

NPCC Victim & Witness Portfolio

Victim Portal Guidance/Policy

Purpose

This national guidance outlines the recommended approach and principles for using digital portal capabilities to engage with vulnerable victims. It encourages forces to extend digital two-way communications to all victims, including those with vulnerabilities or higher risk, and aims to support consistent, informed risk management and mitigation across forces. Forces must always ensure that victims are not put in danger of further harm through the use of a portal.

Intended readership includes Heads of Public Contact, Leads for Digital Policing and Force leads for victims and witnesses.

Introduction

The Victims' Code entitles victims to receive timely updates from the police as investigations progress, including mandatory notifications (e.g., arrest, release, bail changes) and the victim's preferred frequency and method of contact. Communication methods have evolved, with most of the public now having access to digital channels such as email, text and multiple apps.

Recent surveys highlight dissatisfaction with police communication, with 46% of respondents feeling inadequately informed about investigations. Improving digital contact and procedural justice, including two-way communication, can enhance satisfaction, trust, and confidence in the police.

In 2025, the College of Policing published an [evidence-based guide](#) which provides a high-level overview of research on confidence and satisfaction with the police.

National Digital Public Contact Programme

Several forces have adopted technological solutions such as My Police Portal enabling victims to receive automatic, personalised updates via their preferred communication channel. Victims can communicate directly with their case officer and self-serve information through the portal. From contact to closure, victims contacting police can receive automatic updates with key information such as their crime number, crime prevention advice and guidance, case progression and how to obtain support from partners including locally commissioned victim support services. This approach improves efficiency, public contact and satisfaction, and supports compliance with the Victims' Code.

In collaboration with DPC, the forces who have been deploying new contact management capability including police portals to date are:

- TVP / Hants

- Durham
- Humberside
- Humberside Witness Care (post charge)
- Merseyside
- Staffordshire
- Sussex

Benefits identified include:

- Improved access and convenience for the public.
- Greater accessibility to staff, regardless of shift patterns.
- Increased compliance and public satisfaction.
- Staff morale improvements.
- Capacity savings and reduced call volumes.
- Time savings for both the public and officers.
- Consistent national service delivery.

The National Portal aims to provide an end-to-end, two-way digital experience, supporting direct, timely, and meaningful interactions between the public and police. It is envisioned as the 'digital front counter' and will form the foundation for future automated services.

Expansion to Further Crime Types and Victim Cohorts

Early adopters wish to expand the portal to cover more crime types, including those involving vulnerable victims (e.g., Domestic Abuse, Rape and Serious Sexual Offences). Victim safety is paramount with the onboarding process involving a human element rather than automation with each victim considered as an individual and suitability decided on a case-by-case basis providing the victim with a choice of whether or not they wish to engage with the solution.

Principles for Portal Use

The following principles have been established to guide forces in relation to portal risk and management responsibilities:

1. Service Improvement: Portal use must enhance service to all victims, considering their individual needs.
2. Inclusivity: The portal should be available to as many victims as possible, prioritising vulnerable victims and high-risk crimes, while managing risk appropriately.
3. Risk Management: Do not assume digital engagement is unsafe for vulnerable victims; in some cases, it may be safer.

4. Safeguarding: Digital engagement should be considered alongside broader safeguarding plans. If digital contact is unsafe, alternative engagement methods must be included in the relevant safeguarding plan.
5. Force Responsibility: Each force is responsible for assessing and managing portal use risk, including for vulnerable groups such as children and young people.
6. Risk Assessment: Portal use risk should be assessed within the overall force risk management for vulnerable victims. Digital engagement may mitigate some existing risks.
7. Feedback: Forces should consider how victims provide feedback on the service they have received so any concerns can be flagged, reviewed and acted upon as appropriate.

Recommended Approaches for Onboarding Vulnerable Victims

The following suggested approaches have been identified, based on successes in early adopter forces, to guide forces onboarding the victim portal capability for vulnerable victims. Forces should:

- Provide a “Leave Site Quick” exit button for safety.
- Use multi-factor authentication for registration/login.
- Allow victims to control notification preferences (e.g., text/email alerts), with default settings prioritising safety.
- Use neutral language (e.g., ‘incident’ instead of ‘crime’ or ‘DA’) to protect victims if correspondence is seen by perpetrators.
- Send alerts ahead of national government text alerts to accommodate victims with extra or concealed phones.
- Implement enhanced monitoring and data quality checks during initial rollout.
- Ensure that a No Further Action (NFA) decision in Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) cases is communicated by the OIC if safe and practicable to maximise victim understanding and victim care.
- Encourage national sharing of learning and best practice as portal use expands.

Governance and Local Policy

The NPCC Victim & Witness Portfolio, NPCC Centre for VAWG, DPC and forces have collaborated to define these principles and approaches. Forces are responsible for using these national principles to inform and develop their own local policy and practice.

Forces consider communications from public to police (crime reports, witness statements or information provided) to be considered disclosable as per CPIA – communications received via portal are stored in the force RMS and would fall under force process for management including relevant disclosure.

The NPCC Victim and Witness Portfolio will continue to engage with forces to reflect on any ongoing learning and ensure all relevant documents/guidance are updated appropriately and regularly.

Approved by:

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