

## Victim Engagement Forum

### Terms of Reference

This document defines the terms of reference for the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Victim Engagement Forum including purpose, scope and governance.

#### Purpose:

The role of the PCC is to be the voice of the people, provide the link between police and communities. They have a general duty to regularly consult and involve the public.

The PCC already consults with public through social media, parish focus groups, and her Talk Sussex events ([SPCC - Events & surveys \(sussex-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://sussex-pcc.gov.uk)).

Within the Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024 ([SPCC - Police & Crime Plan \(sussex-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://sussex-pcc.gov.uk)) Public Priority 3 is around supporting victims and safeguarding the vulnerable. As part of this priority, it includes ensuring the voice of the victim is placed at the centre of funding and service decisions. The Victim Engagement Forum has been created to respond to this.

#### Definition:

A 'victim' has been defined as per the Victims Code of Practice ([Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales \(Victim's Code\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)).

The Code acknowledges that the terms 'complainant' and 'survivor' are often used in the criminal justice system to describe a person who has made a criminal allegation to the police. However, for the purpose of this Code, the definition of a 'victim' is:

- a person<sup>[footnote 2]</sup> who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss which was directly caused by a criminal offence<sup>[footnote 3]</sup>
- a close relative<sup>[footnote 4]</sup> (or a nominated family spokesperson) of a person whose death was directly caused by a criminal offence.

### **Victim Engagement Forum Scope:**

The overarching purpose of the Victim Engagement Forum is to ensure the voice of the victim is collated and utilised in all of PCC's work.

Engagement will be utilised to:

- Help the PCC commission the right services, ensure they are appropriate, what is needed and are accessible
- Hold the Police to account on victim experience and how it can be improved, feedback on any disengagement or reasons for not wanting to go through the Criminal Justice System (CJS)
- Provide better oversight of the Victims Code of Practice requirements which the PCC has been given the responsibility of monitoring
- Where appropriate, provide consultation to other statutory and non-statutory partners

### **Governance:**

The Victim Engagement Forum will be overseen and coordinated by the office of the PCC, with overall oversight by the PCC. Partner organisations will be invited to input, where appropriate, for different engagement topics.

### **Process:**

#### **Joining:**

Victims will be invited to join up to the forum through Talk Sussex, PCC Newsletter, Social Media, and victim support providers client engagement.

Those who are interested in joining will then be contacted to provide more detail about the forum and what it entails and to find out the below:

- Name
- Email Address
- Local Authority area
- Demographic information *if* the member consents
- How long ago their victim experience was (only those who have been a victim within last few years will be 'approved' to join due to the constant change in CJS landscape).

These details will then be held on a spreadsheet that is locked by password only held by relevant members of the PCC office.

At any time, should they want their details to be removed, they can contact the PCC office ([commissioning@sussex-pcc.gov.uk](mailto:commissioning@sussex-pcc.gov.uk)) and these will be removed.

### **Identification of topics and process for engagement:**

The topics for engagement activity will be identified through discussions with partners and services, and also through analysis of various data (Sussex Police, Local Needs Assessment data, victim services monitoring).

Once a topic has been identified and has been considered as appropriate for the Victim Engagement Forum, the process for engagement will be decided.

This can be:

- Questionnaire/survey
- Focus group/virtual consultation
- Sharing of information for feedback via email

When a member responds to an engagement process, they will be consenting for this to be shared where appropriate. For how feedback is recorded for sharing, please see the relevant section. For focus groups/virtual consultations an ask will go out to all members first to ask who would like to engage.

Due to a potential crossover with Sussex Police Victims Advisory Group, where appropriate, the Citizens Focus Team will be engaged with in the first place to decide on best way to take forward. If it is best placed to sit within the engagement forum, the PCC office will take the lead.

On occasion, those within certain areas or demographics may be contacted specifically in relation to a specific topic.

### **Out of scope:**

The following are considered out of scope for the Victim Engagement Forum and will not be part of discussions or engaged over:

- Individual cases
- Individual complaints of CJS journey
- Complaints around services currently commissioned

These all have their own specific processes that must be followed.

### **Recording and sharing of engagement:**

Comments/feedback will not be saved in a way that is relatable to an individual member of the forum.

- Survey/questionnaire data will be collated and analysed.
- Focus groups/consultations will utilise a note taker to record main topics of discussion and feedback.
- Documentation review will be qualitatively analysed.

All recordings will be kept in a folder within the PCC shared drive for that particular engagement topic and session. These will be dated so can be deleted in line with data protection regulations.

As data will be recorded anonymously, once a member has engaged there will not be a way to delete their data. Therefore it will be made clear to members that engagement will be seen as consent for their feedback and comments to be utilised and shared.

Engagement findings will be shared with/at the following (where appropriate):

- Victim and Witness Group (PCC office chaired)
- Sussex Criminal Justice Board (PCC chaired)
- Sussex Police
- Residents through newsletters/social media postings
- Local services through Safe Space Sussex Funding Network
- Other statutory services as appropriate.

When the Office of the PCC is able to let forum members know of any direct actions or changes that have been made following their engagement, this will be done at the first opportunity to retain engagement and interest.

### **Rules of engagement:**

- Obligation- There is no requirement to engage. If a member does not want to, they are free to stop at any time
- Relevancy- Feedback and engagement will only be collected when it is relevant to the topic raised and in line with the terms of reference of this group.
- Polite- All members are asked to be polite and to respect one another's views. Hateful, discriminatory or rude comments will not be tolerated, and the member will be asked to leave.
- Safe- Engagement will be done in the safest possible way. Members are asked not to state any personal details about themselves or others.

If engagement is done in a way that the office of the PCC feels is not in line with this terms of reference then we reserve the right to remove the comments from feedback collation and/or remove the member from that discussion/forum.

**Confidentiality and Data Protection:**

Confidentiality and data protection will be at the forefront of all engagement. The OPCC will ensure that all processes are in place to ensure data is held in a confidential way in line with Data Protection Regulations.

Data protection will be in line with the Sussex PCC Data Protection Policies ([SPCC - Data Protection \(sussex-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://sussex-pcc.gov.uk))