

Victims & Witnesses



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In July 2002, the Government published the White Paper “Justice for All” which promised to put victims and witnesses at the heart of the Criminal Justice system: ensuring that they see justice delivered quickly and more often.

It indicated that victims would be supported and kept informed, while at the same time empowering them to give evidence in a secure environment. The aim of the white paper was to redress the balance in favour of victims, witnesses and communities and to deliver justice for all by building greater trust and credibility.

In Blackpool, dissatisfaction was expressed with the ability of the Police to keep victims / witnesses informed on progress of criminal cases.

These complaints were :

- Between providing their statement and attending court the witness / victim had little or no contact with the Police
- The witness/victim had not been informed of the existence or cancellation of bail conditions
- Messages left for Police Officers to contact them were not answered.

Implementing solutions to these problems, required considerable resources, with problems existing in obtaining data from court systems.

In order to address some of these issues, a victim liaison unit was created at Blackpool Central Police Station and was formed in co-operation with the Victim Support organisation.

The unit offers telephone advice to the victims of violent crime, burglary and robbery, giving details of arrests, hearing dates at court, bail conditions, sentences imposed, advice on the criminal justice system and liaisons with other agencies.

Volunteers help resource the unit, helping to increase public satisfaction and confidence in the Lancashire Constabulary, raising the profile of victim support and increasing the number of referrals to the Victim Support Service.

Victim support in Blackpool actioned 9717 cases, which was by far the greatest number of victims dealt within any area of Lancashire.