

Dyfed-Powys Victim Engagement Forum

Guidelines and Terms of Reference

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn y Gymraeg
This document is available in Welsh



2023



Heddlu Police
**DYFED
POWYS**



Comisiynydd Heddlu a Throseddu
Dyfed-Powys
Police and Crime Commissioner



Introduction

One of the main duties of a Police and Crime Commissioner is to be the voice of victims, and in this role, I see myself as a local 'Victims' Champion'. The improvement of services provided to victims is one of my main priorities. Victims should be at the heart of everything both the police and local criminal justice services do in our area. Victims' rights must be understood and enacted fully, ensuring effective services which are truly victim-centred.

The Victim Engagement Forum was established in partnership with criminal justice agencies in October 2020. Members of the Forum assist both myself and partners in placing victims at the heart of the criminal justice system. Their views help to ensure that the voice of those with lived experiences influences the development and scrutiny of victims' services.

Collectively, my partners and I 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 need to hear the experiences and views of victims. All victims of crime (as defined under the Victims' Code) and anti-social behaviour, as well as individuals who have supported someone close to them through victims' services, are encouraged to join the Forum and share their feedback through various engagement opportunities.

This could involve completing a survey, providing notes on specific processes, policy or document, or taking part in an online or face-to-face discussion. There is no expectation on the individuals to take part in each and every opportunity; they choose as and when they wish to get involved.



My office co-ordinates the Forum on behalf of my criminal justice partners, and I am proud of the improvements we have made so far in the delivery of services we provide. We continue to provide opportunities for those with lived experience to engage in local discussions about criminal justice priorities and to co-design services. I am thankful to the Forum members for their time and invaluable feedback on a range of different projects and activities over the last few years. Hearing from victims is making a real difference to the services that we provide to the public. Have a look at my Annual Reports to find out more.

The aim of this booklet is to set out the role of the Forum, its members and my office. If there is anything that is not covered here, please just ask. I am really looking forward to continuing the Forum's important work alongside you.

Your sincerely,

PCC Dafydd Llywelyn
Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Commissioner



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What do we mean by victim?

All victims of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB), as well as individuals who have supported someone close to them through vicims' services, are encouraged to join the Forum to share their feedback.

Within the revised 2020 Victims' Code, a 'victim' is defined as:

- A 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 (or a nominated family spokesperson) of a person whose death was directly caused by a criminal offence.



We understand how great harm can also be suffered as a result of ASB and therefore invite victims of ASB to join the Forum too.

Through our engagement to date, we have come to find that some individuals who have been affected by crime would prefer for alternative words to 'victim' to be used, such as 'survivor' or 'injured party'.



When engaging directly with individuals on the Forum, we will endeavour to use their preferred terminology. However, for the purposes of this booklet – our Terms of Reference, we will sometimes refer to Forum members collectively as 'victims'



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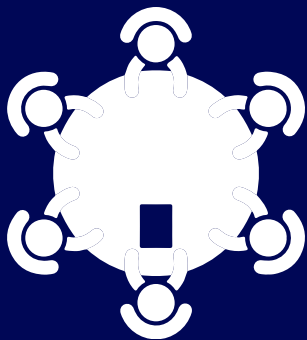
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What is the Victim Engagement Forum?



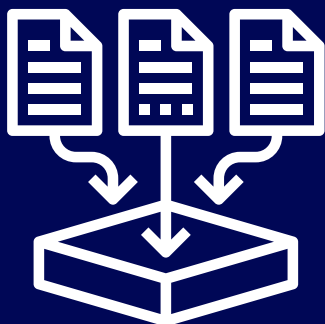
Members of the Forum have all been affected by crime or ASB, or someone close to them has, and each member has agreed to receive information on engagement opportunities linked to improving victims' services.



Members' details are recorded on a Forum Database, accessible only by the team within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Up until 2023, the only information held on the Database for each member was their name and preferred contact details. This was to ensure we were able to provide information on engagement activities to enable members to make an informed decision as to whether they wanted to take part in these opportunities.

From April 2023, the following details will also be recorded on the Forum Database, with members' consent:

- **Name;**
- **Contact details – including telephone, email address and postal address;**
- **Preferred contact method;**
- **Language preference;**
- **Area of residence;**
- **What crime(s) a member is/has been a victim of; and**
- **Demographic information such as age, gender and ethnicity (protected characteristics under the Equality Act).**



Holding such data will enable more targeted engagement in terms of crime types and the locality of services received. It will also enable the Commissioner and partners to assess whether feedback from engagement activity is representative.



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Why is the Victim Engagement Forum Important?

The overarching purpose of the Forum is to ensure that victims have a say in the scrutiny and delivery of an outstanding service for victims. It is vital that engagement through the Forum makes a difference.

The overall aims of victim engagement through the Forum are to:

- Provide suggestions and advice on how victims' services – throughout the Criminal Justice System – can be improved;
- Provide feedback to criminal justice agencies on policies and procedures;
- Provide advice and guidance to ensure victims' services are appropriate, meet victims' needs, and that there are no gaps in service provision;
- Improve victims' trust and confidence in criminal justice agencies;
- Empower victims to instigate improvement;
- Ensure victims can see the difference their involvement in the Forum is making;
- Improve victim satisfaction and any potential disengagement with the criminal justice system; and
- To act as the collective 'voice of the victim'- whilst recognising each person's experience is unique.





How does the Victim Engagement Forum Work?

- The Forum's engagement activities are co-ordinated by the Commissioner's team, with input from partner organisations.
- Engagement activities take place on a quarterly basis – this means once every 3 months, or 4 times within a financial year. Taking this structured approach ensures that both partners and Forum members know when the next request for feedback will be received.
- One-off engagement activities may also take place where victim feedback is required urgently or outside of the quarterly engagement.
- The topics considered through the engagement activities are identified through discussions with partners at forums and meetings which focus on the victim, such as the Local Criminal Justice Board's Victim and Witness Sub-Group.
- Suggestions may be brought to the Commissioner outside of these established forums where there is a victim focus.
- An example of targeted engagement which is a priority area for the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner and Dyfed Powys Police is engaging with victims and survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), which includes Domestic Abuse (DA) and Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO)
- Feedback and key issues raised by victim service providers, such as services funded by the Commissioner, will be also considered in identifying topics of engagement, as will matters identified through scrutiny activity undertaken by the Commissioner's team.
- Should numerous engagement topics be identified and requested for a specific quarter, the OPCC will decide which activities should take priority.
- An engagement topic may be deemed inappropriate if there is an existing alternative and more suitable option for the partner to pursue in gathering feedback.
- The partner agency who requested the engagement activity will be the specialist in its field and is expected to work alongside the Commissioner's team to identify the objectives of the activity. They will also work with the Commissioner's team to plan the engagement activity.
- The Commissioner's team will advise on the best engagement methods and will work with the partner to develop engagement tools, such as survey questions or focus group discussion topics. The Commissioner's team will make contact with the victims, advising them of the engagement activity.



How does the Victim Engagement Forum Work?

It is recognised that not all victims wish to, or are able to, engage with us in the same way. Therefore, we will look to offer different engagement methods for each activity.

These can include:

- Online surveys
- Postal surveys
- Face-to-face surveys
- Online focus group or workshop
- Face-to-face focus group or workshop
- A telephone discussion
- 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; and
- Contact through social media.

This list is by no means exhaustive, and the methods used be adapted to suit the member and the situation.

- The Commissioner's team will lead on carrying out the engagement activities.
- Where necessary, partner agencies will be asked to take part in the activity to make sure the appropriate people and specialists are present, to provide victims with the information and support they require.
- Any funding required for engagement activity in line with the work of the Forum will be covered in the first instance by the Commissioner. However, there may be a requirement for additional resources or funding to be provided by partners
- Engagement results will be gathered by the Commissioner's team and shared with the relevant partner. This may include recommendations as a result of the findings and feedback.
- It will be the responsibility of the partner agency to fully consider the engagement results, victim feedback and recommendations.
- We make a commitment to Forum members to keep them updated and involved throughout the engagement process. Partners will be expected to ensure the provision of information to the Commissioner's team to enable the delivery of this commitment.
- The partner agency will provide updates on any action taken, recommendations put in place, and improvements made to victim services as a direct result of the victim engagement.
- Updates will be provided to the Commissioner and partners at the Local Criminal Justice Board's Victim and Witness Sub-Group.
- Updates will also be provided to our Forum members.
- The PCC will scrutinise the work of the VEF, ensuring victims' voices are listened to

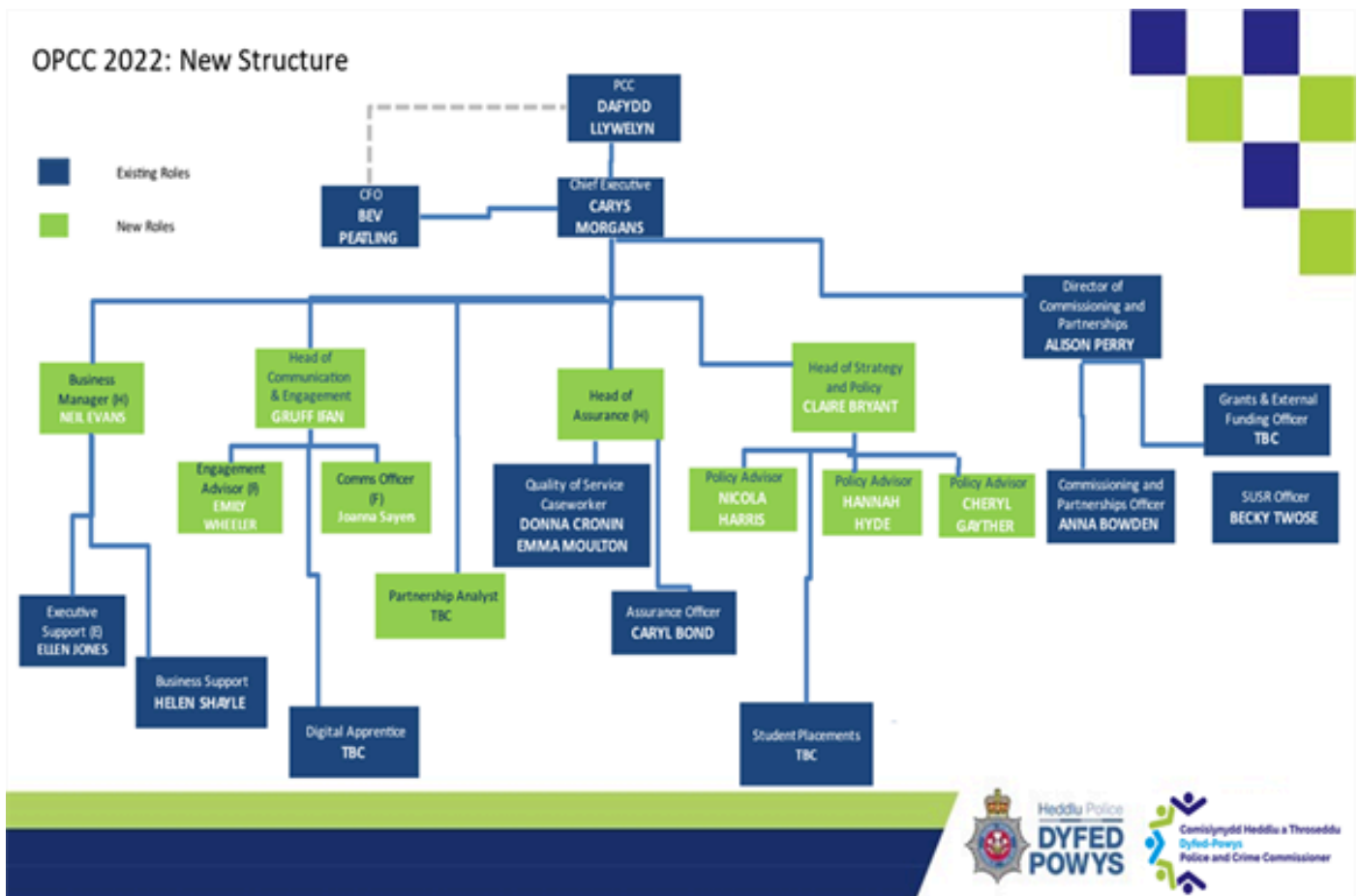




Our Office

You may see us refer to our office as OPCC. which stands for Office of Police and Crime Commissioner.

Here is our latest office structure.



You may hear from a few members of the Commissioner's team, but the Engagement and Communications Team will be in touch most often.





Our Promise

We Promise To.....

- Provide you with all of the details about an engagement activity so that you can decide whether you want to take part.
- Not put any pressure on you to share your feedback and views because we know it can be difficult to talk about your experiences.
- Listen to your opinions.
- Respect you and take you seriously.
- Let you know how we and partner agencies have considered your feedback and ideas.
- Direct you to the relevant support services when you need it.

We Ask You To...

- Let us know if your contact details have changed.
- Let us know if you don't want to be on the Forum anymore.
- Let us know if you are affected by any of the topics you are asked to consider through our engagement with you – we can direct you to suitable support services.
- Do not utilise the Forum as a means to progress, or request updates on, individual cases or complaints.
- Do not report any operational matters to us. We are not the Police. You will need to contact Dyfed-Powys Police. Call 999 in an emergency and 101 for non-urgent policing matters. You can also contact them online: <https://www.dyfed-powys.police.uk/ro/report/>
- Do not share personal or sensitive information during group engagement activities such as focus groups or online discussions. Stay safe.
- 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.
- Be lawful - We will not tolerate discriminatory, hateful or defamatory posts or comments and will act if we consider something to be unlawful.



Communication

We will contact you mainly via email and phone about engagement opportunities.

Please note that we work Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., which means we might not be available outside these hours to respond to any queries or concerns you may have.

As above, our social media accounts are not monitored outside of office hours (9a.m. – 5p.m.) so please do not contact us on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram in an emergency.

If you need to talk to someone urgently or in a crisis, please contact:

Victim Support - Confidential support to victims of crime - 0300 123 2996

Dal i Godi – Mid & West Wales IDVA Service - 01267 221194

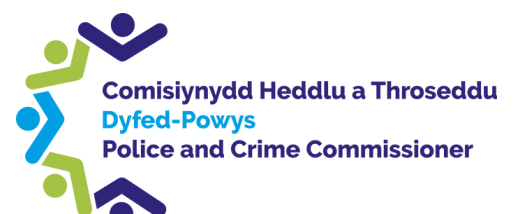
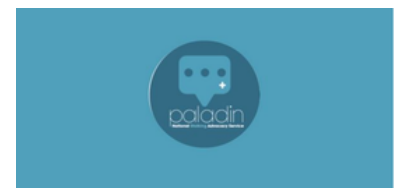
New Pathways - Support service for victims of sexual abuse - 01685 379 310

Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service - www.paladinservice.co.uk

Dyfed-Powys Police – 999



dal i godi
Mid & West Wales IDVA Service
Gwasanaeth IDVA
Nghanolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru





Impartiality and Confidentiality

Confidentiality and data protection will be at the heart of all engagement and interaction with victims, and the Commissioner's team 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.

Become a Forum member

If, having read this document, you would like to become a member of the Victim Engagement Forum, please let us know.



opcc.communication@dyfed-powys.police.uk



01267 226440



Complete our online form by scanning the QR code.



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Victim Code of Conduct and your rights



Victims' Code

All victims of crime in England and Wales have rights:

-  To be able to understand and to be understood
-  To have the details of the crime recorded without unjustified delay
-  To be provided with information when reporting the crime
-  To be referred to services that support victims and have services and support tailored to your needs
-  To be provided with information about compensation
-  To be provided with information about the investigation and prosecution
-  To make a Victim Personal Statement
-  To be given information about the trial, trial process and your role as a witness
-  To be given information about the outcome of the case and any appeals
-  To be paid expenses and have property returned
-  To be given information about the offender following a conviction
-  To make a complaint about your rights not being met

More information about the Victims' Code and your rights can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime

Being a victim of crime can be traumatic. You don't have to deal with it alone. Find out more about the support available at www.gov.uk/get-support-as-a-victim-of-crime



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