

VICTIM SUPPORT

Strategy 2020–2023

Supporting and empowering people affected by crime

We would like to thank Victim Support service users, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders who have helped to develop this strategy.



www.victimsupport.org.uk

About us

What we do

Victim Support is an independent charity. We are dedicated to supporting people affected by crime and traumatic incidents in England and Wales, and we put them at the heart of our organisation.

We provide support

In person

Over the phone

Online



We give specialist help

In addition to our multi-crime services we deliver a wide range of specialist services including those related to:

- homicide
- terrorism
- fraud
- domestic abuse
- sexual violence
- antisocial behaviour
- hate crime.

We champion victims' rights

We are independent of the government, the police, local authorities and the criminal justice system.

We work locally, and recognise, and are responsive to regional priorities but our national overview gives us the ability to share best practice and innovate our services as well as champion victims' rights from a strong evidence base.



Where we are now

Crime has changed

Last year there were still an estimated 10.4 million offences committed¹ – that's about one every three seconds. Crime can affect anyone, and for some people life is never the same again.

The type of crime has changed in recent years with more crime taking place online and a greater proportion of crime causing serious harm.

In 2019 there were:

45,627 instances of knife crime

83,930 instances of robbery

900,000 instances of computer misuse

3.7 million instances of fraud.

Police-recorded crime has increased, partly due to improvements in police reporting, but also as more people have come forward to report previously hidden offences.

In 2019 there were:

746,219 instances of domestic abuse related crimes

73,260 sexual offences where there are data to identify the victim was a child.²

Demand and complexity has increased

There has been an increase in awareness of mental health and wellbeing which has driven demand for universal services, such as multi-crime services. With public services under strain, we have seen an increasingly complex profile of users come to our services with higher risk profiles.

There are significant challenges to overcome

Only **9%** of offences charged or summonsed

6 out of 10 victims do not receive their rights under the Victims' Code

People **do not** feel protected by the police

There is **growing evidence** of the overlap between offenders and victims

Access to independent support is a **postcode lottery**.



1. Office for National Statistics. (2020). *Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2019*. London: Office for National Statistics.

2. Office for National Statistics. (2020). *Child sexual abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2019*. London: Office for National Statistics.

What we want to achieve

Our vision

A world where there are fewer victims, but who have stronger rights, better support and a real influence in the criminal justice system.

Our ambitions

To empower

Through specialist support and advocacy, we will empower more people to move beyond the harm they have experienced and stay safer.

To innovate

Responding to emerging crimes and changing needs, we will develop innovative new services.

To change

Through campaigning, we will effect change to ensure that people have enforceable rights and feel respected by the criminal justice system.



How we will achieve it

We will achieve these ambitions by focusing on four priorities:

Building resilience

Crime can result in trauma, financial loss, physical injury or family breakup.

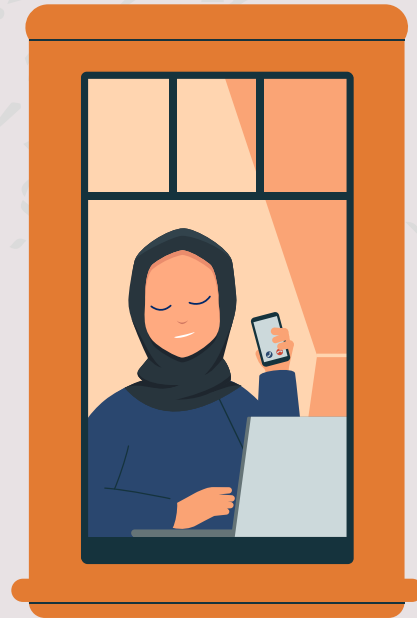
We want to play our part, not only by providing expert help, but also ensuring that fewer people experience the effects of crime.



We will raise awareness of the impacts of crime, both with the general public and with those who commit crime.

We will work with more young people who are involved in or have experienced 'high harm' crimes, and work in partnership to build the resilience of communities most affected by crime and the fear of crime.

We will work with whole families to prevent the escalation of incidents to domestic abuse and offending, and by providing support and equipment to reduce re-victimisation.



Reaching out

Crime is not always reported and those affected do not always engage with a support service.

Young people, people with mental health problems and BAME communities are disproportionately affected by crime.

We will grow awareness of our services through the media, social media and community engagement.

We will increase the capacity of our 24/7 Supportline and we will extend our live chat and online services to build trust with and reach more victims.

We will reach out by locating more of our teams in community locations such as hospitals and local hubs and expand our work with diverse communities to develop culturally appropriate services and resources that better meet their needs.

Adapting to change

Crime is increasingly perpetrated via digital means, and the way people want to, and expect to, interact with our services is changing.

We have to be able to evidence conclusively that the services we deliver and the way that we deliver them results in people achieving better outcomes.

We will continue to develop our knowledge and understanding of the needs of people who have been affected by crime and how to meet these needs.

We will grow our specialist work in emerging crime areas and expand the range of ways which people can contact us and receive our services, including more digital services.

We will ensure our services deliver operational excellence, deliver value for money and focus on approaches which deliver the best outcomes for people who use our services.

Empowering people

Supporting people, while vital and valued, is not enough. There needs to be both a legal and cultural change in how victims' rights are viewed and treated by criminal justice agencies, and they must be legally required to comply.

We will continue to publish our research to influence policy and practice within the criminal justice system.

We will continue to advocate for a Victims' Law which will ensure that victims have key rights enshrined in law, that improvements are made in their experience of the courts and that the Victims' Code is strengthened and broadened.

We will develop an 'experts-by-experience' panel who can speak out publicly for people affected by crime and be advocates for improvements in services and policy development.

We will develop the advocacy skills of our teams to support people using our services so that they can obtain the help they need from the criminal justice system. We will continually upskill them so they have the confidence to drive innovation and help deliver on our strategy.



The way we will achieve it

Our values

EMPOWERING
INCLUSIVE
COLLABORATIVE
INDEPENDENT

Empowering

We work with people to shape the support they receive, develop their resilience and the skills to achieve their rights. Our work is informed by their voice.

Inclusive

We provide equitable and accessible services for everyone and ensure our teams reflect the diversity of the communities we serve. We benefit from the involvement of volunteers and those with lived experience in all aspects of our work.

Collaborative

We work collaboratively with partners to meet the needs of people affected by crime and together we will campaign for system change. We minimise any adverse impact on the environment resulting from our activities.

Independent

We support people and advocate for them in their individual journeys. We speak with an independent voice to campaign for improvements in the criminal justice system.

Join us in making a difference

Crime and its impact affects all of us. Help us to support and empower people affected by crime.

www.victimsupport.org.uk



VICTIM SUPPORT

We are an independent charity offering free, confidential support to people affected by crime and traumatic incidents.

For information and support, contact us by:

- calling: Supportline **08 08 16 89 111**
- using Next Generation Text (add **18001** before any of our phone numbers)
- Online: **victimsupport.org.uk**

To find out how you can help us, visit **victimsupport.org.uk/get-involved**

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Published by Victim Support
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Charity registration: 298028 Company no: 2158780
Registered in England. Limited by guarantee.
Registered office as above.

Contact your local Victim Support:

