



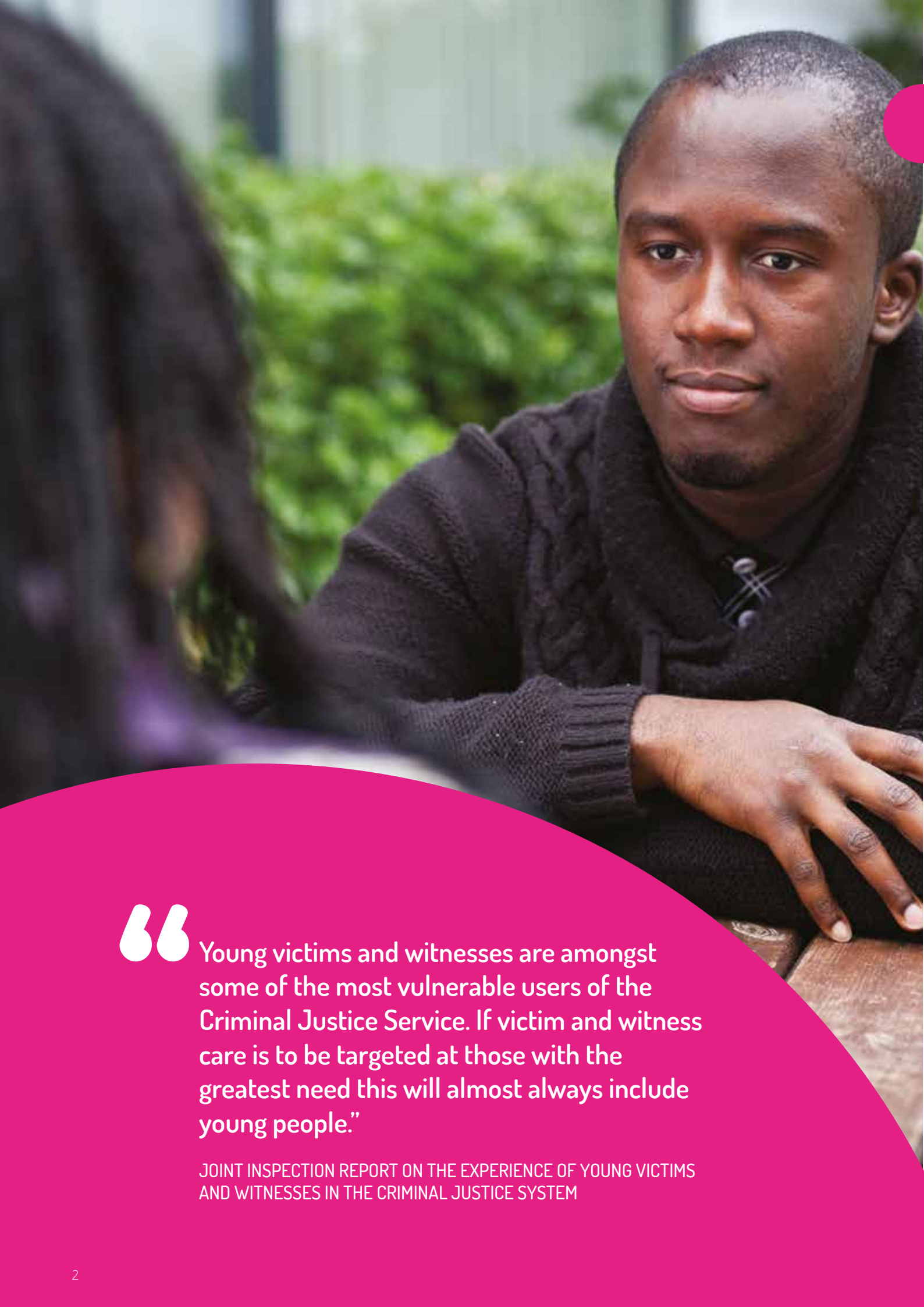
COPING WITH THE
EFFECTS OF CRIME
TOGETHER



GETTING IT RIGHT FOR YOUNG VICTIMS AND WITNESSES

WHAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAY
THEY NEED FROM SUPPORT SERVICES

June 2015



Young victims and witnesses are amongst some of the most vulnerable users of the Criminal Justice Service. If victim and witness care is to be targeted at those with the greatest need this will almost always include young people.”

JOINT INSPECTION REPORT ON THE EXPERIENCE OF YOUNG VICTIMS AND WITNESSES IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

Victim Support has provided emotional and practical support to victims of crime in England and Wales for 40 years.

You & Co, Victim Support's children and young people's programme, has over the past 12 months, provided support and worked alongside more than 20,000 young victims of crime and 17,000 young witnesses.

The stories and experiences that these remarkable children have shared with us often mirror the many damning reports¹, that evidence children and young people are often left floundering and unsupported across many stages of their criminal justice journey.

Our own research completed alongside the University of Bedfordshire "Suffering in Silence, Children and Unreported Crime 2014", identified that children and young people, disproportionately experience more crime than adults and are significantly over-represented in the most serious crime statistics.

However, children are not being identified as victims and not being heard when they report crimes. Crimes against children are still not always taken seriously by the authorities and tragically, that means criminals can carry on abusing them and other children. This has a substantial wider impact on children and the communities they live in from increase in health service needs, education issues and leading to some young victims developing offender behaviours themselves.

Children and young people must get the support they need to report crimes, testify in court and to try to come to terms with the awful ordeal they've been through if we are to protect them and provide a positive future.

There has been significant recent progress with the revised Victim Code having a specific focus on children, alongside improved policy and guidance across the police, criminal prosecution service, courts and judiciary. These policies now reflect the vulnerability and high levels of risk that children in our society face and outline the special protection that must be provided to keep them safe.

Good policies only work if they are applied in practice.

This resource shares the challenges, insights and the learning You & Co have gained from working alongside and putting into practice learning gained from children and their families and we thank them for their involvement and the willingness with which they gave their views.

It is designed to help commissioners and professionals, assess the needs and gaps in services for young victims and witnesses and shares a support pathway that we have felt helpful in engaging and supporting these vulnerable children.

AMANDA NAYLOR • SENIOR MANAGER CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROGRAMME

About the author

Jayne Jones is a Business Improvement Specialist, specialising in process and service improvement within the Criminal Justice sectors. With an extensive background in multi-agency working, Jayne understands the difficulties that service users may face when being supported by many agencies during challenging periods. Using her knowledge of the services that criminal justice agencies, voluntary agencies and local authorities provide, Jayne has been able to develop streamlined ways of working which have enabled service improvements for those using services.

¹Making Justice Work 2015, Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, 2015 Joint Inspection Report on the Experiences of Young Victims and Witnesses in the Criminal Justice System 2012.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	5
Commissioners' Checklist	6
How crime impacts on children and young people	8
Impacts and cost implications	9
Supporting children through their individual criminal justice journey	10
Holistic young victim and young witness support structure	11
Deciding on the right approach for children and young people	12
A safe and effective service delivery model	14
Key assumptions	15
Support for young victims	16
Using needs assessment and cope and recovery framework to direct interventions	18
Support for young witnesses	20
Better outcomes for young witnesses	22
The victim's code	23
A future commissioning pathway that works for children	23
Appendix	26

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of Victim Support.

Cover and page 2: models used



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Children and young people in England and Wales are experiencing significant levels of crime and victimisation. In most cases, they are doing so without the support and intervention of statutory services, given that less than one in five incidents of crime and victimisation are being reported.”
SUFFERING IN SILENCE: CHILDREN AND UNREPORTED CRIME

There is significant evidence that demonstrates children and young people are not receiving the level of support and services that they are entitled to as victims of crime under the Victim's Code.

During this age of austerity, service delivery from the public sector continues to be a challenge. To provide the very basic of services to the number of service users that require it is the best some agencies can do just to be able to give the essential support to those in need. The criminal justice pathway is no exception. While statistical analysis may suggest that crime is falling, the requirements for support remains, and the struggle for agencies to provide that support continues.

The ability to pass support to charitable agencies is key for some services to, at the very least, meet its legal obligations. The importance of enabling victims and witnesses to give their best evidence is still a key element of all criminal justice agencies – some having the ability to gain support from expert services that can support those within the community who need tailored care.

Victim Support, where it is funded to do so, provides early help from the moment that a child becomes a victim of crime,

and continues throughout young people's journey through the criminal justice system, whatever that might look like. They continue to provide support for those young people even after court proceedings have ended to enable young people to work towards re-integration and cope and recovery outcomes.

The need for children and young people to be supported by specialists who understand the unique ways children experience and are impacted by crime, and have the skills to communicate and work alongside them should not be under-estimated.

This report is based on evidence gathered from Victim Support Young Victim and Young Witness services. It identifies individual young people's experiences and the ways in which they felt they were helped and the times they also felt let down by criminal justice agencies. It also analyses how services can best be commissioned and work collaboratively together to ensure that young people are provided with appropriate support at every step of the criminal justice journey.

COMMISSIONERS' CHECKLIST

From Victim Support's experience of delivering support to vulnerable victims and witnesses, backed by research, a wide range of recommendations were identified that the Police and Crime Commissioners may want to consider when commissioning services for children and young people

Before Commissioning:

- Have you listened to the experiences of children and young people in your area
- Have you included children and young people as a specific vulnerable category in your commissioning plan
- Are there opportunities for young people to be involved in assessing bids and helping in decision making on commissioned services

Commissioning Services

- Have you identified ways of ensuring services reach out to children – to mitigate the low reporting to the police of crime against children
- Does this outreach work include a focus on reaching the most vulnerable groups of young people (who are also more likely to be impacted by crime than their peers) – LGBT, disabled young people, young people with mental health issues, BME communities
- Have you identified how services need to respond differently to children than adults – based on how children's experience and impact of crime is different to adults
- Have you specified clear safeguarding and information sharing processes
- Is there an expectation that services commissioned will have a participation strategy that ensures children are involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of services
- Are resources being allocated not only based on known "crime" but also attempting to reach out to vulnerable victims who may not have reported to the police
- Have you resourced the service in the knowledge that some children will require intensive support to help them cope and recover whilst others will require less support

- Are there a range of support options to be delivered in the service 1-1 support, group work, social education programmes (eg bullying, CSE programmes), peer education programmes
- Will services commissioned work alongside other more mainstream children's agencies building capacity and resilience of support for children
- Are the outcomes that you expect for children clearly identified – do they include wider considerations such as education and family outcomes as well as safety outcomes
- Are any therapeutic services (counselling, CBT, psychotherapy) being commissioned and if so are these in line with local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and do they have a clear understanding of the specific nature of pre-trial therapy and court disclosure
- Are there overarching strategies and clear links from services working with young offenders to young victims services
- Do commissioned services have a children's complaint procedure, with the consideration of sourcing support/advocacy to help children make their complaint

Evaluating Services

- Are there reporting mechanisms in place for you hear the thoughts and experiences of children and young people using services on current and future developments
- Are complaints from young people being reviewed and acted on
- Is the data gathered from the service and the increased understanding of young victims in the area informing future commissioning and planning of services



SUFFERING IN SILENCE: CHILDREN AND UNREPORTED CRIME

The report 'Suffering in silence: Children and unreported crime' was a result of a Scoping Inquiry into the hidden victimisation of children and young people, undertaken by Victim Support and the University of Bedfordshire on behalf of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Victims and Witnesses of crime. The findings concluded:

1. Children and young people experience much higher rates of crime than police data suggests.
2. Children and young people don't always know what constitutes crime and how to report this.
3. The context in which victimisation occurs affects the likelihood of reporting.
4. Children and young people fear repercussions of reporting.
5. Children and young people may blame themselves for victimisation.
6. Negative perceptions of the police can deter reporting of crime.

HOW CRIME IMPACTS ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Victim Support understands that children and young people disproportionately experience more crime than adults and are more likely to be victims of crime than any other age group (Crime Survey for England and Wales, 2011 / 2012). We also know that young people are at particularly higher risk of some of the most serious crimes including violent and sexual crimes.

However, Victim Support, through its children and young people's services, has witnessed first-hand the challenges that young people face in navigating the criminal justice system; from the post-code lottery that exists, to the adverse long-term effects on the young person's life outcomes, including educational achievement, family networks and physical and emotional health.

This impact often has long term repercussions on the emotional well-being of vulnerable children and young people; affecting family relationships, friendships, confidence and self-esteem, their behaviours, school, health and life chances. The real cost of crime can be seen in our health services, psychological services, criminal justice systems and education, as young people flounder without the necessary specialist support to help them cope.

Our own research completed alongside the University of Bedfordshire 'Suffering in Silence: Children and Unreported Crime 2014', found that children and young people experience much higher rates of crime than police data suggests. Reasons for this, the report investigates, include:

- The context in which victimisation occurs affects the likelihood of reporting.
- Children and young people fear repercussions of reporting.
- Children and young people may blame themselves for victimisation.
- Negative perceptions of the police can deter reporting of crime.

Victimisation and offending are closely linked. Children and young people who are victimised are more likely than others to break the criminal law, and young offenders are also more likely to have been victims of crime.

These findings suggest that there are more children and young people that require support following victimisation than are being managed through the formal criminal justice system. Research, referenced in Dr Becket's report, suggests that retrospective accounts of childhood sexual abuse show only 5-13% of those who experienced sexual violence or abuse

had reported it to an adult or anyone in authority at the time. The report also shows that there are often conflicting actions following the report of victimisation by a child – some will formally report the incident to the police while others may not due to misunderstanding, inappropriate training or lack of trust of the accuser.

Victim Support's Young Victims' Services will support a child regardless to whether they have, or want to, formally report the incident to the police. They will however, explore the issues regarding reporting and put support in place to help young people who want to report.

Whilst children don't talk to adults, evidence shows that they do talk to their peers and share their experiences of victimisation. This behaviour, whilst not new, is being used positively by the service in order to develop peer education programmes to ensure that young people are trained to support young people who may be scared to report to speak to Victim Support or another trusted adult.

Copeland et al identified that even what may be considered as lower level crime, such as bullying, has long lasting effects on the psychological health and well-being of victims:

“We found that victims continued to have a higher prevalence of agoraphobia, generalized anxiety and panic disorder and that victims were at increased risk of young adult depression, panic disorder, agoraphobia (females only), and suicidality (males only).”

Sperry and Spatz Widom concluded from their research that support services do mediate or moderate negative outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and illicit drug use, where children had experienced childhood abuse.

Victim Support Children and Young People's Programme has developed based on this premise that children are widely negatively impacted by crime and yet despite often the severity of this crime and high levels of trauma resulting from it, that support services do make a difference and can help children regain control and stability to help them move forward.

IMPACTS AND COST IMPLICATIONS



HEALTH

Self harm, physical illness, low self-esteem, eating disorders, increased substance misuse, alcohol misuse, sexually transmitted infections, depression, anxiety, sleep deprived, related illness, incontinence issues



EDUCATION

Truancy, low attendance, low attainment, expulsion, behaviour issues, bullying, re-sits, repeating years



FAMILIES

Family breakdown, children missing from home, impact on siblings, impact on parents, moving house

f WIDER COST TO SOCIETY

- Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- GPs
- Sexual health Clinics
- Specialist health Services
- Counselling services
- Specialist Youth Substance Misuse services

f WIDER COST TO SOCIETY

- Education Welfare Officers
- League Tables
- Expulsion panels
- Additional pastoral / educational support

f WIDER COST TO SOCIETY

- Social care / Troubled Family support
- Police
- Housing
- Employers

Common types of crime children and young people are experiencing include; domestic violence, relationship abuse, sexual abuse, anti-social behaviour, hate crime, gang and street crime, burglary, bullying and cyber-bullying.

- By the time they are 16, one in nine young people has experienced an adult trying to sexually groom them. (Beckett and Schubotz 2014)
- One quarter of girls and 18% of boys had experienced some form of physical violence within their relationship (Barter et al 2009a)
- 35% of 11-17 year olds reported experiencing cyber-bullying in 2014, more than double the rate recorded one year prior (McAfee 2014)
- At least 750,000 children a year witness domestic violence. Nearly three quarters of children on the 'at risk' register live in households where domestic violence occurs" (Dept. of Health, 2002)
- 40% of children said that the burglary effected how safe they felt in their home in the evening and at night and 30% said they had more nightmares (Take No More, Report from Victims Support and ADT, 2014)

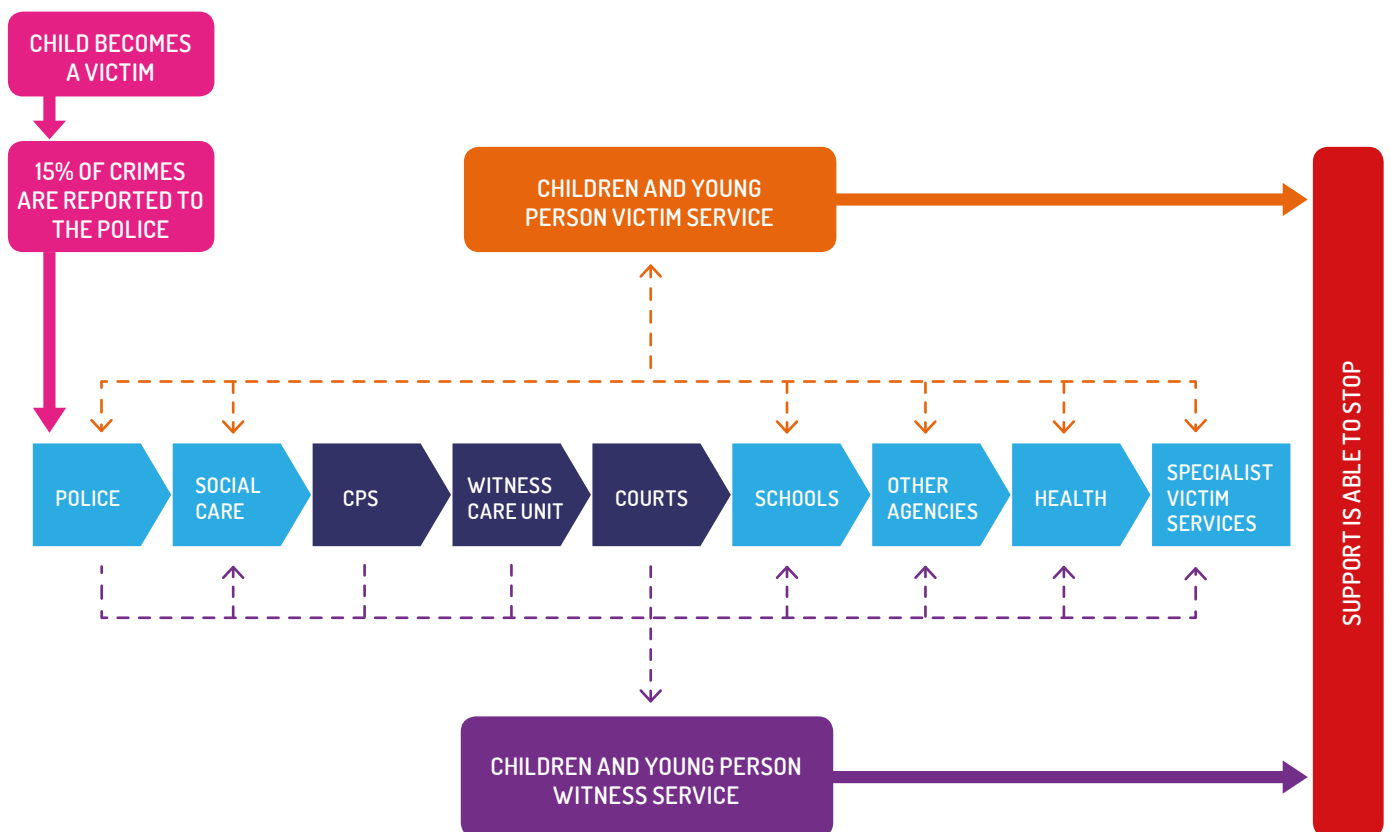
SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH THEIR INDIVIDUAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE JOURNEY

Victim Supports Children and Young Peoples services support young people across all areas of their lives that have been impacted by crime, whilst also working alongside them throughout their criminal justice journey.

The complexity of experience and impact of crime on children and young people means that many agencies can become involved within their criminal justice journey. An effective young victims worker is able to co-ordinate these agencies involvement effectively ensuring good communication and support of the child throughout.

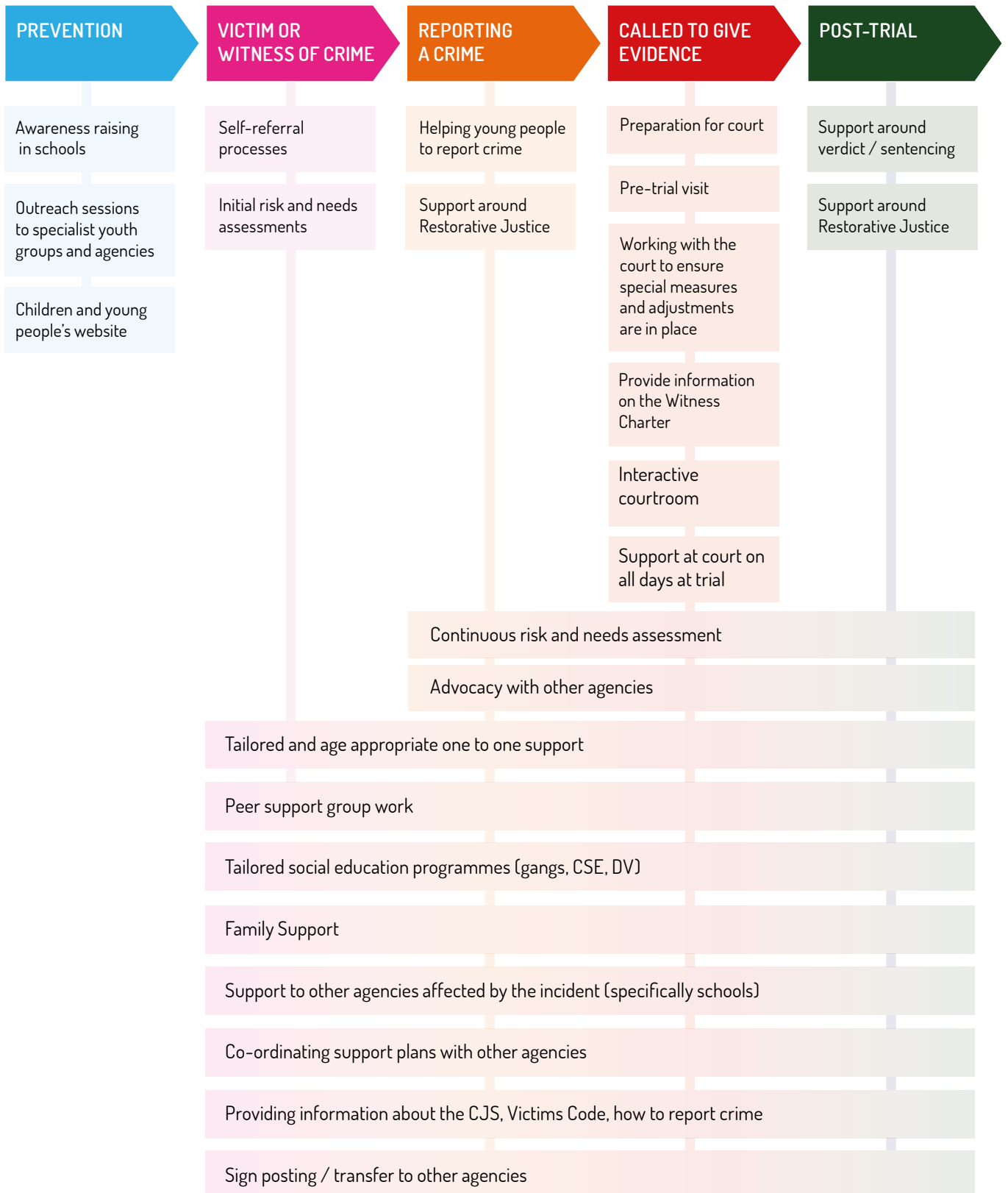
Victim Support offers a range of services to young victims and young witnesses. These can be specific young victim services focussing support on the victim experience and working towards cope and recovery outcomes for that child. Other young witness

services may focus on the court process, supporting young people to prepare for giving their best evidence and helping them understand the process and outcomes from a trial. Moving into the new commissioning framework, it is likely that these support pathways may come together within a single service. However, it is important to differentiate the different types of support required at the different stages of the criminal justice process, and therefore for ease, we have separated them within this report.



HOLISTIC YOUNG VICTIM AND YOUNG WITNESS SUPPORT STRUCTURE

This table demonstrates the support for children and young people at each stage of their journey.



DECIDING ON THE RIGHT APPROACH FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Service commissioners have a finite resource that needs to meet the needs of a wide range of the most vulnerable young victims, who under the Victims Code are entitled to enhanced services – often utilising criteria based on risk, vulnerability, support required and ability to cope.

You & Co experience shows not all children require the same levels or intensity of approach. A 3 tiered support model is often utilised across young victim provision to maximise resources and reach, whilst ensuring those most vulnerable get the intensity and duration of support they require.

Referral triage processes manage and allocate referrals, based on assessment utilising Risk, Protective and Resilience assessment indicators, to ensure young victims are provided with the right levels of support, by the right agency, quickly and effectively.

TIER 1 PREVENTION & BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES

Safer Strategies for Schools: preventative social education sessions providing wide reach to large numbers of children, providing them with crucial safety, prevention and crime diversion information, creating safer school and youth environments; whilst providing school and youth work staff to identify those children are at risk/ may have been victims of crime but have not reported.

TIER 2 IMMEDIATE SAFETY/ PROTECTIVE STRATEGIES APPROACH

Drop in support at crisis touch points and specialised small group work programmes, for those who disclose victim experiences. Ensuring early, outreach support and signposting for young victims preventing repeat victimisation and helping young people develop coping skills to stop risk escalating.

TIER 3 INTENSIVE COPE AND RECOVERY INTERVENTIONS

A smaller number of children identified through schools work and referral triage will have experienced more serious crime and require intensive 1-1 support over a longer time period. These young people will access the full young victim offer, 1-1 support, family support, multi-agency advocacy and co-ordination and multi-systemic interventions. This is evaluated using a holistic outcomes star assessment process that identifies a victim's journey and progress across 8 outcome areas.



CASE STUDY:

Alex, 13*

Alex was referred to You & Co after being assaulted by a group of young people. The incident knocked Alex's confidence, his attendance at school began to drop and he started to isolate himself from friends and activities he used to enjoy. Alex was also struggling to communicate how he was feeling to his family. Alex's You & Co Worker, Jack, helped Alex to identify the obstacles that were stopping him going to school and after-school clubs. Alex was worried about travelling on his own, so Jack helped Alex to work on a safety plan, identify safe contacts he could contact in an emergency and safe people he could travel with. Jack also helped Alex communicate with his family, and was encouraged to talk about his day whether this had been good or bad. Jack also helped Alex to work on positive friendships, and developed a 'friend action plan' to help him identify those people which had a positive impact on his life. Alex gained in confidence, and with plans in place, felt that he could now start to move forward.

*Model used

A SAFE AND EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

Victim Support has a customised service delivery model 'Risk, Protective and Resilience' (RPR). The focus of this model is to reduce risk factors, increase support and protective factors and increase resilience for young victims and witnesses.

Victim Support has evidenced that when these three elements are achieved, that children are safer because they:

- are at reduced risk of repeat victimisation,
- are able to identify the support that they can access,
- are able to make choices that promote their safety,
- have the skills to cope with the impact of crime,
- develop hope and aspiration for the future.

RPR has a strong theoretical evidence base and fits clearly with (re)victimisation theory, addressing the victim/perpetrator cycle

that can exist for some young people and directly relates to the cope and recovery model proposed by the MOJ.

With a strong equality focus that enables us to tailor support for each individual and identify vulnerabilities, RPR ensures that those that require support the most, receive it. Consequently, providing a more sophisticated model for commissioners rather than just targeting resources to the most serious crimes.

The model maintains a focus on risk levels, therefore enabling services to operate safely and clearly identify where risk is escalating/diminishing therefore ensuring that appropriate referrals and signposting is completed.

YOUNG VICTIM SERVICE

YOUNG WITNESS SERVICE

RISK LEVELS

The **risk** factors present at initial assessment in relation to the young victims ability to cope with being a victim of crime and how vulnerable they are to repeat victimisation.

The **risk** factors present at initial assessment in relation to the young witnesses ability to give their best evidence in court and cope with the trial

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

The levels of support they have available **protective factors** (support mechanisms) that exist or need to be put in place to mitigate the risk and ensure that young victims can achieve positive outcomes

The **protective factors** (support mechanisms) that exist or need to be put in place to mitigate the risk and ensure that young witnesses are fully prepared to give their best evidence

RESILIENCE LEVELS

The ability to cope with this incident and further challenges (**resilience**) at point of referral and the additional coping strategies required for positive change

The ability to develop **resilience** that enables young witnesses to make informed choices leading to best evidence whilst developing coping strategies to deal with the trauma of trial and move on through post-trial support

KEY ASSUMPTIONS

The risk, protective and resilience model bases itself on some key assumptions currently shared across much of the children's sector deriving from a range of research sources:

1. Children who display multiple risk factors are at increased likelihood of abuse or traumatic experiences – including being a victim of crime.
2. Once becoming a victim of crime certain risk factors (both internal and external) can increase which impacts on recovery from the initial crime and can lead to further victimisation.
3. Children are most likely to experience crime by their peers, family or people they know, in their homes, schools and communities during day time hours. Therefore when assessing and monitoring risk, a wide range of factors need to be taken into account including, home, school, friendships, feelings and behaviours, relationship with parents, health and the interaction between these risk factors.

Removing risk factors alone does not make children safe. Many children removed from child sexual exploitation or domestic abuse situations go on to experience further victimisation in other areas of their lives, or in some cases become perpetrators of crime.

4. The most effective intervention models with children and families start from a position of assessing and building on strengths.
5. By increasing young people's support networks, the changes in young victim's lives are likely to be more sustainable.
6. There are a range of protective behaviour strategies that young people can be supported to develop. These strategies are completely transferable across all areas of their lives.

Building protective factors alone does not in itself make children safe. If we focus on building protective factors but do not address the risk elements, we are in danger of making the victim modify

their own behaviour to effect change rather than addressing the problem source (eg moving a child out of a school where they are being bullied does not address the safety levels of the school, help the victim develop confidence in systems that have a duty to keep them safe, or the skills to deal with any future incidents).

7. Seriousness of crime does not necessarily equate to level of impact on the individual child. Children and young people vary widely in the way they respond to a set of circumstances. Some children may do well even in the most adverse situations whilst others appear to have little capacity to cope with even small difficulties.
8. Helping children develop resilience factors including making positive choices, weighing up consequences and developing positive coping strategies is an effective means of making lasting positive change for children and young people.
9. If young people are to achieve coping and recovery outcomes, they must be supported to develop aspiration for the future and believe things can be different.

Focussing on resilience alone does not make children safe. In fact children who have experienced the most serious crimes, domestic abuse, sexual abuse and gang activity often score high on resiliency factors and yet continue to experience high levels of crime. Their levels of resiliency can sometimes lead to them not being perceived to be victims; rather they are labelled as young people indulging in risky activity. There is a high risk of death or serious injury across these highly resilient young people who have little protection and multiple risks.

By adopting an intervention model that reduces risk factors, increases protective factors and increases resilience, children are young people are safer, less likely to be re-victimised and more likely to move on from their victim experiences and effect positive change.

SUPPORT FOR YOUNG VICTIMS – AN EFFECTIVE SUPPORT PATHWAY

Victim Support's Young Victims Service provide support to:

- Primary victims (the victim themselves)
- Secondary victims (who have been impacted from another family member's victim experience)

Support is offered regardless to whether the incident has been reported to the police, or the police define what has happened as being a crime. For example, at Victim Support we provide our services to children who have been victims of bullying.

Services are delivered through specialist staff and highly trained volunteers, who are assessed as having the skills to adapt style and approach of interventions to ensure these are appropriate to the young person's development stage – language, understanding and experiences. Training also focusses on ensuring staff can respond to the fast changing nature of crime that young people experience including use of social media and internet and developing forms of exploitation and gangs.

Children and young people particularly appreciate the role of volunteers and that an adult is voluntarily giving up their time to help them, which positively impacts on the support dynamic.

Victim Support recognises that many of the young victims it supports have complex and risky situations. Therefore, clear case management and caseload principals are crucial in ensuring services are effective and safe.

Referrals originate from a variety of sources, including Victim Support (Victim Care Unit, Community Team and Witness Service), Police, Social Services, Youth Offending Teams and Schools and are frequently from families engaged with Children and Families (CAF) services. They can also originate from anywhere along the criminal justice timeline and can even come from young victims and parents themselves.

We recognise that young victims find it very difficult to self-refer and therefore it's crucial that we work in young people's own environments reaching out, building trust and making ourselves accessible to help young people make that first step in talking to a trusted adult.

Service interventions for victims

Victim Support understands that one size doesn't fit all, and uses personalised, tailored approaches agreed alongside the child. A multi-intervention model supports the needs of the child to achieve cope and recovery outcomes.

Schools and Outreach Programmes

School /Outreach sessions focus on preventative and awareness programmes with children and young people, whilst identifying children who need individual support and sourcing/providing this support for young people impacted by crime.

- Support is identified within the school.
- Protective behaviours are introduced.
- The school is supported to embed learning.
- School/youth workers are skilled up to identify and vulnerable victims and source appropriate support.
- Sessions are age and developmentally appropriate.

Individual Support

One to one support is evidenced as the most effective tool in targeting supporting and effecting positive change.

- Working alongside children to identify priority areas for intervention.
- Developing support plans that reduce risks, increase support and improve young people's ability to keep safe and develop coping strategies.
- Creative interventions and tools utilised – age and developmentally appropriate to engage and help children – focussed on practical change for children.
 - Making sense of experiences and finding ways of addressing impact.
 - Safety planning and making safer choices.
 - Managing feelings and behaviours.
 - Developing coping strategies.
 - Building friendships and support network.
- Regularly reviewed to ensure effectiveness and ensure outcomes.

Group work :

More intensive group work is usually provided to small groups of children (maximum of 12) who have a shared experience of crime or are assessed as being at high risk of a specific crime. (eg a group of children who have experienced domestic violence, or a group of children whose online activity is risky)

- Group work on shared experiences or risks.
- Underpinned by protective behaviours and safety strategies.
- Explore feelings, behaviours and how to manage these.
- Builds on existing strengths and support.
- Age and developmentally appropriate.
- Creative, participatory and fun.
- Self-affirming.
- Creates supportive peer networks and shared experiences.

Family Support

Sustainable positive change is more likely when wider family members are involved in support plans. This is most effective where there is a transparent plan agreed with child and parents and underpinned by working together agreements.

- Work with parents one to one or group work (without child present) to help them think through ways they can support their child.
- Sessions with child and parent together exploring different viewpoints and solutions.
- Work with child but agreed elements fed back to parent by worker.
- Advocacy alongside parent on behalf of child (exclusion panel meeting, child in need meeting).

Multi-agency work

Safeguarding and supporting children always requires strong multi-agency working to maximise support and avoid duplication.

- Joint assessment/linked assessment processes (RPR model fits closely with other agency assessment models).
- Co-ordinated risk management frameworks – that can be triggered by any agency.
- Clear information sharing processes that are transparent and clearly explained to families.
- Attendance and contribution at multi-agency forums.
- Advocacy and ensuring child's voice is heard in any decision making process.
- Shared learning and resources including training other agencies in key issues impacting on young victims and witnesses.

Signposting to other services

Understanding when other universal/specialist services are best placed to continue the support is crucial in ensuring the right support is provided by the right person at the right time.

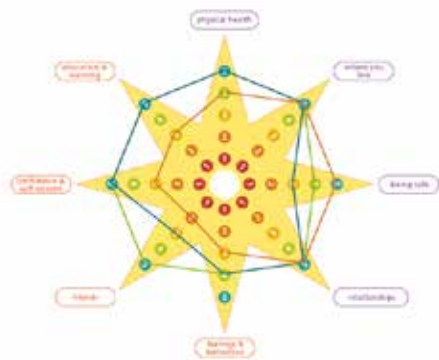
- Overarching children's strategies and pathways in place (i.e. local strategic CSE plan) that detail which services will deliver support to young people at which point.
- A directory of children's services that have been assessed as providing safe and effective support is developed.
- Clear referral processes/warm transfer (handover) processes are developed with key agencies.
- Joint safeguarding and information sharing protocols are in place with those services that are commissioned or sub contracted.



USING NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND COPE AND RECOVERY FRAMEWORK TO DIRECT INTERVENTIONS

At Victim Support we have applied and adapted the evidenced Outcomes Star™ Framework. Progress measurement is undertaken using 'Star' charts from the My Star™ programme, a tool for supporting and measuring change when working with children and young people.

It helps and empowers children and young people to make changes by providing them with a clear picture of the journey they need to take, plotting progress along the way. This is essential in developing the workers understanding of what type and level of support is required and how effective it is during the support plan. It also helps to support the ending of the service and ensures that the child is safe to move forward unsupported by specialist services.



In order to ensure we provide a more effective service for victims – needs assessments must translate into interventions that promote coping strategies, protective behaviours and reduction of risk.

The Risk Protective and Resilience Model provides clear indication of the factors present and absent and therefore enables the worker to see where interventions should focus and suggests what the outcome of those interventions will look like.

For example – a child who is unable to identify safe and protective adults at the beginning of the support process,

must by the end have protective adults in their support circle – whether this be school, social worker, youth worker, parents, extended family or even friends parents. This will make a sustainable difference to that child. All of the RPR indicators are cross matched with cope and recovery outcomes in order that they can be used in this way to interpret and direct support needs and measure specific and tangible outcomes.

The Cope and Recover model specifies '5 broad outcomes' from service delivery:

1. Improved health and wellbeing (physical, mental, psychological)
2. Increased safety and perceptions of safety
3. Reintegration (this includes returning to work/study, finding accommodation, improved finances or financial support, improved relationships/reduction in social isolation)
4. Feeling informed – support available, CJS process and developments, and quality of info eg timeliness and accessibility
5. Improved experiences of the CJS – improved experience and expectations

Victim Support Young Victim's Services', capture these outcomes through the needs assessment and review process as detailed above, alongside the use of a Service User Satisfaction survey (SUS). The SUS is completed at the end of the support process.

The aim is to ensure that all assessment domains of the star are addressed and improved where possible. The service will only be ended once the volunteer is happy that there has been sufficient progress and the child is able to cope on a daily basis without specialist support.

COPE AND RECOVER OUTCOMES	Improved health and wellbeing (physical, mental, psychological)	Increased safety and perceptions of safety (Reduction in repeat victimisation)	Reintegration (Ability to cope)	Feeling informed support available, CJS process and developments, and quality of info. Confidence to report in future	Expectations
OUTCOMES STAR™: CHILD ASSESSMENT DOMAINS	Physical health	Being safe Feelings and behaviours	Where you live Relationships Friends Education and learning Confidence and self-esteem	Not addressed by needs assessment to be measured through SUS	measured through SUS

Safe hands

Draw around your hand in the space below. Write on each finger the names of people you can talk to.



YOU
& CO

3

What's next?

What's working?



I talk to mummy when I am sad.

What's not working?



I shout at mummy when I get angry.

What's next?



- Do the 'anger map' worksheet with my worker
- Speak to mummy if I feel angry so she can help
- Keep a diary of when I get angry and why.

14

YOU
& CO

YOU
& CO

31



SUPPORT FOR YOUNG WITNESSES – AN EFFECTIVE SUPPORT PATHWAY

Recent high profile child sexual exploitation cases have highlighted the often devastating impact that giving witness testimony has on individual children and young people.

This includes immediate challenges such as giving evidence in court, to longer term negative impacts that can significantly affect a young person's life chances – such as disrupted education, breakdown in family networks and poor physical and emotional health.

The additional vulnerabilities of children require a specialist and more intensive support model than what is generally provided by existing witness support services.

Victim Support has developed and tested a holistic model to help address these often unmet needs for young witnesses.

Dependant on need, assessed alongside children and young people, young witnesses will be provided with support that spans the pre-trial to post trial journey. For some young people this may only require 4–6 sessions of support, for many others the support can span up to 6 months and require intensive support and preparation.

Victim Support has developed a range of interactive tools that meet age and development requirements to help young people understand a complex and ever changing process – including the development of an interactive courtroom that enables young people to explore the court process and courthouse in an accessible way.

Not only are the witnesses prepared for the court trial process, they are also supported to understand the impact the crime has had upon them. For example, a child may feel guilty and responsible for the incident. They may also feel that they are getting the perpetrator into trouble or that they will be in trouble themselves if a verdict of not guilty is returned. Understanding these emotions and how to best deal with them pre and post-trial is essential in supporting a victim through a traumatic process.

Support workers often also engage with schools to ensure that they are aware of what their pupil is going through. The child may require specific support measures and arrangements if they become overwhelmed during lessons, are missing significant lessons of exams due to trial or need a safe person to talk to.

CASE STUDY:

Three children's experiences at court

The young witness service received a referral for three young children, all aged under 10. The eldest two had been asked to give evidence in a trial against their biological parents. The three siblings had been systematically and routinely raped and sexually abused by three family members over a period of five years.

All three children were extremely traumatised and terrified that they would be seen by the defendants.

The YWS visited the children regularly in their home and looked to resolve some of their anxieties by talking about the use of special measures – in total completing 11 preparation sessions with the two eldest children. Alongside this meeting regularly with their social worker, Police officer in charge of the case, foster parents and soon to be adoptive parent.

As the trial approached the children's behaviour began to become more challenging, and so we worked with their adoptive mum to develop some coping strategies that could be used at home but that were also appropriate for court. Three weeks before trial the boys were moved from their long term and stable foster placement into their new home with their adoptive mother. This transition was an extremely stressful time for all involved. The YWS ensured that the support provided remained consistent and frequent.

Both boys managed to stay calm and focused throughout their time at court. Despite the fact that with three defence barristers their cross examinations lasted well over 4 hours each. Both the foster carers and adoptive parents of the children were extremely grateful for the support provided. They said that until the YWS became involved they were convinced the boys 'would not be able to even get to court, let alone give their best evidence'.

Support is delivered in outreach and court settings based on a tailored needs assessment and witness support plan that may include:

- Pre-trial visits – showing children around the court and trying out special measures in situ (often multiple visits).
- Explanation who's who in court and their role and introductions to key people.
- Explaining the court process.
- Helping children understand their role as a witness
- Safety planning with children and ensuring that separate entrances, waiting areas and security measures are in place.
- Addressing anxieties and worries and supporting the development of coping strategies so young people have mechanisms in place that enable them to deal with the additional stress of a trial and cross examination.
- Coordination with other support agencies.
- Helping parents and supporters understand the process so they can better support their child.
- Practical help with travel, childcare, understanding what to bring to court, how to dress etc.
- Working with the Police Officer in case and CPS to ensure appropriate special measures applications completed and that they have ensured young people have viewed their ABE.
- Ensuring young witnesses are treated in line with the Victim's Code and Witness Charter.
- Being alongside young witnesses at court to answer any questions and support them with managing feelings and behaviours in the court setting.
- Supporting young people to understand verdict and sentencing.
- Helping young people plan and re-integrate after court.
- Bringing in other agencies where on-going support is needed – often this may be a young victims' service.



BETTER OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG WITNESSES

In areas where we are delivering a targeted service to young witnesses, there is evidence of fewer cracked ineffective or vacated trials because:

- Attendance on trial day of young witnesses increases.
- There is often an earlier entry of guilty plea by defendants.
- Coordination and preparation for trial is improved as agencies communicate more effectively as young witness supporter advocates/highlights processes that may be missed otherwise:
 - Application/changes to special measures requests including appointment of Intermediaries
 - Reminding Officer In Charge of Evidence in Chief DVD refresh
 - Identifying transport/child care issues for family and ensuring Witness Care Unit support witnesses to access court
 - Checking video link is booked and in working order and other special measures are in place.
- Young witnesses having increased satisfaction with the process; through the development of better understanding of what is required of them, being supported to give their best evidence and feeling safe in what can be a frightening environment.
- Increased satisfaction from other agencies particularly the Judiciary and CPS who often report that young witness support and preparation increases children's best evidence and enables the criminal justice process to run more smoothly.
- Improved long term outcomes for young people. This is due to experiencing less-trauma as a witness, from having strong preparation and support and also the positive impact of having post-trial support to come to terms with a guilty or non-guilty verdict. Often a guilty verdict is as devastating for a young person as a non-guilty verdict, particularly if the defendant was a friend or family member. Post-trial support also enables young witness supporters to provide families with additional support and information services that will be able to continue to help the young person going forward.



THE VICTIM'S CODE: ENSURING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE RECEIVE THEIR ENTITLEMENTS

The Victim's Code was updated in 2013 and recognised that children and young people required specific consideration through the inclusion of a separate section for children and young people for the first time.

Victim Support although not specifically named in the Victims Code as having legal responsibilities works closely alongside victims and other agencies help to ensure that Victim Code entitlements are met on behalf of criminal justice agencies and helps to support the delivery of Witness Charter standards.

Helping young people understand their key rights in the Code and bridging communication with other criminal justice agencies has ensured that they are:

- kept informed about case progress by the police.
- told when a suspect is arrested, charged, bailed or sentenced.
- given the appropriate extra help in court. These are called special measures, which are designed to make it easier for young people to give the best possible evidence.

- told when an offender will be released, if the offender has been sentenced to a year or more in prison for a violent or sexual offence.
- referred to the most appropriate agency that supports young victims.
- given a chance to say how the crime has affected you by reading out a Victim Personal Statement in court.
- Given information about taking part in restorative justice scheme

It is this advocacy role that young people have felt has been crucial in navigating the system.

A FUTURE COMMISSIONING PATHWAY THAT WORKS FOR CHILDREN

The prevalence of crime against children and young people, particularly the most serious crime and the widespread impact of this crime on children, peers, families, schools and young offender rates is evidenced.

Children and young people that Victim Support have worked with have provided clear messages about what they need from services to feel better supported and able to engage in criminal justice processes.

Having a clear co-ordinated pathway of support with a young victims/witness worker explaining, working alongside and advocating for children is clearly what is required if children are able to feel properly supported through the criminal justice journey.

This requires commissioners to think about the specific needs of children in all services that they are commissioning and endeavouring listen to their experiences and to engage them in finding solutions.

- “ It felt like someone was on your side believing you.”
- “ They gave clear explanations, support emotionally and at the time – reassurance.”

APPENDIX

Research Methodology

While the research undertaken for this document is not statistically significant, it has been co-developed with, and is representative of, children and young people and service providers. Contributions were sought from the following areas where Victim Support already provides services to young victims and witnesses:

- Kent
- Nottingham
- London
- Newcastle
- South Yorkshire
- Surrey and Sussex
- Thames Valley

Service investigation was undertaken in Kent for both services which included work shadowing, court visits and a service user workshop.

What do professionals say about the services?

100% of service providers working alongside Victim Support reported being very happy (on a range of 1-5, 5 being very happy) with those services. They also reported no overlap of services, proving that the Child and Young Victim and Witness Services are unique in their service delivery and not simply providing a cheap alternative for functions that should be provided by other criminal justice or support agencies.

What do service users say about the services?

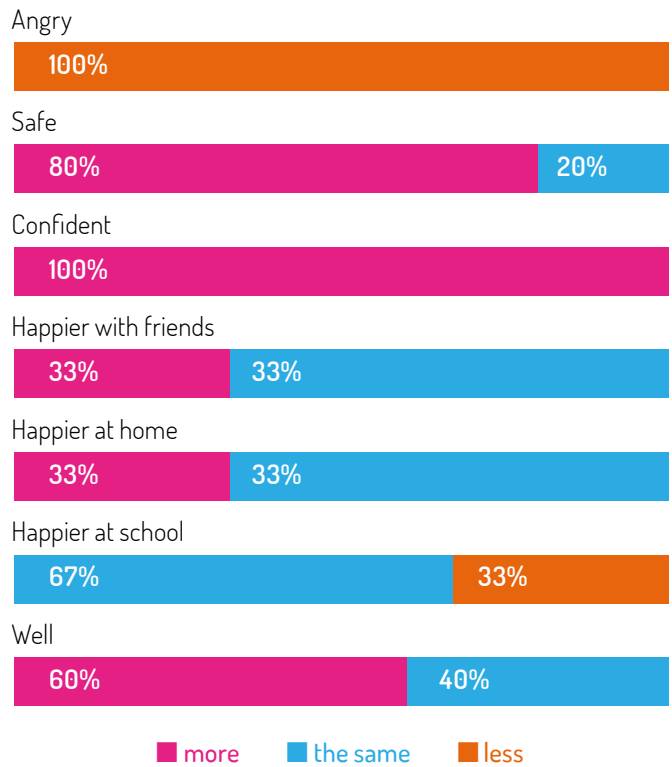
Asked how they helped, the following comment sums up the views of those who have used the Child and Young Person Victim Services:

“They gave clear explanations, support emotionally and at the time – reassurance.”

Service users were asked about the Young Witness Service. One remark sums up the general feeling of parents:

“The witness service is a valuable one, as without this my son would have been a lot more scared about what to expect. I felt as a parent it also helped me to understand the process and my son’s options when giving evidence. It made the whole experience, although unpleasant, one my son was able to get through and to put behind him afterwards.”

Did the support make participants more or less?



Clearly the support has a positive impact on victims, witnesses and their families. A workshop of those who had used the Kent Child Witness Service reported positive effects on their emotions which can be really difficult for children to understand:

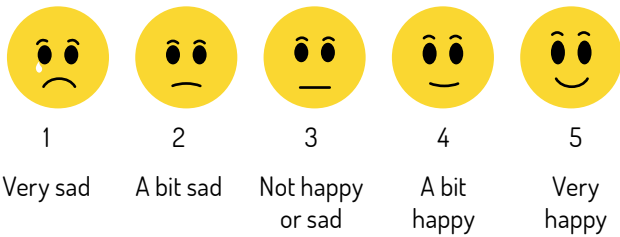
In addition, verbal reports from the workshop demonstrates the impact the service has on young witnesses, which is especially important when children are having to prove they are being truthful – in most instances, against the word of an adult:

“It felt like someone was on your side believing you.”

“They were more confident with giving their evidence after they had been prepared.”

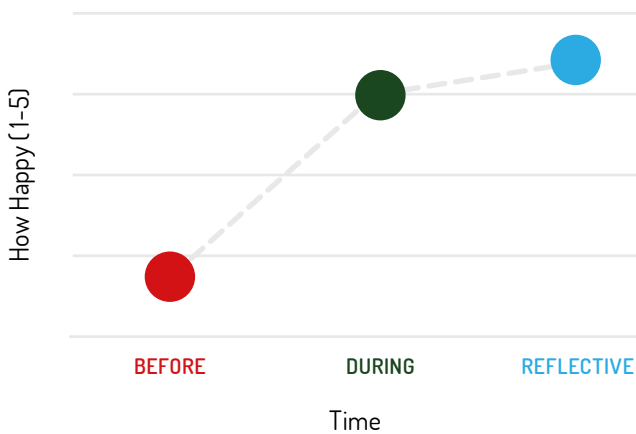
“I felt like, if I could talk to the volunteer I could talk to anyone and build trust.”

Quantitative research undertaken for this report also clearly demonstrates the value that children and young people, and their parents put on the service they have been given:



Scale used on service user questionnaires

Question posed on Service User questionnaires	Average score
How did you feel BEFORE being contacted by (either) service?	1.75
How happy were you to see the volunteer DURING the service?	4.00
How happy were you with the support you received - REFLECTIVE ?	4.40



100% of service users surveyed would recommend the Victim Support Young Witness Service and/or the Young Victims Service to others.

Young People's Views on the delivery of entitlements in line with:

The Victim's Code

Investigation with service users and service providers has identified that some of these entitlements are not being delivered at all, or they are being delivered by Victim Support on behalf of criminal justice agencies.

Part B of the Victims Code expressly states a number of legal entitlements for children and young people. These entitlements are listed by section, are not exhaustive and relate to the research undertaken. The chart below shows that a victim can expect from the code i.e. the maximum times for notification (where a crime is committed, a suspect is arrested and court proceedings will follow).

Notification of	Notification to:		Who is responsible?
	Victim	Vulnerable or intimidated victim (incl. under 18's)	
Victim Code	Within 2 working days after reporting crime		Police
Contact details passed to Victim Support	Within 2 working days after reporting crime		Police
Case progression updates	By agreement with police officer		Police
Suspect arrest	Within 5 working days	Within 1 working day	Police
If suspect is bailed	Within 5 working days	Within 1 working day	Police
Charge or other disposal	Within 5 working days	Within 1 working day	Police
Court hearing date set	5 working days after Witness Care Unit are informed		Witness Care Unit
Sentencing decision	1 working day after Witness Care Unit are informed		Witness Care Unit

Deviations occur where the incident is 'no-crimed', no suspect is identified, the case does not make court etc.

Section 1 of the Victim Code relates to the Police investigation and includes (but is not restricted to):

- a clear explanation of what happens next,
- a needs assessment,
- details sent to organisations that help victims of crime,
- to have their statement video recorded,
- to be told about court special measures,
- Updates on what is happening with the investigation and how often they will make contact.

Feedback from service users on this includes:

- “ We would like more explanations about the criminal justice process from the Police and what will happen at each stage”.
- “ Questions could be simpler so children can understand them”
- “ We would like to be told what is happening to the suspect”

Section 2 of the Victims Code describes the court proceedings and entitlements that include (but are not restricted to) those which are delivered by the CPS or Witness Care Unit:

- To be told within 1 working day of charging decisions
- To be informed within 1 working day of changes to bail conditions, court hearings or bail breaches
- To be informed by the WCU what will happen at court and any special measures available
- Have a pre-trial visit to the court

One victim of a serious crime voiced her concern:

- “ I discovered the plea hearing date had been set from looking on the internet and had no formal notification from any professional agency.”

From this feedback it is clear that the criminal justice agencies should consider where information is available from the internet which may conflict with their requirements under the Victims Code.

The Victim Support Young Victim and Witness Service currently delivers the pre-trial visit service on behalf of the CPS and Witness Care Unit. This service not only ensures the delivery of a Victims Code entitlement, it is a fundamental step in the delivery of the service. This enables the success of delivery to be achieved:

100% of service users supported by the Victim Support Young Victim and Witness Service were asked if they wanted a pre-trial visit.

Of those asked, 100% attended a pre-trial visit.

One service user reported: “Fantastic service. We were so impressed by the support especially the pre-trial visit”.

While pre-trial visits are reported to be very successful to supporting the needs of the service user, meeting court staff at the pre-trial visit returned mixed reviews. Of those surveyed, only 50% met either the judge or court staff before the trial and half of those reported feeling more nervous or scared after the meeting with them.

Where stronger links are formed between the Young Victim and an improved service, led by the demands of the clients, could be developed to better engage those working within the courts with those giving evidence.

Section 3 of the Victim Code explains entitlements at court which include (but are not restricted to):

- To meet with the prosecutor (where possible)
- Request alternative access to the court to avoid meeting the offender or their supporters
- Wait in a separate area of the court
- Have any special measures applied that have been pre-arranged

The service users had very different experiences of the court service. Some were offered meetings with the prosecutor, alternative routes into court (sometimes this is hindered by the court layout), or special measures to support the achievement of best evidence in court, while others were not.

The same support should be offered as a matter of course to every child attending court.

Conversely, some service users who met the judge before the trial reported feeling more scared or nervous than they had been previously. Others who had met with the prosecutor and judge felt it reassured:

- “ When I met the judge it made me realise that he was just a normal person.”

However, not all service users experienced a service that made the victim feel safe. One victim said that the prosecutor had tried to convince them to give evidence in court rather than from the link room but they refused as they felt too vulnerable to do this.

It is also clear that the application of some of the Victims Code is delivered by Victim Support rather than the services required to do so. While the opportunity exists to do this, Victim Support will happily support agencies to achieve their directives.

Service users AND service providers have reported excellent case updates where the service have an open and often direct link into their respective Police forces. Where possible, this link should be developed and exploited as it is incredibly valuable.

“ My witness service worker was amazing and as a family we would not have got through it. Every other person let us down. I am so thankful for the help we were given thank you.”

The Witness Charter

Although the standards in the Witness Charter are not legally binding, they set out a level of service that a witness can expect. While adherence to the service standards are, in the main, met by those agencies within the criminal justice system, it must be made clear that some of those services are provided by Victim Support – namely the Child and Young Person’s Witness Service that is delivered in courts.

It must also be made clear that the Children and Young Person Witness service is different to the Witness Service offered to adults which is delivered by a separate service. The training needs and skill level required by those delivering services to children and young people differ to those required by those delivering services to adults.

The charter is explicit in its need to ensure that the level of service victims and witnesses can expect and it is clear that the charter covers the Police, CPS and Witness Care Unit. Victim Support deliver services with and on behalf of those agencies and where possible maintain the standards required under the charter. Specifically these include (but are not restricted to):

- Standards 3 & 8 – Supporting the delivery of special measures in court
- Standard 11 – a visit to the court before the trial day to be shown around
- Standard 14 – a safe environment for all and to ensure that prosecution witnesses, defence witnesses and their family and friends wait in separate areas

While separation is not always possible due to the layout of the court, victims reported feeling safe in court. When asked if they would recommend the service to their friends who had been a victim of crime, 100% of recipients said they would, and that they would tell their friends:

“ They made you feel comfortable and calm about it”

“ They help with everything”

“ It helped me to understand what would happen on the day and not to feel anything was my fault”

Victim Support: Delivery of services for Children and Young People

With a proven track record through satisfaction surveys and repeat recommendation, Victim Support have been shown to provide an excellent service to their clients and this is demonstrated in all areas that have specialist services for children as shown in the survey results above.

Young victims’ and witness services provide valuable support to:

- Ensure victims get the right support, at the right time, by the right agency
- Are engaged with around how they can best move forward and recover from the incident
- Provide key support between families and other agencies that are impacted directly or indirectly by the incident
- Support the criminal justice process by supporting the delivery of best evidence
- Work with service users and their families to find long term solutions for moving forward

YOU & CO IS VICTIM SUPPORT'S YOUTH PROGRAMME THAT HELPS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COPE WITH THE IMPACT AND EFFECTS OF CRIME.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are especially grateful to all of the children and young people and their parents/guardians who gave up their time to share their experiences with us. We have learnt so much from you and it ensures that we can continue to support other children and young people in future to the best of our abilities.

Many thanks also go to:

- Jayne Jones, who researched and co-developed this briefing
- All of our multi-agency partners and practitioners who have contributed to this work and for your continued support of the project
- Children and Young People's Workers at Victim Support for their contributions

OTHER YOU & CO MATERIALS

This booklet is part of the You & Co suite of booklets covering a range of issues that affect young victims and witnesses of crime. They are designed to help professionals deliver best practice. Additional booklets are available from:

youandco@victimsupport.org.uk

