

Victim contact procedure

The allocation email will inform the VLO as to when a young person has received a court order (RO, YRO, DTO). The VLO must check each case to ascertain if there was a direct victim involved.

For ROs, YROs and PSRs where victims are involved, the VLO will fill out a victim referral template and sends it to YOT police who will then send it back with the victim details. The police will then send a standard letter to the victim informing the victim that VLO will be contacting them by phone. This must be sent within 5 working days and the Police will record that this has taken place on Careworks. The details of the victim must be held separately to that of the young person who committed the offence.

The VLO must familiarise herself with the case summary and any relevant offender information prior to contacting the victim. The VLO must make contact with the victim and attempt to secure an assessment meeting within 10 working days of the sentence being passed. The VLO will contact the victim by phone to arrange a meeting either at their home address or a neutral venue and to establish whether additional support is required i.e an interpreter.

The VLO will need to make contact by phone twice, once in the day and once in the evening. If contact has not been made by phone, a letter and victim information leaflet is sent asking the victim to contact the VLO. If victim is willing to meet, the VLO will meet with the victim to explain restorative justice, the various R J options and to give them an information leaflet with a contact telephone number. The VLO will complete an R J assessment and attach this to the paperclip.

In the event that the victim does not respond in any way then the VLO will note this and revisit the contact within a reasonable period of time if this course of action is deemed appropriate.

If the VLO is meeting with the victim in their home, a form 141a will have to be completed and sent to the police for the address to be cleared. The VLO will need to follow the Home Visit procedure in full. The form 141a can also be utilised in the event that the VLO is meeting the victim in the Community.

For referral orders, if the VLO meets with the victim prior to the referral order panel, then the victim should be asked if they wish to attend the RO panel , or if they would prefer for the VLO to act as a representative on their behalf and read out a statement. If the victim does not want to attend the initial panel, they can be offered the opportunity of attending a review panel or the end panel.

If the victim does not want to meet with VLO, the victim should be asked if he/she would be willing to answer some RJ questions by email or if they could be contacted at a later date.

Options following the meeting:

Victim may decline further involvement

Victim wants indirect RJ

- shuttle mediation – questions from victim put to young person and responses taken back to victim. This can be conducted on more than one occasion and supported by the VLO
- the impact on the victim is passed on to young person's officer and this is used in victim empathy work with the young person

- a letter of explanation or apology is requested by victim. This can be completed with the support of the VLO
- victim is informed of reparation (paying back to the community) and updated as to whether it was successfully completed or not
- victim is entitled to receive information of how the young person is progressing on their order and details of whether the order was completed successfully. This should only be sent if the victim has requested the information.

Victim wants direct reparation

VLO will discuss options with victim then liaise with reparation officer re feasibility. Health and Safety considerations, as well as those of confidentiality must be taken into account.

Victim wants direct RJ

This can only go ahead if the young person is willing to meet with the victim and visa versa. If this is the case, RJ assessments need to be completed for all of those taking part in the meeting to ensure that all parties are ready for this type of intervention and that the victim will not be re-victimised. The VLO will organise the RJ conference including suitable venue and refreshments, ensuring that the victim has private space. The RJ conference should aim to lead to an agreement being signed which is then passed on to the young person's officer to support the fulfilment of any of the terms identified.

RJ principles and codes of conduct in terms of practice must be adhered to.

Serious offences where custody was the outcome

If the offence resulted in the young person receiving a custodial sentence of 12 months or more then the VLO must liaise with the YOT officer and the victim support unit prior to making contact with the victim. In many cases it may be advisable for joint visits to take place. The VLO must be fully informed about MAPPA guidance and recommendations at all times.

It is likely that any case resulting in a custodial sentence was following the commissioning of a serious offence and therefore these cases need to be managed with extra sensitivity. The VLO should be fully briefed in the circumstances and work within a multi-agency framework.

If deemed suitable, the VLO can assess the young person whilst he/she is in custody in order to facilitate other forms of RJ.

Assessing young people

The VLO will meet with all young people whose offences involve a victim. The VLO must familiarise herself with the young person's case summary and ASSET assessments, including any learning, special educational needs or language considerations. The VLO must then discuss the victim with the YOT case holder prior to making contact with the young person. The VLO must discuss any risk related concerns prior to organising the assessment.

A copy of the assessment must be kept on the paperclip and a full account of the young person's engagement logged on Careworks contacts.

Recording

All contacts with the victims and young people should be entered on careworks and their assessments should be attached to the paperclip.

The Excel spread sheet needs to be maintained at all times.

Victim Satisfaction

The views of the victim in relation to the process should be sought at the end of each intervention. The victim satisfaction questionnaire should be sent to the victim, with a stamp addressed envelope in order to support its return.

The information should be collated on a spread sheet which is then evaluated every six months.