

Wakefield District Community Safety  
Partnership from **Victims to Voices**  
to be **heard**

A Victims and Witnesses Support  
Strategy for Wakefield  
**2014 - 2016**



“I’m determined to ensure that every part of the criminal justice system takes responsibility for improving care and support for victims and witnesses. I welcome this commitment from local agencies in Wakefield to work together to do just that”

**Baroness Newlove  
of Warrington  
Victims’  
Commissioner**

## Introduction

Anyone can fall victim to crime. Even relatively minor crimes can be traumatic and the most serious crimes cause enormous emotional and physical harm. The effects can be long-lasting and the impact can remain with people long after the actual crime has happened or, indeed, the case has been dealt with. It is a universal problem that concerns us all.

It has costs for individuals, families, businesses, for the economy and our communities. Crime can leave victims distressed, traumatised, physically injured and in financial difficulty. Victims need support to help them recover from these effects; immediate, practical and local support that is tailored to their needs.

Our priority is to prevent crime occurring in the first place but equally, where people do fall victim, we must protect and assist them and ensure their needs come first. The criminal justice system is founded on the principle that defendants are innocent until proven guilty. But that does not mean that it should focus only on them. Victims and their families must have a voice and we must listen.

### Vision and aims

The Wakefield District Community Safety Partnership (CSP) wants to see less crime and fewer victims of crime. However, when a crime does occur, we want to make sure that we have the right services in place which are available at the right time and meet the needs of those who use them. We want to make sure that victims feel that they are being treated as individuals, rather than simply just part of a case in the system, and that they are clear about who they can contact to get more information.

Underpinning our victims' strategy is a series of values which will influence all our steps in delivering it. Our strategy is victim centred and victims have prime consideration in its delivery. They will be treated with dignity and respect, and treated sensitively and confidentially, with recognition given to their individual circumstances.

### **Our strategy is:**

- **inclusive:** the diversity of victims' experience, culture and lifestyles are recognised;
- **focused:** service delivery will be clearly focused on achieving specific results in a targeted manner with available resources; and
- **integrated:** services for victims will be delivered in a co-ordinated, consistent and effective manner, through partnerships between the relevant statutory, community and voluntary frameworks.

### **Our ambitions are:**

- victims of crime will be treated with dignity and respect and feel valued at all stages of the process;
- victims of crime will receive accurate and timely information including what will be expected of them and what they can expect to happen;
- victims of crime will receive practical help and support throughout the process according to their needs;
- victims of crime will have a better understanding of the process;
- victims of crime will feel protected and safe; and
- victims of crime will receive a personalised service.

### **Setting the context**

This strategy is our visible commitment to take action and a statement about our dedication to protecting victims and witnesses of crime to ensure they receive the best support they can. It will underpin the vision and ambition set out in the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan 2013-18 to ensure that victims' needs always come first. It will also act as a catalyst to influence local delivery of the Ministry of Justice Code of Practice for Victims of Crime which was launched in October 2013. This code sets a minimum standard for local services which are provided to victims of crime.

### **Commissioning approaches**

Victims of crime can have complex needs, and services work most effectively where there is a clearly owned partnership strategy. Through delivery of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, the CSP will ensure the local criminal justice system runs smoothly and partners work towards building a personalised service where victims are treated as individuals.

Our local strategy is an ambitious programme to transform victim services in the Wakefield District. Our commissioning framework will follow the guidance and best practice provided by the Ministry of Justice which forms part of the commitment the Government made in 2012 in the consultation Getting It Right for Victims and Witnesses.

We will ensure the needs of victims are assessed and that services are based on evidence of effectiveness, research and mapping exercises. These will include, but not be limited to: advocacy; information provision; counselling; peer support; practice assistance; emotional support; shelters and interim accommodation; and telephone helplines.

**The Wakefield District CSP will work together to influence the commissioning of victim support services for:**

- children, including those at risk of sexual exploitation;
- those who have suffered burglary;
- those who have experienced hate crime;
- those who have suffered domestic abuse, honour based violence and forced marriage;
- victims of rape and sexual assault; and
- those who are subject to repeat crime or anti-social behaviour.

**Measuring performance**

Success of this strategy will be based on how a service has supported a victim and the results of that support. We will influence the commissioning of services which support victims to cope with the immediate impacts of crime and recover from the harm experienced.

**Listening to you**

In October 2013, we invited local stakeholders, citizens and in particular people who had been victims of crime, to share their views on how support services can be developed. Our vision is clear and the ambitions described here reflect what you told us.

*“Our priority is to prevent crime happening in the first place but, equally, where people fall victim to crime we must help them. We want to make sure that in Wakefield victims of crime and those affected by it are seen, heard and supported through effective, high quality services.”*



**Cllr Maureen Cummings**

Chair, Wakefield District Community Safety Partnership

---

***We will continue to listen and respond***

We always want to hear from you.

If you would like to find out more about the Wakefield District Community Safety Partnership or have any thoughts, questions, suggestions or considerations you would like to make, please **contact:**

Antony Sadler

Service Director-Communities

Wakefield Council

Tel: 01924 305509

email: [phcommissioning@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:phcommissioning@wakefield.gov.uk)

[www.wakefield.gov.uk](http://www.wakefield.gov.uk)