

National Audit Office survey of Victim Support Schemes, Areas and Crown Court Witness Services

Survey of Victim Support Schemes/Branches

We undertook a questionnaire survey of the 334 schemes or branches, extant at the time of our examination. We obtained 294 responses, a response rate of 88 per cent.

Survey of Crown Court Witness Services

We undertook a questionnaire survey of all 89 Crown Court Witness Services at the time of our examination. We obtained 82 responses, a response rate of 92 per cent.

Both surveys asked for information on:

- ☐ Referrals
- ☐ Service delivery
- ☐ Volunteers and staffing
- ☐ Relationships with other agencies

The questionnaires were initially piloted in two areas and sent to National Office for comment.

The data from the questionnaire returns were inputted into a SPSS database and then analysed, mainly by frequency and crosstabulation analysis.

The results below show the responses to the quantitative questions. The percentages have been rounded and will not always therefore add up to 100 per cent.

Survey of Area offices

Where schemes, branches and Witness Services are part of an Area, their budget is set and managed by the Area, and attendance at inter-agency groups is often the responsibility of area staff rather than individual schemes. We therefore undertook a questionnaire survey of all 20 Area offices at the time of our examination and asked:

- ☐ which types of local inter-agency groups they were a member of, and
- ☐ what their sources of funding were, including the split between Home Office Funding and other sources.

We obtained 18 responses, a response rate of 90 per cent.

Survey results

Survey of Victim Support Schemes

Section 1 – Referrals

1. How would you rate the effectiveness of the following referral mechanisms in allowing victims to access your services?

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Automatic referral from the police (<i>n</i> =289)	43%	30%	14%	10%	3%
Consensual referral from the police (<i>n</i> =289)	13%	26%	34%	25%	3%
Referral from other agencies (<i>n</i> =290)	6%	32%	47%	15%	1%
Supportline (<i>n</i> =273)	7%	23%	45%	20%	6%
The National Office's publicity in encouraging self referral (<i>n</i> =273)	3%	13%	36%	37%	11%

2. On automatic data referrals, do the police meet the target of referring on victims to your Branch/Scheme within two working days? (*n*=289)

In virtually all cases (over 90%)	39%
In most cases (55-90%)	44%
In about half of cases (45-54%)	8%
In a minority of cases (10-44%)	7%
In no or few cases (less than 10%)	3%

Section 2 – Service delivery

3. Does your Branch/Scheme always initially send a letter, which explains your services, to victims when they are referred to you? (*n*=292)

Yes	46%
No	55%

4. Does your Branch/Scheme visit victims without prior contact by letter or phone? (n=290)

Yes	50%
No	50%

5. Does your Branch/Scheme provide a service to any of the groups below? (n=294)

People bereaved by road death	75%
People suddenly bereaved other than by homicide	51%
Victims of car theft	52%

6. Has your Branch/Scheme undertaken any local initiatives in the last two years to enhance your services to the following groups? (n=294)

Racial and ethnic minorities	62%
Gays and lesbians	36%
Children/schools	46%
Casualty patients in hospital	24%
Those living in high crime areas	40%
Those living in isolated rural areas	18%
Those interested in crime prevention	40%
Victims of domestic violence	80%
Other(s)	28%

7. Has your Branch/Scheme ever carried out a satisfaction survey or participated in an area survey of victims of crime that you have helped? (n=289)

Yes	55%
No	45%

Section 3 – Volunteers and staffing

8. Are the number of volunteers in your Branch/Scheme: (n=292)

too many?	0%
about right?	47%
too few?	53%

Section 4 – Relationships with other agencies

9. Please rate, from your point of view, the quality of your relationships with local criminal justice agencies.

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
The Crown Prosecution Service (<i>n</i> =287)	20%	29%	36%	10 %	4%
The police (<i>n</i> =293)	60%	31%	9%	0%	0%
The Probation Service (<i>n</i> =290)	30%	37%	28%	9%	3%
The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (<i>n</i> =293)	48%	35%	16%	1%	0%

10. Please rate, from your point of view, how well each of the criminal justice agencies meet the standards of service to victims outlined in the Victims' Charter.

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
The Crown Prosecution Service (<i>n</i> =273)	4%	27%	45%	22%	3%
The police (<i>n</i> =279)	11%	37%	38%	12%	1%
The Court Service (<i>n</i> =269)	12%	37%	47%	4%	1%
The Probation Service (<i>n</i> =271)	11%	35%	45%	7%	2%
The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (<i>n</i> =285)	18%	43%	34%	5%	0%

11. Of which types of local inter-agency groups are your Branch/Scheme a member? (*n*=294)

Youth Offending Team	54%
Crime Reduction Partnership	78%
Groups dealing with racist crime	69%
Groups dealing with domestic violence	94%
Groups dealing with sexual crime	30%
Groups dealing with violent crime	33%
Other(s)	48%

Survey of Crown Court Witness Services

Section 1 – Referrals

1. Does your Witness Service receive lists of witnesses attending court (LWACs) in advance from the Crown Prosecution Service or Criminal Justice Units? (n=82)

Yes, all the time	59%
Yes, sometimes	39%
No	2%

2. Does your Witness Service have on the day referral procedures in the court, e.g. a reception point? (n=82)

Yes	94%
No	6%

3. How would you rate the effectiveness of the following agencies in helping witnesses, victims and their families to access your services?

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
The Crown Prosecution Service (n=82)	37%	37%	21%	5%	1%
The Court Service (n=79)	43%	37%	15%	5%	0%

Section 2 – Service delivery

4. In addition to providing a service to prosecution witnesses, does your Witness Service offer a service to the following groups: (n=82)

	Yes	No
defence witnesses	96%	4%
victims who are not witnesses	94%	6%
families and friends of witnesses/victims	100%	0%
accompanying professionals, e.g. social workers	100%	0%
volunteers from other agencies	97%	2%

5. Does your Witness Service have an office in the court? (n=82)

Yes	96%
No	4%

6. Does your Witness Service have separate accommodation available for:

	Yes	No
prosecution witnesses (n=81)	89%	11%
defence witnesses (n=79)	54%	46%
vulnerable/intimidated witnesses, including children (n=80)	90%	10%

7. Has your Witness Service ever carried out a satisfaction survey or participated in an area survey of victims of crime that you have helped? (n=79)

Yes	62%
No	38%

Section 3 – Volunteers and staffing

8. Are the number of volunteers in your Witness Service: (n=80)

too many?	0%
about right?	74%
too few?	26%

Section 4 – Relationships with other agencies

9. Please rate, from your point of view, the quality of your relationships with local criminal justice agencies.

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
The Crown Prosecution Service (n=81)	62%	32%	6%	0%	0%
The police (n=81)	52 %	41%	6%	1%	0%
The Court Service (n=81)	68%	24%	6%	3%	0%
The Probation Service (n=79)	39%	37%	18%	4%	3%

10. Please rate, from your point of view, how well each of the criminal justice agencies meet the standards of service to victims outlined in the Victims' Charter.

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
The Crown Prosecution Service (<i>n</i> =80)	20 %	40 %	34 %	6 %	0 %
The police (<i>n</i> =80)	15 %	49 %	33 %	4 %	0 %
The Court Service (<i>n</i> =80)	20 %	35 %	39 %	5 %	1 %
The Probation Service (<i>n</i> =66)	11 %	53 %			

11. Of which types of local inter-agency group are you a member?

Trials Issue Group	62%
Court Users Group	94%
Area Criminal Justice Strategy Committee	23%
Other(s)	43%

Survey of Area offices

Q1. Of which types of local inter-agency groups are your Area a member? (n=18)

Youth Offending Team	94%
Crime Reduction Partnership	89%
Trials Issue Group	100%
Court Users Group	100%
Area Criminal Justice Strategy Committee	94%
Groups dealing with racist crime	94%
Groups dealing with domestic violence	100%
Groups dealing with sexual crime	61%
Groups dealing with violent crime	33%
Other(s)	67%

Q2. How much funding has your Area received from the Home Office and from other sources?

Area	Income from Home Office 2000-01 (£)	Income from Other sources 2000-01 (£)	Total income 2000-01 (£)	Income from other sources as a % of total income
Avon	162,020	36,636	198,656	18
Bedfordshire	257,477	289,935	547,412	53
Cheshire	66,503	1,380	67,883	2
Cumbria	130,520	34,661	165,181	21
Dorset	152,663	26,890	179,553	15
Greater Manchester	896,816	748,194	1,645,010	45
Herefordshire	35,923	5,345	41,268	13
Kent	89,190	29,654	118,844	25
Lancashire	511,956	79,479	591,435	13
North Wales	180,088	48,885	228,973	21
Northamptonshire	254,823	195,846	450,669	43
Nottinghamshire	318,299	21,776	340,075	6
Oxfordshire	157,673	21,000	178,673	12
Powys	105,122	69,186	174,308	40
Shropshire	71,547	132,101	203,648	65
Somerset	94,617	17,060	111,677	15
Teeside	238,172	200,951	439,123	46
Wiltshire	135,560	120,630	256,190	47