

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority Performance Management Committee
16 July 2007

Open for the purposes of FOI

Report of the Assistant Chief Constable Territorial Policing and Justice

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Recommendation(s):

- (i) Members of the Committee note the report.

Introduction

1. The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime was introduced in April 2006 as part of the government programme of reforms within the criminal justice system. The Codes provide victims with the right to receive support and information to help them deal with the affects of the crime plus regular updates throughout the course of the police investigation, court process and post-conviction stage. They pertain to the Police, Crown Prosecution Service, HM Court Service, Witness Care Units, Probation Service, Prison Service and Youth Offending Teams.
2. Developments in providing information for victims locally include the provision of the Victim of Crime leaflet in 15 languages, as an audio version on compact disc, as a recorded information message on a freephone telephone number and in large print booklets. This is in addition to an e-mail template designed to provide those victims who elect to be updated in this manner with information on the progress of the crime together with links to the Victim Support Service and other sources of help and advice.

Compliance

3. Quality of Service Review evaluation – burglary

	October 2006	Jan – Mar 07
Satisfaction with being kept informed of progress of investigation (Target 80%)	79.3%	79.4%
Information of Codes of Practice for Victims of Crime Provided	80.9%	91.8%
Victim kept informed without asking	88%	90.5%

4. Post-arrest contact with victim

	December 2006	March 2007
Crime complaint record indicates victim updated	59%	75%

Future Developments

5. The police crime recording system (CIS) is currently being developed to provide the means by which prompts for victim contact occur, where record of contact is made and as a source of data for compliance evaluation. It is intended to ensure investigating officers are reminded at every stage of their investigation to provide the victim with an update where appropriate.

Witness Charter

6. April 2008 will see the introduction of the Witness Charter, which is the next step in the government's programme of work to raise public confidence in the criminal justice system and support the needs of victims and witnesses.
7. The proposed Charter sets out the services witnesses can expect during the criminal justice process, including:
 - information about the progress of the investigation or court case at key stages of the process
 - tailored support based on individual needs assessment
 - the opportunity to visit the court building ahead of the trial
 - minimising unnecessary attendance and waiting times in court
 - emotional and practical support at court before during and after the trial, particularly in the cases of vulnerable or intimidated witnesses
 - action against intimidation at court and in the community
8. The Constabulary has appointed a project manager to oversee the launch of the Charter, an Inspector who was previously manager of the Victim Codes project.

Contact: for further information

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