

Victim feedback panel

Bringing together Essex Police, the force's commissioned victim services, and victims themselves to a force-wide platform, to capture the victim's voice for organisational learning and help shape service delivery improvements.

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Key details

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| Stage of practice | Evaluated locally |
| Purpose | Organisational |
| Topic | Community engagement Criminal justice Diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) |
| Organisation | Essex Police |
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| Region | Eastern |
| Partners | Police Voluntary/not for profit organisation |
| Stage of implementation | The practice is implemented. |

Key details

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| Start date | May 2021 |
| Scale of initiative | Local |
| Target group | Adults Children and young people Communities Families General public Offenders Victims |

Aim

- Share information and listen to the voice of victims either directly or indirectly via commissioned support services. Three support services are commissioned: Synergy Essex (sexual offences support service); Compass (Domestic Abuse support service); and Victim Support.
- Engage with victims of all crime types to learn more about their experiences with service including what worked well and where the force could have made a difference.
- Seek regular feedback, identify any recurring themes and seek opportunities for cases studies to bring the victims experience to life to shape the force's approach and improve services.
- Ensure that feedback is shared to support continuous learning and development.
- Provide a mechanism whereby the victim's endorsement can be sought on specific tasks such as the introduction of new processes or training
- Recognising achievements and considering ways in which these can be promoted. This allows praise to be delivered to individuals, teams or organisationally. It also allows for learning to be developed and delivered to staff.
- Exchange information about service provision to support the best quality information to victims, maintain their engagement, and improve their satisfaction and confidence

Intended outcome

- To give victims a voice to talk about their personal experience, supporting learning for the force, which identifies what has worked well and could be improved in the delivery of service.
- To help shape the force approach to improving the service for future victims.
- To ensure feedback is shared to support continuous learning and development. This information exchange ensures victims are heard while maintaining their engagement and improving their satisfaction and confidence.

Description

This initiative started during the COVID-19 pandemic. Panels were held over Microsoft Teams. This allowed for a larger audience and for events to be recorded, so officers and staff could view the victim feedback panels via a link.

The Victim Feedback Panel provides victims of crime with a platform to have their voice heard and provide their feedback about how Essex Police has dealt with their report/investigation, looking at the whole criminal justice process. Four panels have been held to date, occurring twice yearly, with this practice receiving a National Policing Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme award since.

Essex Police's victim feedback panel uses closed investigations, focusing on themes including:

- Sexual violence and domestic abuse
- Violence against women and girls
- Victims from minority communities
- Stalking and harassment
- High harm offences

The process uses case studies to provide bespoke feedback to frontline teams and identify recurring themes that help the force to learn and shape future services. An in-depth Q&A session gives attendees the opportunity to share ideas for improvement and learn from colleagues with more experience, alongside those who have been recognised for the compassion and support shown to others. The feedback provided is then used to update training sessions for officers and staff.

The panel is led by a detective inspector, with a small team assisting, which includes a force Victims Services Manager. This is an internal police event, open to all police staff from a mixture of

ranks and staff roles from across all the command areas in the force, with representatives from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), partner agencies and the commissioned services. Within the panel each commissioned service has a timeslot to speak about their service and what they can offer victims of crime. They also provide information on how referrals can be made to them, with aims to enhance victim support.

Victims are sourced for the panel in several ways. One example is by being flagged by staff or teams, often as a result of course case results. Alternatively, the three commissioned services promote the panel and look at victims or clients who may be interested in taking part. The force also promotes the panel both internally and externally.

Evaluation

Evaluation is ongoing, led by the Police Force.

- Internal evaluation – Essex Police’s victims and witnesses board, chaired by the ACC for Crime & Public Protection, reviews the panel.
- Staff feedback – the three panels held so far have received good feedback from staff attendees through feedback surveys distributed after the event.
- Victim feedback – positive feedback is obtained informally through the officer in the case (OIC) and support worker contacts. This feedback has been shared and promoted by the Force’s media team.
- Support worker feedback – positive feedback has been received from this group.

Overall impact

- Positive impacts shown through ongoing evaluation, for example positive feedback from victims involved and staff feedback surveys. This shows how beneficial the learning from the panel is for staff and their wider teams.
- Increase in referrals to victim support services since the panel has been established.
- Better understanding by staff and officers in relation to the victim’s journey and voice.
- Improvement and learning continuously in relation to victim trauma.
- Provided opportunities for victims to speak, in their own words, about their experiences to help shape the force’s approach and to improve the overall service.

- Exchanged information about service provision to support the best quality information to victims, maintain their engagement, and improve their satisfaction and confidence.
- Knowledge sharing with other police forces – some forces have been in contact to find out more about the panel, to potentially form similar panels themselves. As part of this planning documents and Terms of Reference for the panel have been shared.

Learning

- Essex Police found the main challenge to be finding appropriate victim participants who are willing to take part. The force decided that working with victims whose cases are finalised and not currently in the criminal justice system was the best option. Additionally, it's preferable if there are no outstanding complaints or grievances in place in relation to the case.
- At times has been difficult to get victims of crime who are willing to engage in the panel in person. Instead, the force has used pre-recorded testimonies that are then used at the panel. Even if victims prerecord, they are always invited to the panel. However, some victims are also reluctant to be on camera. In these cases, many will agree for their feedback to be provided by their support worker. Working closely with victim services is essential to ensure those victims are supported throughout.
- It's valuable for victims to share their stories of positive experiences and instances where the service they received could have supported them better.
- Good working relationships with commissioned services/partners really helps and has improved significantly with Essex Police since the establishment of the panel.

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Tags

Victim care