



Victim Engagement Forum

Terms of Reference

1. INTRODUCTION

This document defines the terms of reference for the Dyfed-Powys Victim Engagement Forum, its purpose, governance structure and working arrangements, membership and the roles and responsibilities of the members.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Dyfed-Powys works in partnership with local criminal justice agencies, and other partners, to place victims at the heart of the criminal justice system.

Within the revised 2015 [Victims' Code](#), a 'victim' is defined as:

- *A natural person who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss which was directly caused by a criminal offence;*
- *A close relative of a person whose death was directly caused by a criminal offence. "Close relative" is defined as the spouse, the partner, the relatives in direct line, the siblings and the dependants of the victim. Other family members, including guardians and carers, may be considered close relatives at the discretion of the service provider.*

Collectively, we are eager to improve victims' experiences of the criminal justice system. We want victims to help us scrutinise the way we deliver services, to help us be:

- Ambitious to keep improving;
- Fair in the way we treat people; and
- Focused on the needs of victims.

In order to do this, we want to hear the experiences and views of victims of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB). The Dyfed-Powys Victim Engagement Forum (VEF) will be the main conduit for this activity, and adopts a partnership approach to engaging with victims of crime and ASB across the Dyfed-Powys area.

2. VICTIM ENGAGEMENT FORUM PURPOSE

The overarching purpose of the VEF is to work collaboratively to ensure the voice of victims influences the scrutiny of service provision to support the delivery of an outstanding service for victims. It is vital that our engagement is effective, meaningful and impactful; that it makes a difference.

The overall aims of engagement activity through the VEF are to:

- Provide constructive suggestions and advice on how the quality of victim service delivery – throughout the Criminal Justice System – can be improved;
- Provide consultation to criminal justice agencies on practice, policy and procedures linked to victim services;



- Provide advice and guidance to ensure that victims' services are appropriate, that they meet the victim's needs, and that they are complete i.e. there are no gaps in service provision;
- Improve trust and confidence in criminal justice agencies through the involvement of local communities in the scrutiny and improvement of victim services;
- To empower victims to instigate improvement through ensuring that the impact of the VEF on service provision is transparent and victims can see the difference their involvement in the VEF is making;
- Improve victim satisfaction and any potential disengagement with the criminal justice system through service improvement; and
- Act as the collective 'voice of the victim'- whilst recognising each person's experience is unique.

3. GOVERNANCE AND WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

The VEF will be overseen and co-ordinated by the OPCC, with input from partner organisations at all stages of the victim engagement process:

a) Identification of topics

The topics for engagement activity will be identified through discussions amongst partners at established forums which focus on the victim, for example, Dyfed-Powys Criminal Justice Board and its Victim and Witness Sub-Group, and Dyfed-Powys Police's (DPP) Strategic Criminal Justice and Investigations Group and its Sub-Groups; Criminal Justice, Victim and Witness Group and Investigation Standards.

Further suggestions may also be brought to the OPCC outside of these established forums where there is a victim focus, and additional partners may be brought on-board where necessary. Feedback and key issues raised by service providers, such as services commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), will be also considered in identifying topics of engagement.

b) Incorporation in to the Victim Engagement Programme

The topics identified will be considered by the OPCC and, if deemed appropriate for the VEF, engagement activity around that topic will be incorporated in to a Victim Engagement Programme. Details of these decisions will be incorporated in to the planning records to ensure a clear trail of why the specific engagement activity is set to take place.

An engagement topic may be deemed inappropriate if there is an existing alternative and more suitable option for the partner / victim to pursue to seek feedback and a review. For example, the VEF will not provide an avenue for the review of an individual victim's case, as there are existing avenues for them to follow.

The Engagement Programme will detail all aspects of the engagement activity, from timeline to methodology, and will be shared with partners.

Should numerous engagement activities be identified and requested for a specific timeframe, the OPCC will decide which activity should take priority. Consideration will be given to the partner's aim and objectives for the engagement activity, the Police and Crime Commissioner's statutory duties,



Police and Crime Panel scrutiny activity, and partners' Policies and Strategies, such as DPP's Force Control Strategy.

c) Planning

The partner agency will be the specialist in its field, and will be expected to work with the OPCC to identify the objectives and intended outputs for the engagement activity. They will also work with the OPCC to plan for the engagement activity.

The OPCC will advise as to the most suitable engagement methodologies to adopt, and will work with the partner agency to develop the engagement tools, such as survey questions or focus group discussion topics.

The OPCC will be responsible for co-ordinating contact with victims and promoting the engagement activity, with support from the partner agency utilising social media and communications platforms.

d) Engagement activities

It is recognised that not all victims wish to, or are able to, engage with us in the same way. Therefore, we will strive to offer different engagement activities for each topic. These can include:

- A survey sent electronically;
- A survey completed in person;
- A focus group who meet in person;
- An online virtual meeting;
- The sharing of a document or policy by email or through the post, with a request to provide feedback on said document or policy by email, in writing or on the telephone;
- Polls on social media; and
- One to one discussions.

This list is by no means exhaustive and methodology will be adapted to suit the situation.

The OPCC will lead on undertaking the engagement activities. Where necessary, such as for focus groups, partner agencies will be asked to attend / take part in the activity to ensure the appropriate individuals are present to provide victims with the information they require. This will also instil confidence in the victims that agencies are listening to their feedback, sharing it within their organisation and acting upon that feedback.

For each engagement activity, we will set Rules of Engagement, which will assist us in allowing victims to have their say, to interact with one another and ourselves, and in retrieving the information we require. The Rules may vary slightly depending on the activity, but the emphasis will be on the following:

- i. Be polite - We may not all like what is said, but if it's said without obscenity, profanity and is non-threatening, then we're ok with that.
- ii. Be lawful - We will not tolerate discriminatory, hateful or defamatory posts and will act if posts are considered to be unlawful.
- iii. Protect yourself - Please don't post personal details or the names, pictures and personal details of any individuals without their permission.

- iv. Keep it relevant - We will be discussing a specific element of a victim's journey, and there will be future opportunities to share views on other aspects of the criminal justice system.

We respect everyone's right to express their thoughts and opinions, but if contributions don't comply with our Rules, then we reserve the right to delete comments and/or remove members if in a group discussion.

e) Consideration of engagement results

Engagement results will be collated by the OPCC and delivered to the relevant partner agency. It will then be the responsibility of that partner agency to fully consider the engagement results and victim feedback.

f) Updates and feedback

This is a vital stage of the engagement process. We make a commitment to those who engage to keep them updated and involved. Partners will be expected to ensure the provision of information to the OPCC to enable the delivery of this commitment.

Within a set timeframe, the partner agency will be expected to provide updates on action taken, recommendations put in place, and improvements made to victim services as a direct result of the victim engagement. The OPCC will provide details of a feedback process, including timescales and processes for each engagement activity.

Updates will be provided to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and partner organisations at the Local Criminal Justice Board, and in turn, will be fed back to the victims, in order for partners to be held accountable by the victims themselves.

Having taken part in our engagement activity, it is important that victims are informed of how their input has impacted upon service provision. The engagement outcomes will also be communicated more widely as deemed appropriate, for example through press releases and social media posts.

The PCC will scrutinise the work of the VEF, ensuring victims' voices are listened to.

5. PARTNER MEMBERSHIP AND VICTIM DATABASE

Partners involved in the VEF include those who form the Dyfed-Powys Criminal Justice Board, and membership will be widened to other partners where necessary, for example to include third sector organisations and the PCC's commissioned services.

The VEF will not seek a set victim "membership" nor a Panel of victims. We will establish a database – Victim Engagement Database – of victims of crime / ASB (as defined under the Victims' Code), and individuals whom have had someone they are close to fall victim to crime / ASB and supported them through the process.

Each individual on our database will previously have agreed to take part in engagement with the OPCC, linked to the victims' journey.

When engagement activity is due to be undertaken, we will notify all on the database, providing information on the nature of the engagement activity and requesting involvement by those who wish to share their views on the specific topic being considered.

In addition to this, where suitable, we will advertise engagement opportunities publically within our communities, to reach victims with whom we may not have had prior contact.

Where applicable, depending on the engagement topic, the OPCC may also target specific communities within the Force area in promoting the activity. For example, the OPCC may contact residents of a specific location, or those who share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act.

6. FUNDING

Any funding required for engagement activity undertaken by the OPCC in line with the work of the VEF will be covered in the first instance by the PCC. However, there may be a requirement for additional resource or funding to be provided by partner organisations dependent upon the joint priorities and plans agreed for the VEF.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Confidentiality and data protection will be at the heart of all engagement and interaction with victims, and the OPCC will ensure that all relevant paperwork, assessments, and agreements are in place; for example, a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) and Confidentiality Agreements where necessary.

Where individuals wish to contribute anonymously, opportunity to do so will be made available.

8. VERSION CONTROL AND REVIEW DATE

Version:	1
Author:	Hannah Hyde
Approval date:	02/10/2020
Approving Board:	Dyfed-Powys Criminal Justice Board
Review date:	March 2021