



# The Victims' Champions

Michael Banks & Andrea Patterson

# The Victims' Champions - Recap



- ▶ Born from the need to put victims first and provide victim centric services
- ▶ Three Champions approved as part of the Police and Crime Plan - appointed December 2021
  - ▶ Anti-Social Behaviour - Andrea Patterson
  - ▶ Crime - Michael Banks
  - ▶ Domestic Abuse - (Vacant)
- ▶ Attended the Police and Crime Panel 2023

# The Champions Report

- ▶ Report covers the engagement work of all three Victims Champions
- ▶ Highlights the work of the Champions, our findings, achievements to date and provides information to partners for opportunities to change
- ▶ Currently in draft format
- ▶ Will be professionally designed and digitally formatted
- ▶ Inviting the Police and Crime Panel to comment on the report and to note the report

# Key Areas

- ▶ Last year talked about emerging themes
- ▶ Identified three key areas from all victims
  - ▶ Reporting & communication
  - ▶ Investigative and criminal justice process
  - ▶ Victim impact

The Champions have identified concerns and have been working to influence change at a local and National level. Key to this is working with Durham Constabulary and wider partners to introduce change locally.

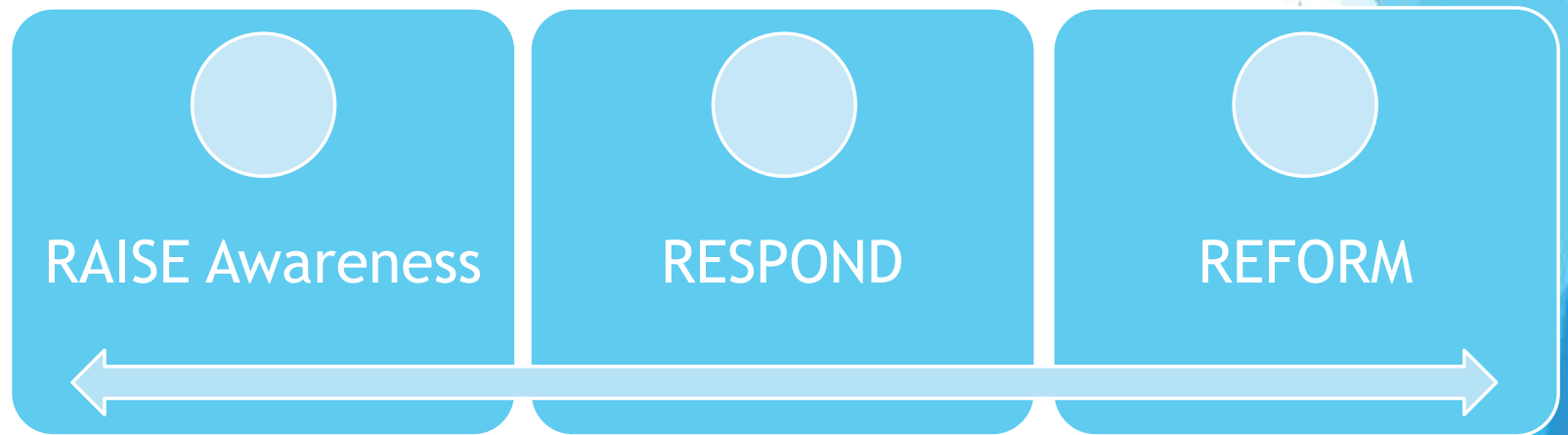
# Achievements

- The introduction of Victim Impact Assessments
- The development of a VCOP compliance tool
- Multi-agency Root Cause Analysis meetings of Victims' Voices case studies
- A referral mechanism from victims via Witness Service at Courts
- Referral mechanisms from victim support organisations
- Commissioned research into over-listing contributing to re-traumatising of victims of rape and serious sexual offences
- Commissioned research into the experiences of people with cognitive disability through the criminal justice system
- Enlisted 'Experts through Experience' as a consultative mechanism
- Enlisted a victim of stranger rape to assist with investigative training

# Achievements

- Joint ASB Strategy
- Three step “Tackling ASB” process adopted by partner agencies
- Interactive signposting tool
- Victim Centric Case Review Process
- Independent Case Review Appeals Process
- Introduced victim vulnerability and impact assessments when not meeting the threshold for case review
- Single Point of Contacts identified by each partner agency to lead on ASB
- ASB Scrutiny Panel Terms of Reference
- Memorandum of Understanding Signed with Housing Providers
- Commissioned victim support through Community Peer Mentors
- Don’t Suffer in Silence Campaign

# The Three R's



# TOP 10 ASKs - Victims of Crime

1. Re-introduce HMCTS Inspectorate.
2. Victim Impact Assessments to be adopted by all CJ agencies and relevant HMG Departments when developing policies, processes, and practises.
3. Specialist RASSO Courts.
4. Review of Court locations so that they are more easily accessible by public transport.
5. Review of court ergonomics and set compulsory standards, e.g., separate entrances for complainant and defendant.
6. Review of Court Listing Policies.
7. Review of expenses payments for Court attendance, so that there are no upfront costs for victims.
8. Victim access to support services at time of need (e.g., counselling waiting lists unacceptable for victims to cope and recover).
9. Extension of s.28.
10. Review of Protection from Harassment Act (so that it has more impact for neighbour disputes).



# TOP 10 ASKs - Anti-Social Behaviour

1. Victims and Prisoners' Bill and the Victims code of practice to include repeat victims of anti-social behaviour
2. Fair funding for Police Forces to allow for greater investment in neighbourhood policing. Funding should take into consideration, rurality, deprivation and need and be based on actual levels of crime and anti-social behaviour
3. Funding to support victims of anti-social behaviour not just crime
4. A single front door for victims to report anti-social behaviour, which can be triaged
5. One National recording system for all agencies, to enable effective case management, early identification of repeat victims, greater intelligence gathering, improved data analysis and effective customer relationship management
6. One National threshold for entitlement to case reviews
7. Legislation to: provide greater powers to landlords; and to make landlords more accountable for their tenants
8. Improved access to public health services for victims i.e. mental health services
9. Improved court escalation processes ie to be much quicker and more robust, so offenders see the consequences of their actions and the victims feel justice is served
10. Introduction of a multi-agency inspection framework for tackling ASB for improved accountability

# TOP 10 ASKs – Domestic Abuse

1. Legal aid for all victims of domestic abuse
2. Ensuring that migrant victims with No recourse to public funds can access domestic abuse services including Refuge
3. Appropriate Funding to ensure victims have access to specialist independent domestic abuse services who can support them all the way through the Criminal Justice Journey including from the point of report to the outcome (whether this be via conviction and sentence or specialist support for victims to request reviews of decisions)
4. Recognition of domestic abuse by NHS – funding to ensure health professionals have specialist domestic abuse training for further opportunities for disclosure and support for early intervention and to prevent escalation.
5. National register for stalking and domestic abuse serial perpetrators.
6. Ensuring all stalking victims have access to a stalking specialist. Stalking is a complex crime, and victims must be supported by specialist advocates who have expertise in the area.
7. Perpetrators of coercive control and stalking to lose parental rights over child where it has been deemed not in the child bests interest to have contact (cannot keep controlling parenting decisions against the child and safe parent's wishes)
8. A specialist training package on coercive control and how to evidence it to be mandatory for all professionals dealing with victims of domestic abuse (including police, CPS, judiciary, children's services etc)
9. All professionals dealing with victims of domestic abuse to have trauma informed training.
10. Review of court ergonomics and set compulsory standards, e.g., separate entrances for complainant and defendant. Video link to be allowed including in Family Court.

# QUESTIONS

Thank you for listening.

Contact Details:

[General.enquiries@durham-pcc.gov.uk](mailto:General.enquiries@durham-pcc.gov.uk)

Tel: 0191 3752001

