



VICTIM SUPPORT

IMPACT REPORT 2018-19





...HELPED ME MOVE BEYOND CRIME



Welcome

Over the past year police recorded crime figures show theft, fraud and the most serious violent offences increasing. Knife crime figures now stand at the highest level ever recorded.

At the same time, nearly 91% of the five million crimes recorded annually are not prosecuted in the courts.

While these statistics reflect the scale of the problem, they cannot fully convey the devastating human cost that results from these tragedies. Every day we see the impact on individuals, families and whole communities of crime and the problems in the criminal justice system. The causes of crimes are complex, and in many of the most serious crimes offenders have themselves been victims.

It is in this challenging context that our specialist teams of committed staff and volunteers contacted nearly 850,000 victims of crime. We went on to advise and support nearly 125,000 people who had experienced crimes including homicide, domestic abuse, sexual violence, historic abuse and hate crime, in their local communities across England and Wales. We also supported over 76,000 victims through our National Contact Centre where we handle incoming calls from victims who contact us directly – often those who are reluctant to report the crime to the police.

We achieved a higher media profile this year than ever before so we were able to give a voice to people who have experienced crime. We were pleased to see that many of the priorities we have been pressing for were included in the Government's *Victims Strategy* published in the Autumn.

As the largest and most experienced victim services provider in England and Wales we have the expertise to deliver innovative solutions to the rising number of victims needing support, in a way and at a time that works for them. But we cannot do this alone, we need everyone involved in the criminal justice system to come together and work with us to continue to transform the lives of those most affected by crime and to ensure their voice is heard.



Diana Fawcett
Chief Executive Officer

Andrew Tivey
Chair of Trustees

Who we are

Victim Support is an independent charity dedicated to supporting victims of crime and traumatic incidents in England and Wales. Our purpose is to provide specialist help and services to support people to cope and recover and to ensure their voices are heard.

Victim Support puts victims at the heart of our organisation. Our work, our support and our voice are informed and shaped by them.

As an organisation, victims, those close to them and witnesses to the crime are our focus. Over the years we have developed unrivalled expertise to understand their needs and ensure they are supported on their journey through the criminal justice system.

We are local

Our services are delivered locally through skilled staff and volunteers who are deeply rooted in these communities. We adapt and flex our services to meet local need and pride ourselves on being responsive to local demands.

We are national

Our local services benefit from secure technology, quality standards and the ability to share best practice and innovate based on research, national trends and performance.

We are independent

We are independent of the government, the police, local authorities and the criminal justice system. This is hugely important as we know that some victims may distrust the criminal justice system and others, particularly those from some minority communities or people with mental health conditions, face barriers in reporting to the police.

We work closely with all these organisations and other specialist partner agencies to achieve our vision – a world where victims and witnesses are given the support they need and the respect they deserve.

What we do

A close-up, artistic photograph of a person's eye. The eye is looking slightly to the right. A contact lens is visible on the eye, and a small, colorful sticker is attached to it. The skin around the eye is detailed, showing pores and texture. The lighting is dramatic, with some highlights and shadows.

We provide free confidential support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for people affected by crime and traumatic events – regardless of whether they have reported the crime to the police.

We contact and offer local support to those who are referred to Victim Support by the police and other agencies.

The support services we offer are tailored to the needs of each person.

Our teams of highly trained staff and volunteers provide a wide range of specialist services for victims and witnesses. These services help people affected by all types of crime including burglary, hate crime, fraud, theft, domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, modern day slavery and terrorism.

We run the National Homicide Service providing a dedicated, comprehensive wraparound service and a vital independent voice for those bereaved by murder and manslaughter in England and Wales.

We champion victims' rights and issues locally and nationally, working closely with policy-makers, commissioners, agencies in the criminal justice system, local government and other providers, partners and organisations.

The impact of crime can be life-changing so we are proud to provide long-term support to victims of both crime and traumatic events. Support is available for as long as it is needed, as we are committed to helping victims move beyond crime.

Our year in numbers

We supported

848,236 victims were offered information and specialist support

123,435 victims were provided with specialist case management support

2,018,022 webpage views provided guidance on the Victim Support website

5,851 news articles featured Victim Support

We campaigned

Our research revealed **6 in 10** victims did not receive their rights under the Victims' Code

2018-19

We made a difference

83% of people we supported felt better informed about the support available and the options open to them

77% of people felt that their wellbeing had improved

76% of people we supported felt safer following our help and support

4 of the 5 key priorities set out by Victim Support were addressed in the Victims Strategy

Highlights 2018–19

There were many highlights for Victim Support in 2018–19. Here are just a few:



April 2018

Victim Support research was raised in a debate at the House of Commons calling for victims' rights to be strengthened and for the Government to introduce a Victims' Law.



May 2018

Victim Support staff and volunteers featured in two BBC documentaries which marked one year since the Manchester Arena attack.



June 2018

Victim Support in Sussex received the Restorative Service Quality Mark in recognition of meeting the Restorative Service Standards.



July 2018

Families who have been affected by knife crime, as well as some of our staff, were involved in developing a knife crime storyline with BBC EastEnders to highlight the issue and ensure an accurate portrayal of how it affects victims and their families.



August 2018

Victim Support volunteers who supported survivors of the Manchester Arena attack were shortlisted for 'Volunteer Team of the Year' at the Third Sector Excellence Awards.



September 2018

The Government abolished the 'same roof' rule – which meant that victims of sexual assault who had lived with the offender before 1979 could not claim compensation for the abuse they had experienced. This followed a successful court challenge and our campaign with Barnardo's, Rape Crisis and others.



October 2018

We launched Victim Support's new countywide New Era domestic abuse service in Staffordshire.



November 2018

We were very pleased to win the first ever Police & Crime Commissioner-nominated award at the national Lord Ferrers Awards, which celebrates volunteering work supporting policing.



December 2018

Our West Yorkshire Independent Sexual Violence Advisor service was awarded the first Lime Culture Quality Mark in the country for our services supporting male victims/survivors of sexual violence.



January 2019

Victim Support was ranked number 14 in the 2019 National Centre for Diversity's Top 100 and was number 27 in Stonewall's Top 100 Employers.



February 2019

We successfully retained the contract to provide victim services across London with the new contract expanded to include the provision of both restorative justice and witness services.



March 2019

We retained the National Homicide Service contract, a vital service which supports families bereaved through murder or manslaughter. This service also won the Lord Mayor of London's Dragon Award during 2018-19 for Innovation.

Campaigning



2018–19 saw the publication of the much anticipated *Victims Strategy*. During the development of the strategy, Victim Support worked closely with the government, representing the voice of victims to ensure that the work would lead to improvements in how they are treated.

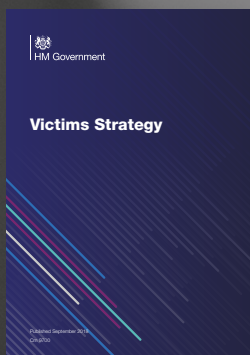
We made strong use of our research with victims during the government's development of the *Victims Strategy*. We highlighted to the government the problems within the criminal justice system and how the current settlement is failing to work for victims.

We pressed the case for reforms to the Victims' Code; calling for it to be strengthened, and for criminal justice agencies to be held to account for the level of service that they provide to victims.

We found that the majority of victims felt that the criminal justice process does not do enough to help and support victims and that as many as six in ten victims do not receive their rights under the Victims' Code.

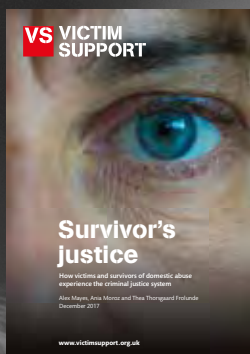
Our research proved impactful and made front page news.

Victim Support set out five key policy priorities for the *Victims Strategy* that would make meaningful improvements to the experience and treatment of victims. We were pleased that four of these were addressed in the strategy:



- Ensure the Victims' Code is properly monitored and enforced
- Make compensation for victims fit for purpose
- Put victims' rights on a statutory footing
- Improve the court experience for victims.

We have continued our work with partner organisations Barnardo's, Liberty, Rape Crisis and the NWG to campaign for reforms to compensation for victims and were pleased that the government committed to reforming the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme.



We continued our work alongside the Home Office and other organisations on the government's Domestic Abuse Bill, which was published and consulted on in 2018-19. We published our research report *Survivor's justice* in December 2017, and were pleased that the Bill included a number of recommendations from that

report, including stronger Domestic Violence Protection Orders, granting all domestic abuse victims special measures and training for frontline police officers.



We published a report that looked at the long-term impact and needs of family members bereaved through homicide. The report, *Living with loss*, includes evidence from existing research and findings from research with former service users of the Victim Support National Homicide Service. The report found that the long-term impact is profound and

extensive, affecting several aspects of life. These range from emotions and behaviour changes to a significant change in care responsibilities or home life. While some of the effects changed over time, others endure and are expected to remain a part of bereaved family members' lives forever.

As a result of these findings the National Homicide Service has developed and incorporated additional services including:

- The provision of ongoing support (if needed) after the criminal justice process has finished by reviewing needs assessments and support plans
- Ensuring that peer support groups are available across England and Wales via a secure online portal and face-to-face group meetings
- Making support services accessible at any point they feel they need someone to talk to in the future.

Innovating

As the leading provider of victims' services across England and Wales, Victim Support is able to draw on extensive research and experience to develop new services and ways of supporting victims. Innovation is essential to ensure we remain at the forefront of victim services and, more importantly, to ensure that victims are able to access our support in a way that works for them at a time that suits them.



This year we have continued to develop workbooks, videos and animations on subjects such as sleep, how to support children after a burglary and how to deal with transphobic hate crime.

These important resources are based on research and best practice. They can either be self-serve, so people can work through them

by themselves at their own pace, or completed with guidance from a caseworker during face-to-face sessions. They contain a range of different exercises encouraging self-reflection and are in a range of digital and written formats to be accessible to a wide range of people. We are translating some of these resources into different languages.

We developed an online peer-to-peer forum and live digital streaming platform for those bereaved through homicide. This platform went live in April 2019 as part of our National Homicide Service contract with the Ministry of Justice. Designed to support families and loved ones after the most horrific crimes, it allows users to find information and share their experiences with others in a safe and highly secure environment.



Supporting

Locally

Our specialist teams of committed staff and volunteers contacted nearly **850,000** victims of crime.

We went on to advise and support nearly 125,000 people who had experienced crimes including homicide, domestic abuse, sexual violence, historic abuse and hate crime in their local communities across England and Wales.

Our tailored services cover many areas of both practical and emotional support and often victims take up several of our services. This includes advocacy, personal safety advice and ongoing emotional support.

Nationally

This year we supported **76,332** victims through our National Contact Centre, home to our 24/7 Supportline.

The dedicated team handle calls, emails, enquiries for support from our website, referred calls from a number of external organisations and online support.

We expanded our Fraud Support Service for some of the UK's largest high street banks, providing support to victims of fraud.

The number of requests for fraud support and calls to Supportline continues to grow year-on-year.

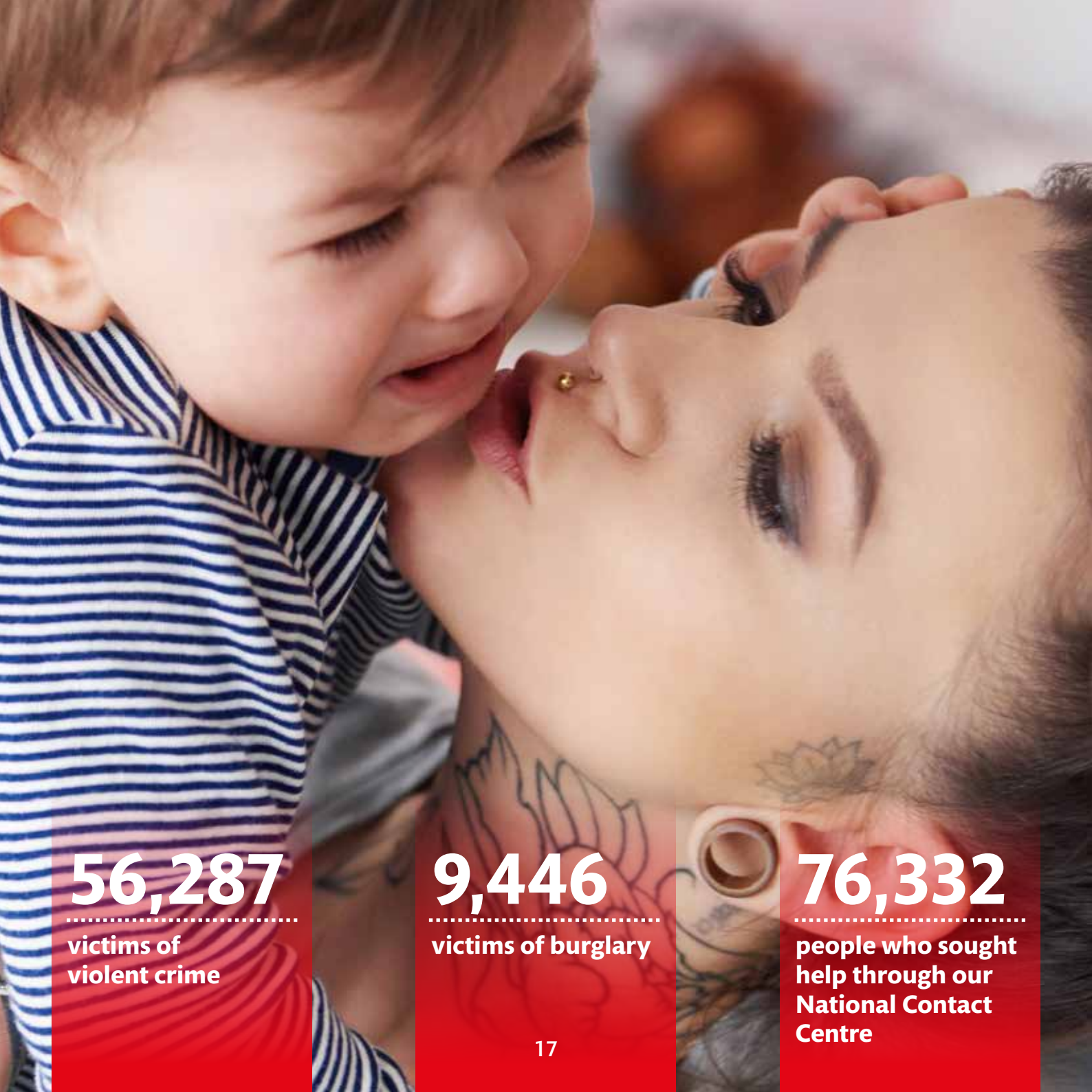
We supported:

43,850

survivors of domestic abuse

1,412

family members bereaved by homicide



56,287

victims of
violent crime

9,446

victims of burglary

76,332

people who sought
help through our
National Contact
Centre



Supporting people like Juliet – a victim of fraud

Juliet had her data leaked as part of a big data breach. Following this, she was victim of a phone scam which resulted in her handing over thousands of pounds to a fraudster.

The attack affected her both financially and emotionally.

“It took me a couple of months to feel ready to talk about it, but when I did, Victim Support was brilliant. I requested a face-to-face meeting and had the chance to talk through my experience without any kind of judgement on the part of the listener, or the need to downplay how upset I was, as I had done with family and friends.

“I found it extremely healing to have a person to talk to – it helped me get things into perspective. My caseworker allowed me to accept that I had been a victim rather than a fool, to stop blaming myself for being so badly deceived, and to recognise that I had been the target of a serious crime. The support I received played a considerable part in my healing process.”

Image posed by model



Supporting people like Alex – a victim of violent crime

Alex was the victim of an attack while he was homeless, which left him feeling even more vulnerable when he was living on the streets. With Victim Support's help, he moved to a hostel and built up the confidence to take some training courses. He is now in employment and plans to move out of the hostel in the near future.

“It was through the police that I was put in touch with Victim Support. The attack really put me on edge. I was still sleeping on the streets and he was still around. Patricia, my volunteer caseworker, could see that I was really down and with her support I built my confidence back up – it really did help. She got me a panic alarm so if something did happen I'd have that there if I needed it – luckily I've not needed it but I've got it if I want it.”

Image posed by model



Supporting people like Carla – a survivor of domestic abuse

When Carla first met her partner, he was charming and affectionate but very soon into the relationship things took a dark turn. Carla lived with the abuse for five years and as a consequence has been diagnosed with complex PTSD.

“One morning I had woken up and my front door had been locked from the outside and I knew he had been in the house and was trying to intimidate me. He was dangerous and manipulative and it was at this point I knew I couldn’t do this alone. I was scared and desperate and I called Victim Support.

“They assigned me an IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advocate) and a few days later changed all my locks and installed additional security.

“It was so important having my IDVA who could validate my experience. It’s so hard when you’ve been told for so long that this is all your fault. She helped with things such as applying for legal aid to get a protective order issued. She helped me with getting to court and advising on lots of practical issues throughout my divorce. If it wasn’t for Victim Support I wouldn’t have felt safe or supported throughout all of this.”

Image posed by model



Supporting people like you

Anyone can experience crime or traumatic events and the impact can be devastating and life-changing. Through our free and independent national Supportline we're here for everyone, no matter who you are or where you live. We help and support victims of all types of crime from burglary, hate crime, fraud and theft, to domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation and terrorism.

For those who choose to report, and for those who don't.

You don't need to report the crime to the police to get our help.

For those who want to give their name, and for those who don't.

We offer a confidential service and there is no need to give your name if you don't want to.

For those who want to contact us in the day, and for those who want to contact us at night.

We're available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

For those who want help now, and for those who want help in the future.

We are here whenever you need help and for as long as help is required.

Supportline: 08 08 16 89 111

Support us

We want to be there for the rising number of victims who need our support, but we need your help to continue the vital work we do.

Join us

Become a volunteer:

victimsupport.org.uk/volunteer

Become a member of staff:

victimsupport.org.uk/jobs

Help us raise funds

Become a fundraiser:

victimsupport.org.uk/fundraise

Become a donor:

victimsupport.org.uk/donate

Add your voice

Join the conversation:

 **VictimSupport**

 **@VictimSupport**

 **victimsupport_uk**

victimsupport.org.uk

**Let's work together
to continue to transform
the lives of those most
affected by crime and
to ensure their voice
is heard.**





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