

Victim engagement forum

Involving people affected by crime and anti-social behaviour in engagement activities to scrutinise and influence service provision to victims.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Organisational
Topic	Community engagement Criminal justice Diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI)
Organisation	Dyfed-Powys Police
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Region	Wales
Partners	Community safety partnership Criminal justice (includes prisons, probation services) Government department Local authority
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.

Key details

Scale of initiative	Regional
Target group	Adults General public Victims

Aim

The aim of the victim engagement forum is to involve those who have been affected by crime and anti-social behaviour in meaningful and impactful engagement activities. The forum aims to give these individuals the opportunity to share their views on the services victims receive throughout the criminal justice system.

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of the victim engagement forum are to:

- work with victims to improve how Dyfed-Powys Police deals with, and processes, non-emergency calls
- provide police officers and staff with a real-life perspective of victims' views on the policing service
- work with victims to improve the service that Dyfed-Powys Police provides

Description

Individuals on a victim database agree to be contacted about engagement opportunities aimed at improving victim services. These engagement opportunities could involve:

- completing a survey
- providing feedback on specific processes, policies or documents
- taking part in a group discussion

There is no expectation that individuals will take part in every offered opportunity.

Two examples of the work of the forum follow.

Involving the forum in proposed changes to how Dyfed-Powys Police deals with, and processes, non-emergency calls from victims of crime/incidents

Forum members were asked to view videos. These videos showed scenarios which compared how a specific call was dealt with by the Dyfed-Powys Police, and how the force intended to deal with such a call in the future. Members were asked to provide feedback on whether they thought the proposed changes would result in an improved service for victims.

A number of forum members were also involved in a “call testing” exercise which saw them being taken through the new process as though an actual caller to the force’s new crime and incident hub and providing feedback to the team.

Training film about victims’ own experiences of Dyfed-Powys Police:

Forum members were interviewed about their experiences with Dyfed-Powys Police. Each member provided feedback on what went well and what did not go well, as well as the advice they would give to officers dealing with a similar case to theirs, and how their experience has affected their future interactions with the police.

The interviews have been used in a training video which will be incorporated into Dyfed-Powys Police’s training package. This video will help to ensure that police officers and staff are provided with a real-life perspective of victims’ views of the policing service.

Overall impact

- The training video created through the victim engagement forum is a vital and impactful resource for Dyfed-Powys Police to have. It is important that new and existing police officers and police staff hear about victims’ experiences from the victims themselves.
- Another force has requested information about the training video created through the Victim Engagement Forum with the intention of developing a similar product.
- Dyfed-Powys Police has been advised that the video is well received by officers in training.
- Forum members have shared feedback that taking part in these engagement opportunities and sharing their story has helped them to work through their experiences.

- Dyfed-Powys Police have regularly engaged with our victim engagement forum members on a number of topics. The force instigates engagement activity, requesting the views of forum members on a number of policing matters. The training video is standing practice within Dyfed-Powys Police's vulnerability training module.

Learning

- The force developed a data protection impact assessment (DPIA) when setting up the forum. This explained the rationale behind recording a limited amount of victims' personal details on the forum's database.
- The gathered names and contact details only, adopting the approach of providing all forum members with sufficient information about an engagement opportunity to enable them to make an informed decision about whether they wanted to take part in each separate engagement opportunity, if they had relevant experience or specific feedback to share.
- In hindsight, gathering more personal details at that stage would have allowed for more targeted engagement and an idea of whether the forum is demographically representative of the communities it represents.
- The force have struggled to encourage criminal justice partners to utilise the Forum to engage victims on their services. Through the updated Terms of Reference we will be adopting a more structured approach to our engagement with Forum members to ensure partners have a set timeframe to request engagement.
- There were a few physical restrictions/barriers whilst making the training video as this was created during Covid.
- Due to the nature of the content of the video and the sensitivity, this cannot be shared externally.

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Tags

Criminal justice