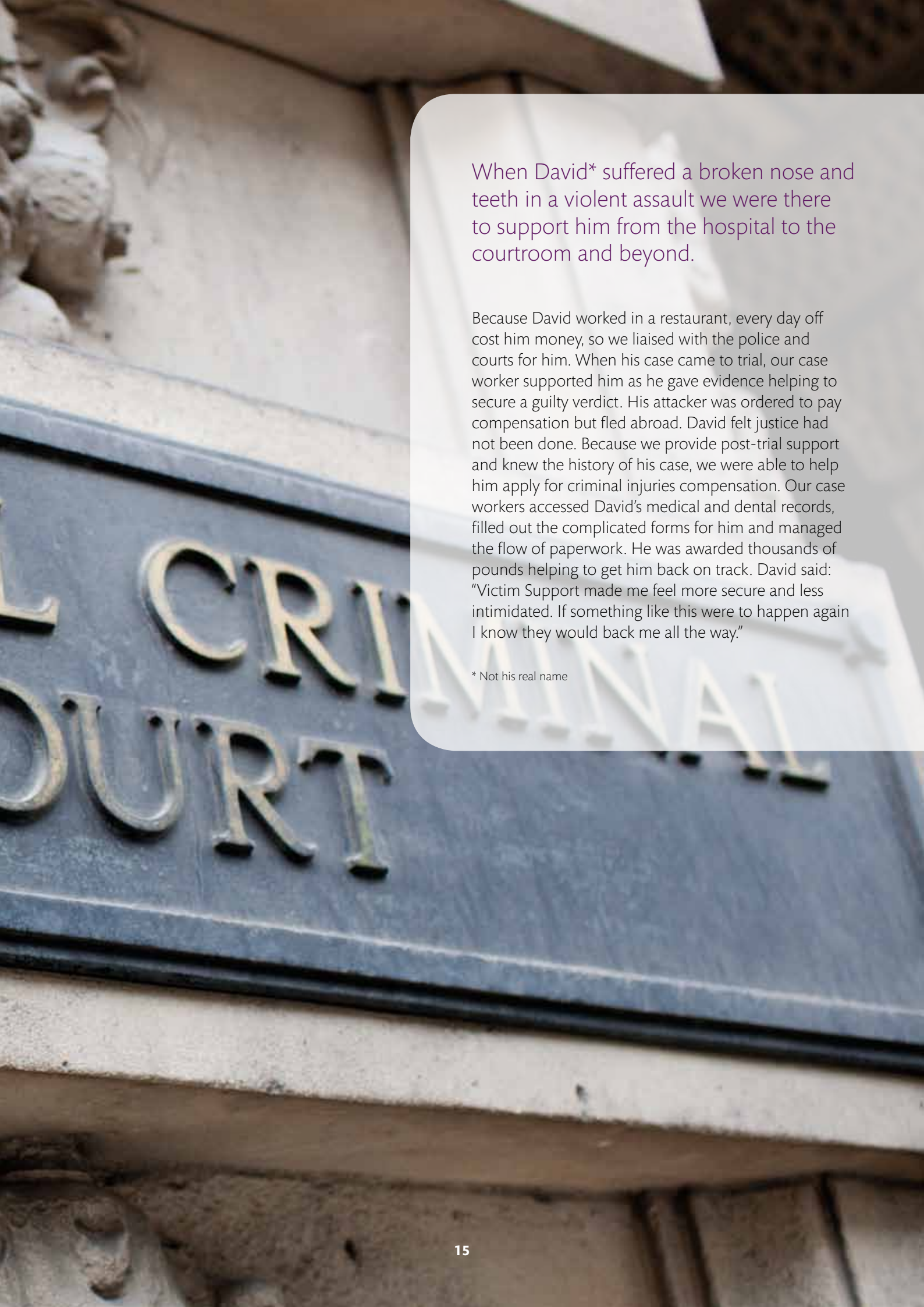


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Katy* was groomed on the streets of Oxford and sexually abused by a gang of men who plied her with drink and drugs.

Like six other teenage girls, she found the courage to give evidence against her abusers in a trial which attracted huge publicity. Our staff and volunteers helped Katy and the other victims through days of harrowing cross-examination. We began to support her long before the start of the trial by arranging visits to court. We provided private waiting rooms away from the offenders' supporters and ensured special measures such as screens and videolinks were available. One volunteer supported a victim through seven consecutive days of giving evidence. Katy's parents said: "We would like to thank Victim Support's Witness Service, many of whom are volunteers, who made some very difficult days bearable."

* Not her real name



When David* suffered a broken nose and teeth in a violent assault we were there to support him from the hospital to the courtroom and beyond.

Because David worked in a restaurant, every day off cost him money, so we liaised with the police and courts for him. When his case came to trial, our case worker supported him as he gave evidence helping to secure a guilty verdict. His attacker was ordered to pay compensation but fled abroad. David felt justice had not been done. Because we provide post-trial support and knew the history of his case, we were able to help him apply for criminal injuries compensation. Our case workers accessed David's medical and dental records, filled out the complicated forms for him and managed the flow of paperwork. He was awarded thousands of pounds helping to get him back on track. David said: "Victim Support made me feel more secure and less intimidated. If something like this were to happen again I know they would back me all the way."

* Not his real name

Our specialist services

We have been tailoring our services to the local needs of victims and witnesses for nearly 40 years and continue to develop new and innovative ways to help.

On top of our 'core' services, this year we delivered specialist support in communities across England and Wales with the help of £6.9m secured from local authorities, public bodies and through other grants, trusts and contracts.

Domestic violence and sexual violence

We are currently the biggest single provider of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) in the country, with more than 70 highly trained practitioners who offer intensive support to high risk victims of domestic violence.

Alongside our IDVAs, volunteers have received specialist training on how to help medium risk victims of domestic violence; this is thanks to a partnership with Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse.

We also have a growing number of Independent Sexual Violence Advocates who help victims of rape and sexual assault navigate the criminal justice system after making an initial complaint.

Antisocial behaviour

Many local authorities commissioned us to provide Victims Champions, which are specialist staff who have supported hundreds of people affected by antisocial behaviour. Their work improves lives, reduces harm in communities and saves public money by co-ordinating early responses from all agencies.

Restorative justice

We have developed victim-led restorative justice provision, affording access to all victims regardless of whether their offender has been identified and successfully prosecuted. This helps victims cope and recover and move on with their lives. We have worked in prisons across the country to deliver victim empathy courses and provide victims with a chance to engage in restorative justice.

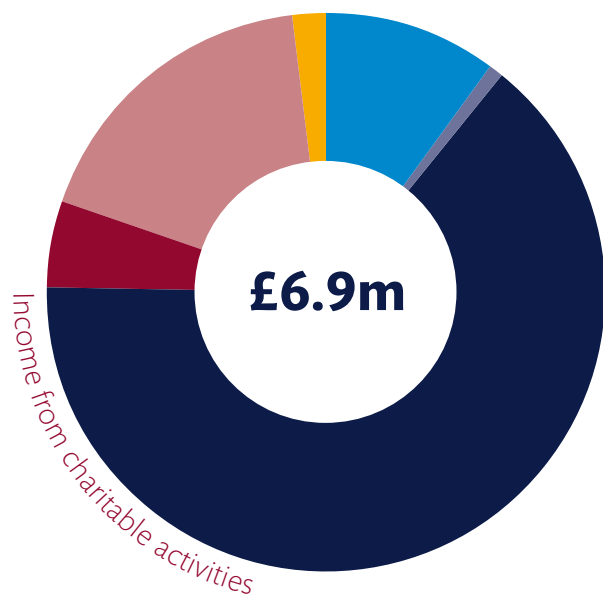
Hate crime

Hate crime remains a priority concern to us and this year we have extended the services we offer, starting new projects to support some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. We have listened to our service users to help us understand the impact of this most personal type of crime, and by working closely with other specialist service providers have been able to ensure that victims know they can turn to us for help.

With our unique blend of national strength and local provision we are able to offer high quality, demand-led services which are varied and specific to the individual needs of the community; this is in recognition of the fact that 'one size' can never fit all. Where we deliver this specialist help, it connects seamlessly to our 'core' services to broaden the range of help for victims so they can get what they need. We will keep working with our local partners and funders so this continues and goes further.

“Victim Support provides an essential service for people affected by crime, and that service is so good because the staff and volunteers who provide it are from the same community as the people they help.”

Police and Crime Commissioner

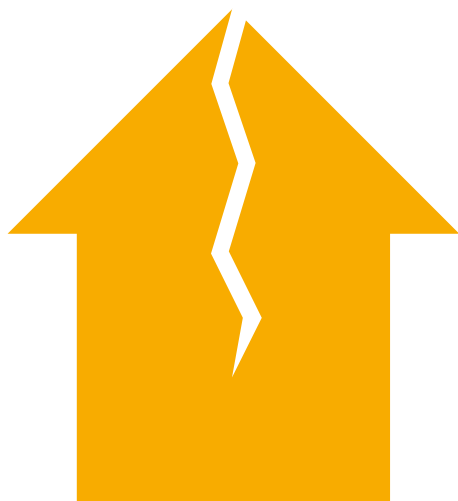


How these services are funded

- Contracts – local authorities and other statutory bodies: £697
- Contracts – other: £68
- Grants – local authorities and other statutory bodies: £4,437
- Grants – police and other criminal justice agencies: £357
- Grants – trusts and other: £1,214
- Other: £131

Total £6.9m

All figures are £'000s



70+

Independent Domestic Violence Advocates in the country making us the biggest single provider

What victims of crime really think

To ensure we are always responsive to the changing needs of victims of crime, we commissioned the leading market research company, Britain Thinks (BT), to conduct independent research on what victims really think and what help they want from support services.

BT polled a sample of over 1,000 victims of crime, including victims of so-called low impact crimes such as harassment, vandalism and burglary, as well as people who suffered theft and domestic and sexual violence. They also conducted in-depth interviews and focus groups.

They found that nearly two thirds of victims (61%) felt the crime had a notable impact on their lives. Effects included changing a routine out of anxiety, requiring medical treatment and taking time off work.

Crucially, nearly six out of ten victims (58%) said that they needed some form of support after the crime.

It confirmed that crime type is not a good indicator of support need with 57% of low impact victims and 66% of high impact victims needing some kind of help.

Even victims who said they did not need support found being contacted helpful, with nine out of ten saying they would want such contact if they suffered crime again.

The survey highlighted where we can improve and in response we have already changed how and when we communicate with victims. We continue to review everything we do to ensure it is meeting the needs of victims based on feedback from our service user surveys.

We have shared this research with Government and police and crime commissioners to help inform their plans for the future as they seek to consult the needs of victims.

In particular, we believe this research shows the need for more holistic care for every victim, providing help when the crime is committed, during the investigation and any court case and afterwards, including the point when any offender is released back into the community.

This comprehensive approach will ensure that no victim of crime ever falls through the cracks of the system.



44%

of victims feel that securely handling their personal information is the most important thing a provider can do



58%

of victims said that they needed some form of support after the crime



Image: © iStock

Speaking up strongly for victims and witnesses

As well as helping thousands of people every day recover from crime, we play a vital role championing the rights of victims and witnesses. We have a duty to speak out on behalf of those who can find themselves lost in a criminal justice system which too often denies them a voice. We are proud to campaign for better treatment of victims and witnesses, to highlight good practice and to call for change when we see examples of bad practice.

This year we have had tremendous success in keeping victims' issues at the top of the criminal justice agenda by helping to shape the campaigns of Britain's first police and crime commissioners (PCCs). Through the hard work of our local managers and their teams, we helped candidates understand the issues of greatest concern to victims in their communities and invited them to make '5 Promises to Victims and Witnesses'. These promises were:

- to be open and accountable
- to ensure victims and witnesses get high quality help
- to make the police more victim-focused
- to give victims and witnesses an effective voice
- to find new ways to deliver justice for victims.

This was underpinned by our local hustings events where we invited candidates to be questioned on their policies.

Overall, we signed up 133 candidates (78%) to the '5 Promises' including 33 who were later elected. We are proud that 80% of PCCs have taken on our mandate to improve victim services.

This success has been reflected in our public profile, with more than 6,300 mentions in the media – the equivalent of £10 million in advertising.

Our Chief Executive, Corporate Management Team colleagues and local managers have frequently appeared in newspapers and on both national and local television and radio. We have used these platforms to focus minds and change opinions about what works best for victims.

In an era of shrinking budgets the need to get help to the most vulnerable has become more pressing.



“Services like Victim Support are crucial, not just in terms of providing individual support but in terms of helping them effectively contribute to the justice system saving millions of pounds a year”

Police and Crime Commissioner



6,300+
mentions in the media



78%

PCC candidates we
persuaded to sign the pledge

We agree with ministers that those most in need of support must get it. However, we have argued strongly against some of the proposed changes to the Victims' Code which could see up to 700,000 people who need help fall through the cracks because the crimes they have suffered are not 'serious'. These offences include burglary and assault and we fear some vulnerable victims would not get the support they need. Our experience tells us that crime type is not a good indicator of need and, as a result, we believe strongly in the principle that all victims of crime should be automatically referred for a proper needs assessment. Ministers were due to finalise the new Victims' Code at the time of writing.

We have campaigned hard to improve the treatment of victims and witnesses at court. Some victims can feel abused twice – once by the offender and once by the criminal justice system itself. It is unacceptable that vulnerable witnesses can be subjected to aggressive cross-examination for days on end. Our contribution to the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Victims and Witnesses has paid dividends here. As Secretariat

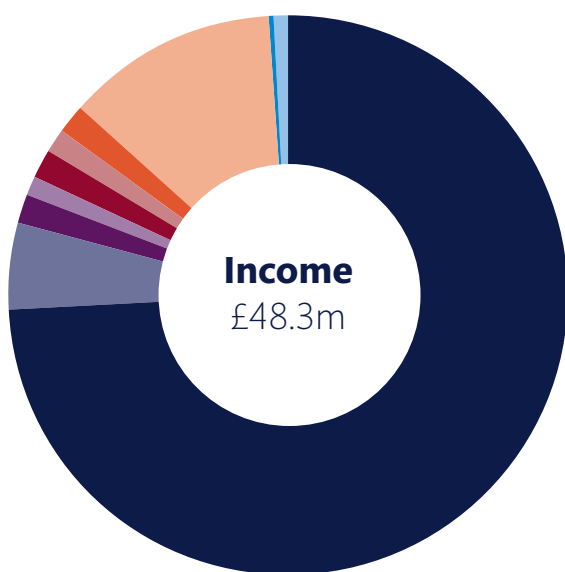
to the APPG we brought together MPs and lawyers, and called for compulsory specialist training for defence barristers who want to cross-examine vulnerable victims. The Bar Council of England and Wales has agreed to our proposal.

Victim Support has completed two major pieces of research during 2012/13. Our mental health project showed how the criminal justice system fails some of the most vulnerable victims of crime. Our report *Out of the Shadows* provided compelling proof of the difficulties witnesses encounter giving evidence at crown courts. We also responded to and influenced ten consultations by MPs, ministers and statutory agencies.



Our income and expenditure for 2012-13

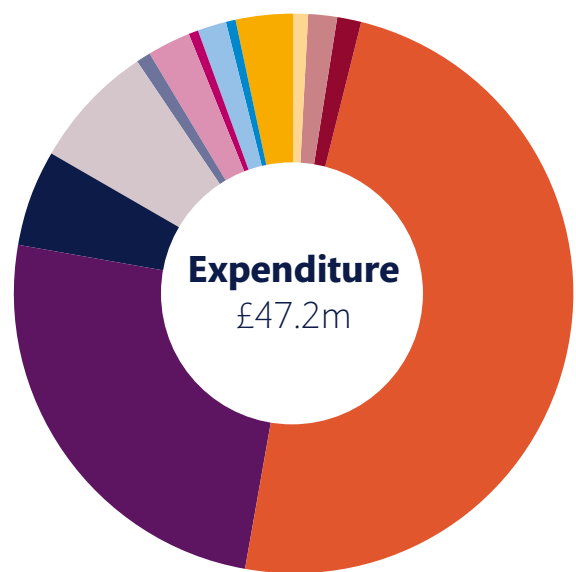
For more information about our finances, see the financial report on pages 48 to 63 of the Trustees' annual report.



- MoJ core services: £36,000
- MoJ homicide services: £2,400
- MoJ other: £837
- Donations and legacies: £491
- Fundraising, trading and investments: £794
- Other grants: £645
- Charitable activities – contracts: £765
- Charitable activities – grants: £6,008
- Charitable activities – other: £131
- Investment gains: £280

Total £48,351

The surplus carried forward of £1.1m will be reinvested in 2013-14 into frontline services.



- Victim care service: £23,130
- Witness service: £11,777
- Homicide service: £2,673
- Domestic violence: £3,351
- Sexual violence: £415
- Antisocial behaviour: £1,199
- Hate crime: £255
- Young victims and witnesses: £765
- Restorative justice: £247
- Other projects: £1,517
- Governance: £435
- Policy and public education: £862
- Cost of generating income: £585

Total £47,211

All figures are £'000s

We will work with others to help victims and witnesses

We are always looking for ways to develop and improve services for victims and witnesses. In order to do this effectively we work with many statutory and voluntary sector partners.

By working together both locally and nationally we provide service users with options for support, we campaign for change and we help each other deliver outstanding services.

These are just some of the people we work with across England and Wales:

Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse	RJ Council
Aftermath Support	RJ Solutions
Assist Trauma Care	Road Peace
Brake	Road Victims Trust
CAADA	Samaritans
CADD: Campaign Against Drinking and Driving	SAMM Abroad
Cassandra Learning Centre	SAMM Merseyside
Child Bereavement UK	SAMM National
CHUMS	SAMM South East
Cruse Bereavement Care	SCARD: Support and Care after Road Death and Injury
Damilola Taylor Trust	Stonewall
DAMN: Death After Medical Negligence	Stop Hate UK
Escaping Victimhood	STOP UK
Faith Matters	Suzy Lamplugh Trust
Families Fighting for Justice	The Compassionate Friends Supporting Bereaved Parents and their Families
General Medical Council	The Godwin Lawson Trust
Grief Encounter Project	The Lucie Blackman Trust – Missing Abroad
JAA: Justice After Acquittal	The Moira Fund
JAGS Foundation	The North Southwark Bereavement Care Association
Jimmy Mizen Foundation	The Red Poppy Company
Lucy Faithfull Foundation	The Robert Levy Foundation
MAMAA: Mothers Against Murder and Aggression	Through UNITY
Marchioness Action Group	Why Me?
MAV: Mothers Against Violence	Winston's Wish
Mind	Women's Aid
Missing People	
National Fraud Authority	
Neighbourhood Watch	
NSPCC	
OLLY	
P.A.L.M.S	
Relate	
REMEDI	

Looking forward

The coming year will see further significant change to how victims and witnesses get the help they need. We will embrace the change in the interests of those we serve.

We believe the move to new local and national commissioning presents an opportunity to improve the experiences of people affected by crime.

Because our services are delivered by volunteers, victims can trust us to do what is right for them while commissioners can trust us to be focused on outcomes and work in partnership.

We believe this unique strength will allow us to adapt to the new environment and continue to provide great services to those who need them.

You can have a positive impact on us

We rely on support from people like you – our volunteers, donors, supporters, influencers or partners. Our success is your success too. However, like most charities, we need your help. Get in touch to find out how you can help us to have an even bigger impact on the lives of victims and witnesses.

www.victimsupport.org.uk

Facebook: [/victimsupport](https://www.facebook.com/victimsupport)

Twitter: [@victimsupport](https://twitter.com/victimsupport)

Registered charity number 298028

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