

You Said, We Did



At the **Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley**, we are always trying to improve the services that are available for victim-survivors of crime in our area. It's important that every victim is able to access the support they need to be able to cope with the impact of the crime and build resilience.

In April 2024, there will be a change to the victims services in the Thames Valley. There will be three new services, the Adult Service, the Children and Young People's Service, and the Sexual Violence Service. Before we redesigned these services, to help us really understand what you want from your victims services, we carried out a number of public surveys and consultations. We'd like to thank everybody who submitted responses to these, and would like to show you the impact that your requests and ideas have made on service design and what victims services will look like from April 2024 and beyond.



You said... Often it is hard for victims of crime to share the story of what happened to them, particularly if they have to repeat the story on multiple occasions.

We did... Our new victims services will work to make sure that when they contact a victim-survivor to provide support, they will minimise the number of times the service user must describe what happened to them. We have streamlined pathways into support to reduce the amount of times a victim will have to retell their story, and have also introduced a new ICT system that will enable providers to have real-time access to assessments, thus removing the need for victims to be assessed multiple times.

You said... *"No support happened - they ring during the day when I am at work and are not available in the evening nor weekend."* (Victims Survey Participant, May 2022)

"Maybe on the day I have a session booked I don't want to talk about it, but on another day when I don't, I am in a crisis. I need something flexible based on my needs". (Interview Participant, February 2022)

We did... To make sure all those who have childcare and/or work/education responsibilities, our services will be as flexible as possible and interventions will be tailored to each victim's needs. The services will be available 9am until 5pm on weekdays, but will also provide some weekend and evening support to make sure they are inclusive and accessible by all. There will be an online offer that can be accessed 24/7. In addition, the Adult Service will have a 24/7 support line and live chat system, so victim-survivors will be able to make contact with the service outside traditional opening hours.



You said... *"I have no clue what is available and as victim never been signposted to anything."* (Victims Survey Participant, May 2022)

"I needed someone to do the emotional lifting for me" (Interview Participant, February 2022)

We did... We want everyone who has been subject to a crime to be able to support the right support when they need it. With the system currently in operation, when someone has experienced a crime, they will be asked if they would like to be referred to victims services for support. We are currently undertaking preparations so that in future, we will be moving to a system by which every victim of crime will be automatically referred to victims services and will be able to opt out if they don't require support. This will make sure every victim of crime will be contacted, all those who need to will be referred and/or signposted to services to help them, and no one will be left without an offer of support.

You said... *"I was offered support the next day by Victims First but turned it down. It would have been helpful if they had contacted me again a few weeks later to make sure that was still the case".* (Interview Participant, February 2022)

We did... We understand that victims of crime may not fully process what has happened to them immediately after a crime has taken place. With our new victims services, if the victim-survivor declines the offer of support, they will be provided with the contact details for the Victims First Hub so they can get back in touch if and when they feel ready and want to engage with support services. Victims will also be offered access to the new online support offer which holds a wealth of information, support and guidance that can be accessed at the point a victim feels is the right time for them.



You said... 48% of those polled in our Victims Survey in May 2022 told us our victims services for women and girls need to increase.

We did... To bring a centre point and a focus to the actions we are taking to eradicate violence against women and girls, we created a strategy entitled 'Improving the safety of women and girls in the Thames Valley'. This is available for everyone to read on our website, and details both the actions which will be taken and who is responsible for taking them. In addition, we have made sure to include specialist and tailored support for women in our new service design, all services are required to be gender-informed, and any barriers to accessing support for women and girls will be tackled by our services. We have also used grant funding to provide further specialist support for women and girls in the Thames Valley including victims of Sexual Violence, Domestic Abuse and Stalking.



You said... *“I would like the PCC to send out more information on services and what’s happening locally”.* (Interview Participant, February 2022)

We did... To help keep you informed on the news from Victims First and for news on our new services, we have relaunched our Victims First Newsletter (you can [click here](#) to subscribe). You also have the option of signing up to our Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner newsletter ([click here](#) to subscribe), which keeps you up to date with the broader efforts of the PCC to cut crime and deliver effective and efficient policing in the Thames Valley.

You said... *“Language barriers can prevent victims of crime from getting full access to the support they need. Suitably qualified interpreters are a must, even when someone ‘appears’ to speak reasonable English.”* (Diverse Communities Workshop Participant, February 2022)

We did... We understand that being able to express yourself fully and to be understood is vital when it comes to being able to cope and build resilience following a crime. Whenever a referral is received by our Victims First Hub, the hub will do a full assessment of the victim-survivor’s needs so that we can understand how to support them effectively. This includes an assessment of language needs. If the victim-survivor needs an interpreter, they can let the Hub know and one will be provided. Interpreter support is also available for those receiving support from one of the victims services.



You said... The end result you want from your victims services is *“To feel heard, believed, supported, empowered and more balanced.”* (Victims Survey Participant, May 2022)

We did... Our services for victims will ensure any adult, child or young person who has been the victim of crime has an offer of support that is right for them. No victim of crime should be left without a support option. Our services are there to help you make sure you feel listened to, and to help you cope with the impact of the crime.

Have you been the victim of a crime and would like some support?

If so, please visit the [Victims First website](#). You can give them a call on 0300 1234 148, or use the live chat to contact a member of the team on our website.

Do you have feedback you’d like to give us about victims services in the Thames Valley and how they could be made better?

If you have lived experience of crime and have used our victims services in the past, please [follow this link](#) for the opportunity to sign up to our lived experience engagement scheme.