

2009-12...

building our future

Foreword

Victim Support has been through a period of huge change over the last two years with the merger into a single charity, the introduction of improved services to victims in the community and the rollout of new management systems.

By any stretch of the imagination that is a great achievement, particularly as we did not lose sight of our purpose of supporting victims and witnesses. In 2008 we supported over 1.5 million victims and witnesses with no drop in services. We should all be proud of our achievement and relish the opportunities that lie ahead as the national charity for victims and witnesses.

It is a testament to the dedication of all our staff and volunteers that this unsettling period of transition has been achieved. It is a truism that change is never-ending. So, for the next three years we will need to build on the recent momentum and continue to improve the organisation and the services it delivers. This corporate plan sets out some of the big themes for the next three years.

Much of the recent change has been the result of a successful working partnership with our principal funder, the Office for Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR). We look forward to continuing that good relationship and developing relationships with a wide range of partners.

As we write this plan the economic outlook is more uncertain than for many years. Victim Support is not immune from that: it makes fundraising harder and it is likely to lead to a greater demand for our services. These next few years will be challenging and we will all need to work together to modernise the organisation still further and hold firm to our purpose of supporting victims and witnesses of crime. Reassuringly we go into this period of uncertainty in a stronger and fitter shape, ready to face the challenges ahead.



Sarah Phillips OBE DL
Chairman of the Board of Trustees



Gillian Guy
Chief Executive



Contents

The role of Victim Support	3
Our values	4
Progress on the 2008-9 plan	5
Planning	6
Governance	10
Priorities for the next three years	12
Excellence	13
Development	17
Leadership	19
Key performance indicators	20

The role

of Victim Support

In our annual plan for 2008-9 we set out the role of the newly-merged Victim Support.

This continues.

Vision

Victim Support strives for a safe and just society in which we all work to reduce the effects of crime and harmful behaviour.

Mission

We will promote the interests of and provide services to support victims and witnesses through our volunteers and staff, through partnerships and referral to relevant help and information. We will ensure consistent standards and value diversity and will be recognised as the national leader in our field.

Ambition

It is our clear ambition to be:

- the national leader in delivering and sourcing the best quality services to victims and witnesses
- a national voice for victims and witnesses – a force for change.

Values

Our values are clear and unequivocal:

Respect

- treat others fairly, demonstrate trust, transparency and honesty
- value and acknowledge every person and the contribution they can make.

Diversity

- celebrate and embrace the differences and potential of all members of society
- make inclusiveness part of everything we do and everything we communicate
- make all our services accessible, relevant and inclusive.

Vibrancy and innovation

- have energy, passion and enthusiasm
- make Victim Support 'the place to be' – exciting and attractive
- be innovative, create ground-breaking solutions and services
- stay ahead of the game
- be agile and creative
- be adaptable and mobilised
- take risks, but manage them.

Commitment and integrity

- know yourself, know Victim Support
- be true to yourself and to our cause
- put principles before profit or profile
- keep your personal and Victim Support identities in harmony
- have clarity of purpose throughout the organisation
- demonstrate honesty, openness and fairness.

Quality and continuous improvement

- achieve the best in everything we do – always for the benefit of victims and witnesses
- be clear about minimum standards
- be driven by quality and continuously seek improvements
- monitor and measure.



Progress

on 2008-9 annual plan

For 2008-9 we set ourselves three high-level priorities:

- to successfully complete the merger of all Victim Support charities across England and Wales – completed on 11 July 2008
- to integrate all functions of the merged charities and create an effective, efficient, well-run national charity – on track
- to roll out Victim Support Plus (VS+) services across England and Wales – completed November 2008.

Some of the other key achievements from 2008-9 include

- introduction of the new Agresso financial management system
- implementation of a new performance management and data collection system
- development of a new national website for launch in the summer of 2009
- raising of our national voice through campaigning work on the Coroners and Justice Bill
- launch of our first national employee opinion survey
- relocation of the National Centre to time and budget.

Planning

assumptions for the next three years

Victim Support is a demand-led service provider: our services are available to everyone and the call for our services is dependent on the level of crime and referrals from the police. Planning for the future can therefore be difficult. Below are the main planning assumptions we are using over the next three years.



Call for our service

Most of the victims we support are referred to us by the police after a crime has been reported. Referral rates have risen steadily over the past ten years, from about 1.1m a year to the current 1.5m a year. Referral rates have tended to increase as areas have introduced the Victim Support Plus business model. We also get self-referrals and are keen to reach out more to those victims of crime who do not wish to report their crime to the police.

As we go to press, the economy is slowing down, which usually leads to an increase in crime, particularly high-volume property crime. All this means that we are likely to see a continuing increase in referrals. Over the next three years we need to become smarter in the way we manage resources so that we can continue to deliver the same high level of service to more people.

Staff and volunteers

We employ some 1,650 people across the organisation. With the exception of those at the National Centre, all were transferred into the single charity on their existing terms and conditions on the usual TUPE basis. Work is under way to design and adopt standard terms and conditions during the period covered by this plan.

Volunteers are central to Victim Support: they are the public face of the services we deliver and provide a valuable way of linking the victim or witness back to the community that has harmed them.

Recruiting and retaining volunteers has become increasingly difficult across all the voluntary sector. We have seen reductions in the numbers of volunteers in our victim service and increases in our Witness Service. We now have a total of 7,000 volunteers, but that tells us little about the amount of volunteer time that we have available to deliver our services.

For the next three years we will therefore develop and implement a volunteering strategy which sets out the different roles of staff and volunteers in the single charity and defines how much volunteer capacity we need (in terms of time) rather than the number of volunteers. This will allow us to match national demand to capacity, rather than simply focusing on the total number of volunteers. We will also focus more on volunteer training and quality assurance so that we can demonstrate the quality of the work that we do with victims and witnesses.

Financial resources

Most of our income, about 75%, comes from the OCJR, part of the Ministry of Justice, to support our core service to victims and witnesses. This is a long-standing arrangement and reflects Victim Support's position as the Government's main supplier of support services to victims and witnesses. The rest of our income we raise mainly from donations and local government income.

In 2008-9 the OCJR grant totalled £37m, of which £7m came from the victim's surcharge levied by the courts on offenders who are fined. We are planning on the basis that these figures remain constant for the next three years, in line with the Government requirement for 3% efficiency savings each year.

To deliver these savings we will develop and implement an efficiency plan so that savings are delivered in a consistent and co-ordinated way across the organisation – and so that savings are clearly identified.

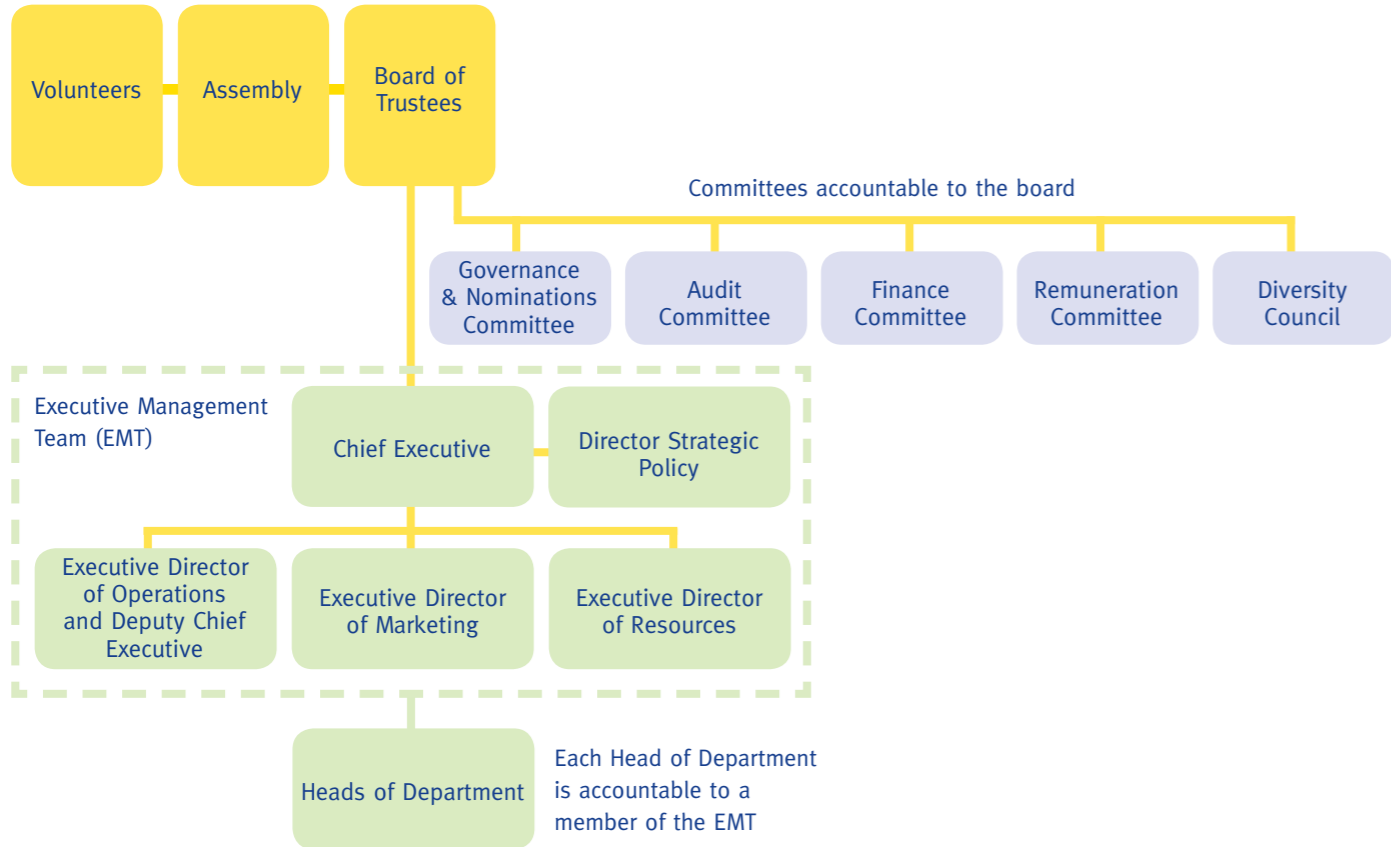
Allied to this we will develop and implement an ambitious fundraising strategy to increase the proportion of non-OCJR income and expand the scale and quality of the services we provide. We will also continue to lobby Government for increased investment to reflect the growth in demand for our services, the likely increase in crime during a recession and to allow us to deliver a better quality service. All this will be challenging in the economic climate as we go to press.

Our main financial assumptions for the next three years are shown below:

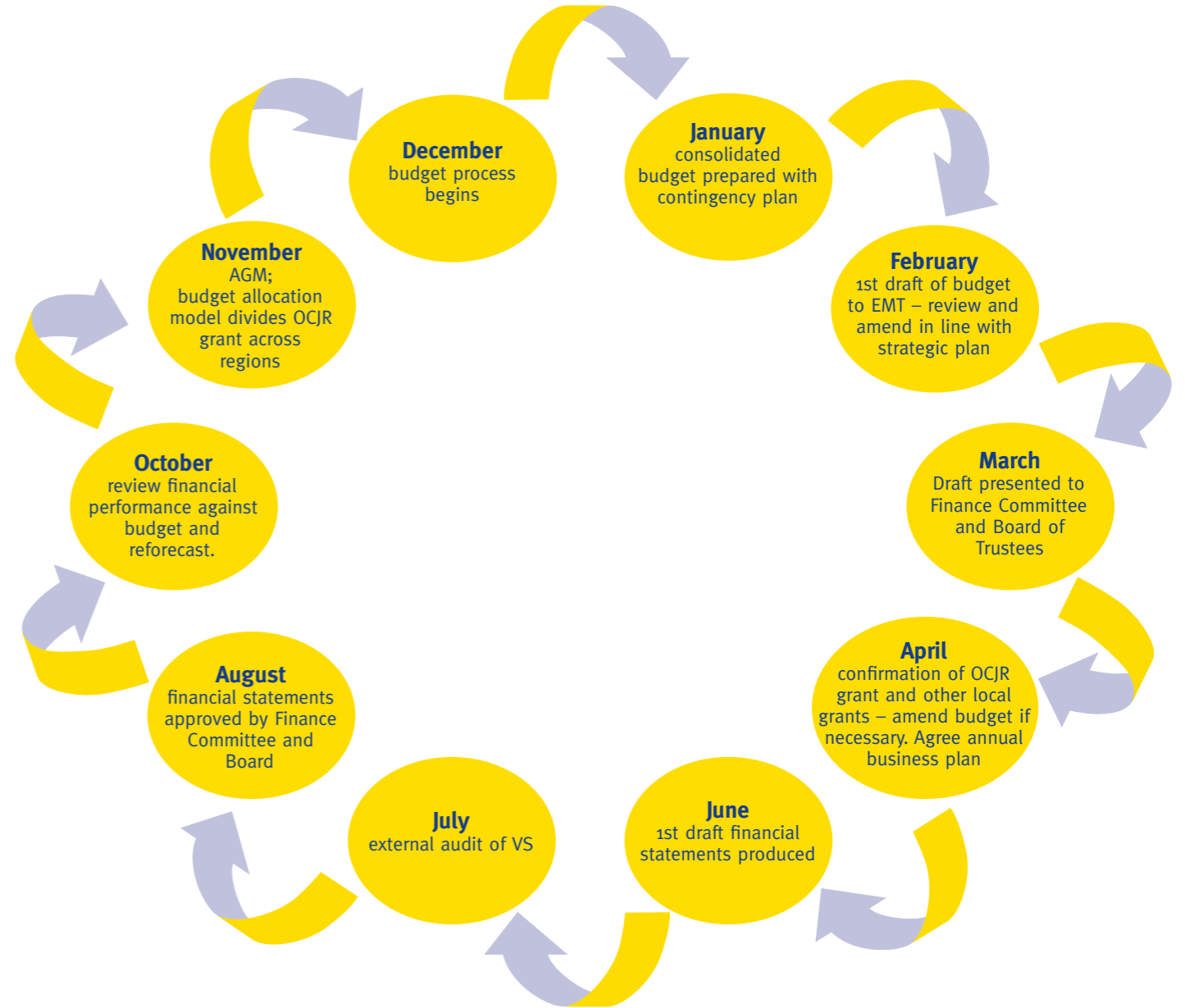
	2009/10 £000s	2010/11 £000s	2011/12 £000s
OCJR grants	37,000	38,000	38,000
Other grants	8,518	8,944	9,391
Donations and activities to generate grants	1,722	2,583	2,712
Investment income	150	225	300
TOTAL INCOME	47,390	49,752	50,403
Governance costs	286	277	269
Administration and management	9,410	7,999	6,799
Policy and public education	900	1,200	1,200
Service delivery to victims and witnesses	37,554	39,056	40,618
Commissioned services	750	1,750	1,750
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	48,900	50,282	50,636
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources	(1,510)	(530)	(233)
Transfers from/(to) reserves	1,510	530	233
Incoming/outgoing resources after transfers	0	0	0

governance

To accompany the merger into a single charity we have implemented a new governance structure to strengthen the role of the Board of Trustees, to increase management of our finances and performance, and to maintain representation from across the organisation in our decision-making.



To support the new governance structure we have also introduced a new annual business planning process to harmonise our annual planning cycle:



Priorities

for the next three years

We are focusing on three headline priorities for the organisation. The thread that runs through all of them is delivering high-quality services to victims and witnesses, combined with building on the new foundations we have laid for the organisation. We want to offer improved services to more people, while making sure that the long-term stability of the organisation is in place. We will also significantly expand our work on being a national voice for victims, representing their views and needs.

Our three priorities are:

Excellence

- to be the national leader in delivering and sourcing the best quality services to victims and witnesses.

Development

- to provide those quality services to more victims and witnesses, and develop new services.

Leadership

- to be a national voice for victims and witnesses: a force for change.

We deal with each of these in more detail in the following sections.

Excellence

Excellence: to be the national leader in delivering and sourcing the best quality services to victims and witnesses

Our services to victims and witnesses

The core of our business is delivering support services to victims and witnesses to a consistent, high-quality standard. Merging into a single charity has given us the foundation for greater consistency. During the last two years we have, in partnership with the OCJR, piloted and rolled out a new approach to delivering tailored support to victims – Victim Support Plus.

Victim Support Plus provides a faster, more effective and more tailored service to victims. We now aim to contact everyone by phone within 48 hours of getting their details from the police. We then carry out a structured needs assessment to agree a package of support, tailored to the victim's particular needs. That can include everything from emotional support given by one of our volunteers to practical support with putting right the effects of the crime, for example replacing locks and doors in a burglary. We are now routinely following up our support to check the service provided and learn how to improve it further.

We want to build on that success over the next three years by bringing greater consistency and quality to all our services through:

- working with the police to reduce the differences in the proportion of victims of crime that they refer to us – so more victims benefit from our services
- maximising the benefits from the Victim Support Plus model in all areas – so we can be sure that we are delivering our services consistently everywhere
- introducing new key performance indicators on the consistency, speed, quality and user satisfaction with our services – so we can demonstrate the value of what we do.

We will continue the modernisation of our services that we started in our victim work. During 2008-9 we began a review of the Witness Service to look at how we could develop its service, bring greater consistency to it and integrate it more closely with our victim services. Over the next three years we will develop a way forward for the Witness Service, taking account of the other agencies that

it operates with – Her Majesty's Courts Service and the Witness Care Units.

We will move towards linking all parts of the organisation with a single business model for how we deliver services, supported by secure transfer of case information and continuity of service – so that the public sees a more seamless approach.

We will modernise and enhance the Victim Supportline so that it is integral to the business model and is a leader in the field of providing phone-based support.

Our people

All of our services depend on our pool of volunteers. As in the rest of the voluntary sector, it has become increasingly difficult to recruit and retain volunteers in sufficient numbers and with the right skills. With that in mind we will, over the next three years, develop and implement a new volunteering strategy with the aim of delivering improved services and making Victim Support a leader in the field of volunteering. It will bring clarity to the

different roles of staff and volunteers and match volunteer capacity and skills more closely to the needs of the organisation. We will support that strategy with a new key performance indicator on volunteer capacity.

We will continue to embed the benefits of moving to a single charity. For example, we will:

- implement a new training strategy to ensure consistent, high-quality training for all our staff and volunteers.
- move towards achieving Investors in People accreditation for the whole organisation.

Our systems

To support the delivery of our front-line services to victims and witnesses, we will continue the modernisation of the infrastructure that we began with the merger into a single charity.

During 2008-9 we introduced new systems for finance, performance management and a single database for Victim Support Plus. Over the next three years we will realise

the benefits of these systems through better management of our finances and performance, and greater clarity on the costs and benefits to victims and witnesses of our services. This will also allow us to better match our fundraising to the level of service we want to provide.

Our resources

As we go to press, the economic situation is much tougher than in recent years. Fundraising is likely to become harder and public spending might become tighter. We therefore need to plan to live within our means – and be ready to make savings if necessary, while trying to maintain service standards. We will also implement a new budget allocation model so that our resources are distributed more fairly across the organisation, with a stronger link to the workload.

We will therefore introduce a detailed efficiency plan to ensure that not only are we constantly improving our efficiency, but that we are doing so in a rational, planned and consistent way that protects the services we provide. We will support this

with new key performance indicators on reducing the costs of referrals year-on-year and growing our income (particularly our non-OCJR income).

Our partners

Victim Support does not – and cannot – operate in isolation. We have to work closely with other agencies in the criminal justice system, with government and with other parts of the voluntary sector. We will continue to work closely with our current partners and affiliated organisations.

Over the next three years we will grow and develop our partnerships so that:

- we are working with other voluntary sector organisations who share our goals, so that our voice is heard more loudly in Government and the media
- we are seen as a player of equal weight in the criminal justice system, allowing us to make sure that the needs of victims and witnesses are not overlooked

- we use our new position as a national charity for victims and witnesses to lead the agenda on improving services for victims and witnesses
- we act as the universal entry point for support and that we are confident in referring victims to the best-equipped organisation, whether or not that is Victim Support.



Development

Development: to provide those quality services to more victims and witnesses, and develop new services

No organisation can survive without growth and development. Victim Support itself has grown from its small, local beginnings into the national charity for victims and witnesses. Over the next three years we must continue that spirit of growth and development.

The tougher economic outlook means that we need to be rigorous in planning growth and development. When we are developing new services or initiatives we must be able to show not just the benefit but also how we will fund them, whether that is through new funding or efficiencies elsewhere. Being more business-like in our planning and use of resources is not an alternative to being a charity – the two should go hand in hand.

Our services

We want to build on our current range of services by increasing our expertise in the following areas:

- homicide
- hate crime
- domestic violence
- knife and gun crime
- supporting vulnerable and intimidated victims
- supporting young victims.

Linked to this, we will become much more responsive to emerging crime problems (such as fraud and internet crime) so that we are ready to be part of the solution and provide support to victims.

We also need to plan ahead for our role in major events, such as the 2012 Olympics, and in major civil emergencies such as terrorism. Such events are a significant challenge for Victim Support, but we need to be ready to play a full and high-quality

role – with clarity about what that role consists of.

Our resources

We have already touched on some of the resource challenges that we face for the next few years. As a single charity we need to take charge of our own resourcing and actively grow it. While we have a substantial financial relationship with the OCJR we need to bolster our wider financial position.

Fundraising needs to become embedded across the organisation so that we maximise our income and minimise our reliance on a small number of funding sources. We will therefore develop and implement a challenging fundraising strategy for the entire organisation which will aim to:

- grow both our total and non-OCJR income year-on-year in real terms so as to reduce our reliance on a small number of major funders
- benchmark our fundraising against similar-sized organisations

- make better use of the fundraising skills of trustees, staff and volunteers
- use a wider range of fundraising techniques than currently, for example building up a large supporter base with the general public
- grow our contractual income for specific services
- link fundraising into our wider marketing and communications strategy
- clarify our relationship with and approach to local, regional and national fundraising.

Our profile

As a single charity we now have the opportunity to really raise the profile of Victim Support and increase the public's understanding of our work. This is an essential part of enabling victims and witnesses to have confidence in our services. It is also central to our fundraising work. We will therefore develop and implement a communications and marketing strategy to raise our profile, and increase public awareness and understanding of Victim Support and its work.

Leadership

Leadership: to be a national voice for victims and witnesses (a force for change)

Part of our ambition is to be a national voice for victims and witnesses and a force for change. Our move to a single charity gives us the ability to put flesh on the bones of the ambition and strengthen our voice. In doing this we will take account of the shifting landscape on representing victims' views, particularly the Government's Victims' Advisory Panel, the Victims' Champion and the proposed Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses.

To develop this we will over the next three years:

- roll out across the country a new network of regular consultation events with the users of our services so that we gather their views on our work. This will also allow us to hear their experiences of other local criminal justice agencies and their views on major national proposals and initiatives to do with victims and witnesses

- campaign more visibly for improvements to the experience of victims and witnesses, based on the real evidence that we gather from the consultation events. We will begin with campaigns on the Coroners and Justice Bill, fraud and young victims of crime
- use our national status to speak with authority as a national voice of victims and witnesses
- become the first port of call for information on victims and witnesses for the media and other opinion-formers.

We will also develop a high-profile network of supporters and ambassadors of Victim Support. Their role will be to help promote our work, raise our profile, bring in funding and, most importantly of all, highlight the needs of victims and witnesses to a larger audience.

Key performance indicators for 2009-10

Indicator 1:

Quality and consistency of service

Quality measured by:

For our victim work:

- 100% of referrals attempted to be contacted by telephone
- minimum of 50% of referrals should be successfully contacted by telephone and a needs assessment carried out within 48 hours of receiving the referral
- 65% of referrals should be successfully contacted by telephone and a needs assessment carried out
- contact at least 10% of victims supported to quality control the service.

For the Witness Service, to increase year-on-year:

- the number of pre-trial visits that take place before the day of the trial
- the number of defence witnesses supported
- the number of vulnerable and intimidated witnesses supported.

Consistency measured by:

- maintaining and seeking to increase year-on-year victim satisfaction with the service provided by Victim Support Plus and the Witness Service (both services measured separately)

Indicator 2: Development

Measured by:

- increasing year-on-year total victim referrals and as a proportion of BCS crime
- increasing year-on-year total witness referrals and as a proportion of total witnesses.

Indicator 3

Cost of service

Measured by:

- cost per referral (across both services combined) falling year-on-year in real terms with both services showing a downwards trend.

Indicator 4

Income generation

Measured by:

- overall income growing in real terms year-on-year
- proportion of non-OCJR income growing year-on-year.

Indicator 5

Volunteer capacity

Measured by:

- total volunteer capacity year-on-year, measured by volunteer time and training to an appropriate level.

Indicator 6

Public awareness

Measured by:

- increasing the proportion of the general public that have heard of Victim Support and its work.

Indicator 7

Voice for victims and witnesses

Measured by:

- number of victims and witnesses that Victim Support consults on its service and wider policy issues at regular intervals, with that number growing year-on-year.



**Victim Support is the national charity
for people affected by crime**

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