

Victims and Witnesses Strategy

2026



West
Yorkshire
Policing
& Crime

Tracy
Brabin
Mayor of
West Yorkshire



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Mayor's foreword

As Mayor of West Yorkshire, I am responsible for setting the strategic direction for policing and crime in West Yorkshire, and for commissioning vital services for victims, survivors and witnesses. Working closely with our Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Alison Lowe OBE, I oversee West Yorkshire Police and set priorities through our Police and Crime Plan. Together, we work with partners across the region to deliver a public health approach to reducing crime and harm.

In my first term, we made real progress towards a safer, fairer and more inclusive West Yorkshire. Supporting victims and witnesses has always been central to that work. This strategy builds on that foundation, setting out a clear vision for the next four years and reaffirming our commitment to those affected by crime.

We have invested in frontline policing, recruiting 895 additional officers and staff and secured national funding to tackle anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood crime and violence against women and girls. A significant achievement was the launch of our dedicated Women's Safety Unit on International Women's Day 2024 – the first of its kind in the country.

Through the Local Criminal Justice Board, we are working with partners to improve support for victims and witnesses and strengthen the effectiveness of the wider justice system. At the same time, we remain focused on driving continuous improvement in policing performance across West Yorkshire.

Listening to communities throughout this process has been vital. We engaged widely across West Yorkshire, speaking to residents, community groups, local leaders and, crucially, victims and survivors to ensure every voice was heard. 95.7% of respondents said supporting victims and witnesses was important to them and 92% of partners agreed. This strategy is a direct response to those voices.

While the Police and Crime Plan sets our direction, we must remain agile and responsive to a changing landscape. As a Mayoral Combined Authority, our devolved powers give us the flexibility to meet local needs and create new opportunities. This strategy reflects that – and shows our continued commitment to putting victims and witnesses at the heart of everything we do.

Tracy Brabin, Mayor of West Yorkshire



The following links provide further detail around the consultation and engagement that has taken place in relation to this strategy:

- [Voice of West Yorkshire Report](#)
- [Summary Needs Assessment](#)

Why supporting victims, survivors and witnesses is a priority

The consultation for the Police and Crime Plan shows that people want us to improve how the criminal justice system works and to make sure victims of all crimes get the support they need.

24% of people who responded to the consultation said that they had been a victim of crime in the past year. They want the criminal justice system to put victims first, improve services and deliver better outcomes for victims of domestic abuse and rape or sexual offences.

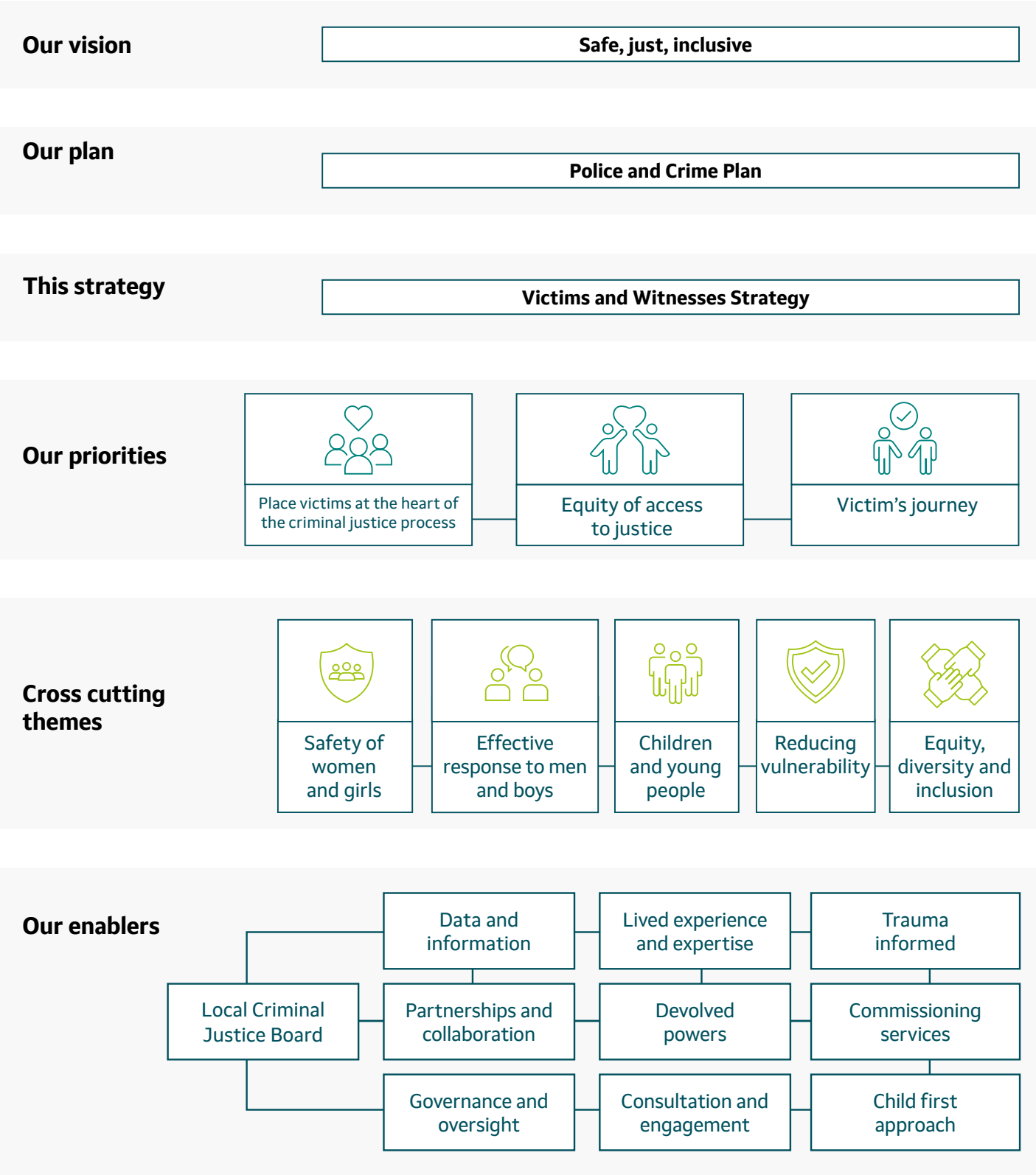
Child criminal exploitation featured as one of the top responses in the consultation, recognising the importance of safeguarding

children. We will seek to protect all members of our communities who are vulnerable due to specific personal circumstances such as age, health, disability, or mental wellbeing.

We need to support all victims and survivors as their cases progress through the criminal justice system and recognise the impact of court backlogs on satisfaction and outcomes.

This strategy highlights the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales (Victims' Code) and the rights to which victims and survivors are entitled.

Plan on a page





Introduction to themes

Priority Three of the Police and Crime Plan is 'Supporting Victims and Witnesses'. It sets out our work with West Yorkshire Police, the wider criminal justice system, Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCSE) partners, and entities like the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) to improve outcomes for victims and survivors and to commission services that support them.

Following consultation internally and with partners from the VCSE sector, the Young Persons' Independent Advisory Group (YIAG), the LCJB, and the West Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership Forum, amongst others, we have identified three clear areas of focus for this strategy:

- Place victims at the heart of the criminal justice process
- Equity of access to justice
- Victims' journey

Under each area of focus are statements of ambition that show our commitment to improve the treatment of victims, survivors, and witnesses within the criminal justice system. They also illustrate our intent to reduce trauma, particularly trauma generated and re-lived through repeated contact with the system.

This means improving access to special measures for vulnerable victims, all victims of sexual and domestic abuse, and children and young people. Getting this right across the criminal justice system will improve outcomes, increase the number of people kept safe from their abusers, and increase the number of perpetrators brought to justice.

While we will focus on three primary priorities, they will be underpinned by five cross cutting themes that guide and enhance delivery.



Key links:

- [National Guidance for Local Criminal Justice Boards](#)
- [MOJ – Victims Code](#)
- [Victims and Prisoners Act 2024](#)

Place victims at the heart of the criminal justice process

We ensure partners take a victim-centred approach across the criminal justice process. This improves the engagement, trust, and confidence of victims and survivors throughout their journey.

We continue to work with the Police, Crown Prosecution Service, courts, and the VCSE organisations who do so much fantastic work to support victims and survivors. We bring these organisations together in the Local Criminal Justice Board, chaired by the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, where they work together to improve the whole system and services for victims and survivors of all crime.

The voices of those with lived experience are alive within this strategy, informing policy and practice to enhance and improve systems for all.

The Victims and Prisoners Act enshrines the 12 Victims' Code Rights in law and the Mayor will hold policing and criminal justice agencies to account for their delivery of victims' rights under the code.

Delivery actions:

- Influence policy and practice by ensuring the lived experience of victims and survivors shapes the way decisions are made.
- Work with criminal justice partners to become a trauma-informed system by 2030.
- Advocate for victims' rights through the LCJB by strengthening how we monitor the performance of organisations duty to comply with the Victims' Code.



Key links:

- [Independent Office for Police Conduct \(IOPC\)](#)
- [Police Race Action Plan – Accessible Version | West Yorkshire Police](#)
- [Victims and Witnesses: Care and Treatment | The Crown Prosecution Service \(cps.gov.uk\)](#)

Equity of access to justice

Cultural competence is the ability of an individual to understand and respect values, attitudes, beliefs, and more that differ across cultures, and to consider and respond appropriately to these differences.

Victims and survivors have a right to feel confident in policing and the criminal justice system and in their ability to hold the system to account when things go wrong.

West Yorkshire Police officers are undertaking cultural competence training. This facilitates greater understanding of diverse communities, enabling officers to build trust, reduce unconscious bias and deliver policing that is fair and respectful.

Delivery actions

- Drive for a culturally competent criminal justice system that meets the needs of all victims, survivors and witnesses.
- Work with criminal justice partners, VCSE organisations, academia and community groups to identify and address inequalities in the justice system.
- Work closely with communities to build trust and strengthen confidence in policing and the wider justice system, especially among underrepresented and marginalised communities.
- Work with criminal justice partners and the VCSE sector to improve outcomes for all victims and survivors of rape and sexual assault.



Key links:

- [West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel – Friday 12 September 2025 – Item 7](#)
- [Operation Soteria – Transforming the Investigation of Rape](#)
- [A victim's journey through the criminal justice system](#)

Victims' journey

The Local Criminal Justice Board is working with criminal justice partners to reduce the time it takes to prosecute perpetrators and increase the number of early guilty pleas at court. This keeps more victims and survivors engaged with their case so that they can see justice done at court.

We support victims and survivors of all crimes, but we recognise and want to highlight that the journey for victims and survivors of serious emotional and physical harm can be particularly challenging — emotionally, psychologically, and practically.

West Yorkshire Police and the Crown Prosecution Service work in line with Operation Soteria principles. This has resulted in a National Operating Model (NOM) focused on suspect-led, evidence-based approaches, and improving victim experience of the investigative process. A senior police officer holds responsibility for all victims and survivors of sexual offences, while a Senior Crown Prosecutor oversees early investigative advice and prosecutions. These principles apply equally to victims and survivors of all sexes and genders.

We will highlight the criminal justice journey that victims and survivors go through, refer

to the Victims' Code already outlined earlier in the strategy, and raise awareness of the special measures available in court and witness support services.

Delivery actions:

- Work closely with West Yorkshire Police to ensure that victims and survivors are kept informed, consulted on key decisions and notified about outcomes throughout the course of the investigation and court process.
- Fund support services for victims and survivors, whether or not the crime has been reported to the police.
- Ensure that specialist, highly trained support services are available for victims and survivors of Domestic Abuse or Sexual Offending throughout the whole investigation, including at court.
- Empower victims and survivors by giving them the opportunity to communicate, in person or in writing, with perpetrators, through our commissioned Restorative Justice service.
- Collaborate with the LCJB to improve the professionalisation, consistency and availability of special measures at key points in the criminal justice process.

Victims' journey



Reporting the crime

- A crime happens to you.
- You report the crime to the police.
- If you decide not to report the crime you can still get help from support services at any time.



Police investigation

- You receive a crime reference number and a victims of crime letter.
- You give a witness statement and have the opportunity to give a Victim Personal Statement.
- The police assess your needs and refer you to support services.



Charging the suspect

- You'll receive updates throughout the investigation.
- If there is enough evidence, police may charge or refer the case to CPS.
- CPS decides whether to prosecute; if not, you can request a review under the Victim's Right to Review Scheme.



First court hearing

- The defendant states their plea and you're told the outcome.
- If the defendant pleads guilty, the case moves to sentencing.
- If the defendant pleads not guilty, then a trial date is set.



Court trial

- Police Witness Care Unit supports you before trial and may refer you to the Court's Witness Service.
- You attend court and may have to give evidence, with extra support if needed.
- You're told the verdict by the Witness Care Unit.



After the trial

- You can join the Victim Contact Scheme if the offender receives a sentence of 12 months or more for a violent or sexual offence.
- You receive updates during the sentence and are told when the offender is released.
- You can share your views on parole conditions if considered.

Key link: [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales \(Victims' Code\) - GOV.UK](#)

Special measures and witness services

Courts provide special measures to help vulnerable and intimidated people give evidence. Adults may be considered vulnerable if they have additional needs, such as a disability, mental ill-health or neurodiversity. Some groups are automatically treated as vulnerable such as children. Victim and Witnesses of domestic abuse, sexual offences and hate crime are considered intimidated.

The police and the Crown Prosecution Service can apply to the courts to for special measures. A judge or magistrate then decides whether they should be used.

Special measures are practical steps that can help someone feel safer and more comfortable when giving evidence. This can include giving evidence via video link or shielding (screening) from seeing the defendant.

The West Yorkshire Police Special Measures Advisor works closely with investigators, prosecutors, courts and support services like Independent Domestic Violence Advisors and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors. Their work has helped increase the number of applications for special measures and continues to improve access so more victims can benefit.

The Witness Service operate in the Magistrates and Crown Courts. The service provides a crucial link between victims and witnesses and the police, The CPS and the Court. The service utilises trained volunteers to provide practical information about the court process. They can also give emotional support to help witnesses feel more confident when giving evidence.



Key links:

- [Special Measures | The Crown Prosecution Service](#)
- [What are Special Measures & how can they help you give your evidence at court? West Yorkshire Police - YouTube](#)
- [Victims of Crime Advice, Help and Support | West Yorkshire Police](#)
- [MOJ – Victims Code](#)
- [Victims and Witnesses: Care and Treatment | The Crown Prosecution Service](#)



Cross cutting theme 1

Safety of women and girls

- Improve outcomes for victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, including criminal justice outcomes.
- Embed a trauma informed approach across systems to ensure services are sensitive, empathetic and understand the impact of lived experiences.
- Continue to amplify the delivery of the Mayor's Safety of Women and Girls strategy via the Women's Safety Unit.
- Challenge negative attitudes and behaviours that put women and girls at risk in public, private and online spaces, through education initiatives and delivering perpetrator programmes to reduce reoffending.



Cross cutting theme 2

Effective response to men and boys

- Recognise and respond to boys and men as victims of domestic and sexual abuse, ensuring services are accessible and stigma is addressed.
- Understand the impact of adverse childhood experiences and trauma on boys and men, and how these can increase vulnerability to victimisation or offending.
- Recognise the increasing online threats to young men and boys — from sextortion to grooming and exploitation — and act to address them.
- Continue to convene a Men and Boys Survivor Panel. The DMPC attends this panel to ensure that lived experience informs policy, practice, and service design. Feedback will also contribute to the national dialogue through wider political forums.



Cross cutting theme 3

Children and young people

- Work with criminal justice agencies to ensure that the voices of children and young people are heard within the criminal justice system.
- Embed the Child First Framework so children are treated as children, with decisions focused on welfare, voice and positive outcomes rather than punishment.
- Work with partners to address child criminal and sexual exploitation, and to be an ally of the survivors of abuse. Supporting work to identify those at risk of exploitation, as well as the safeguarding needs of those who may have been exploited and have come into contact with the criminal justice system.
- Recognise and understand the impact of trauma and the role adverse childhood experiences play in increasing the likelihood of children and young people becoming both victims and perpetrators of crime.
- Commission specialist victim support services (CHISVA/CHIDVA – independent advocates for children and young people affected by sexual or domestic abuse) for children and young people who are victims of, or witnesses to, crime.



Cross cutting theme 4

Reducing vulnerability

- Work in partnership with criminal justice agencies and the VCSE sector to ensure that vulnerability in all its forms and contexts is understood and measures are put in place to safeguard victims and survivors of crime.
- Ensure special measures are considered and offered, where appropriate, to protect and support vulnerable victims and witnesses when giving evidence.
- Ensure that information is made available to vulnerable victims and survivors in a way that is understood.



Cross cutting theme 5

Equity, diversity and inclusion

- Recognise layers of disadvantage and intersectionality.
- Tailor services to meet different needs and challenge unconscious biases, promoting equity in support services and encouraging reporting for victims of all genders.
- Continue to work with partners who provide services to victims of domestic and sexual abuse within faith and ethnic communities, where stigma and fear of exclusion can make seeking help especially challenging.

How to access help and support

In an emergency,
always dial **999**

If you have any reason to believe that a child or adult is at immediate risk of harm, **always** contact the police on **999**.

You can also report things like Anti-Social Behaviour and Criminal Damage online to the police at **westyorkshire.police.uk/report-it**

For a non-emergency incident **dial 101**.



We understand that the issues raised in this Police and Crime Plan may be sensitive or upsetting. If you, or someone you know, have been affected by any of the issues raised in this plan, you may wish to contact the following organisations for advice and support.

Support for you or someone you know:

Organisation	Advice or support available	Contact details	Website
Rape Crisis	Rape Crisis Centres provide independent and confidential services for women and girls of all ages who have experienced any form of sexual violence, at any time in their lives. You can find your nearest branch and use their live chat helpline at their website.	Call: 0800 500 2222	rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help
Victim Support (National)	Victim Support provides advice and guidance to people who have experienced a crime or traumatic incident.	Call: 08 08 16 89 111 or Live chat at their website victimsupport.org.uk	victimsupport.org.uk
Victim Support (West Yorkshire)	Victim Support provides advice and guidance to people who have experienced a crime or traumatic incident.	Call: 0300 303 1971	victimsupport.org.uk/resources/west-yorkshire/
Childline	Childline provides support for anyone aged 18 or under offering a free, private and confidential service where children and young people can talk about anything. You can call them 24/7 or contact them online.	Call: 0800 1111	childline.org.uk/get-support
Samaritans	Support and guidance for anyone experiencing emotional distress.	Call: 116 123 24 hours a day, every day Email jo@samaritans.org	samaritans.org
Mind	For information, advice, and support for anyone experiencing a mental health problem.	Call: 0300 123 3393	mind.org.uk
Crimestoppers	An independent charity allowing you to give information about crime anonymously over the phone or online.	Call: 0800 555 111	crimestoppers-uk.org

Glossary

Term or acronym	Definition or terminology
ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences)	Potentially traumatic events in childhood — such as abuse, neglect or household dysfunction — that can affect health, development, behaviour and outcomes later in life.
Advocate / Advocacy (victims' support)	Specialist support workers who help victims understand their options, navigate services, communicate their needs and have their voice heard within systems like policing, courts and support services.
CCE (Child Criminal Exploitation)	A form of exploitation where children are manipulated, coerced or forced into criminal activity, such as drug dealing, theft or violence.
CJS (Criminal Justice System)	The network of agencies responsible for enforcing the law, investigating crime, prosecuting offenders and carrying out sentences. This includes the police, prosecution services, courts, prisons and probation.
CHIDVA (Children and Young People's Independent Domestic Violence Adviser)	A specialist advocate who supports children and young people experiencing domestic abuse, providing safety planning, emotional support and help navigating agencies.
Child First approach	Ensuring children's rights, needs and voices are considered throughout decision making whilst prioritising opportunities for meaningful engagement. The Child First Framework, co-produced with 455 children, outlines what this looks like in practice, including the importance of involving children in strategic decision making and closing the feedback loop so they know the value they have added.
CHISVA (Children and Young People's Independent Sexual Violence Adviser)	A specialist advocate who supports children and young people affected by sexual violence, offering practical advice and emotional support through investigations and court processes.
Community Outcome Meetings	Public accountability meetings where policing or criminal justice agencies report on performance and respond to questions about outcomes and service delivery.
CPS (Crown Prosecution Service)	The public prosecution authority responsible for deciding whether criminal cases should go to court and for presenting those cases in court.

Term or acronym	Definition or terminology
CSEA	Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
Cultural competence	The ability of individuals or organisations to understand, respect and respond appropriately to cultural differences in attitudes, beliefs and communication.
Devolved powers	Powers transferred from national government to a regional or local authority, allowing decisions on areas such as policing, transport, or economic development to be made closer to communities.
DMPC (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime)	A statutory deputy role that supports the directly elected policing body (Mayor or PCC) in overseeing policing and crime responsibilities.
Domestic Abuse	A pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening, violent or abusive behaviour between intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.
EDI (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)	An approach that recognises and values different backgrounds and identities, aims to reduce inequality, and promotes fair treatment for all.
HMCTS (His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service)	The government agency responsible for administering the courts and tribunals system in England and Wales.
HMPPS (His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service)	The government service responsible for managing prisons and supervising offenders on probation in the community.
IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Adviser)	A trained advocate who supports people experiencing domestic abuse, providing risk assessment, safety planning and guidance through the criminal justice process.
ISAC (Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworker)	A specialist advocate supporting people affected by stalking, helping them understand risks, plan for safety and navigate legal and support options.
ISVA (Independent Sexual Violence Adviser)	A trained advocate who supports people affected by rape or sexual assault, offering information, emotional support and guidance through health, police and court processes.
LGBTQIA+	An umbrella term referring to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual and other diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

Term or acronym	Definition or terminology
LCJB (Local Criminal Justice Board)	A partnership that brings senior leaders from agencies across the criminal justice system together to improve how the system works, strengthen collaboration and address shared challenges.
Magistrates' Court / Crown Court	Courts in England and Wales: Magistrates' Courts deal with lower-level offences and early hearings; Crown Courts handle more serious offences and jury trials.
Mayor's Safer Communities Fund (MSCF)	A grant fund that awards money to community organisations for projects that improve safety, prevent crime and support people affected by crime. The fund is financed using money recovered from criminals under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) . POCA allows law enforcement agencies to seize or confiscate assets gained through criminal activity, and a portion of that recovered money is returned to local policing bodies. The fund reinvests these recovered criminal proceeds back into communities to support local safety and prevention work.
MoJ (Ministry of Justice)	The government department responsible for courts, prisons, probation, legal aid and policy relating to victims and the criminal justice system.
Operation Soteria	A national programme designed to transform police investigations and prosecution of rape and serious sexual offences by improving investigative practice and focusing on offender behaviour rather than victim credibility.
PEEL assessment	An inspection programme by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) that evaluates police forces for effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy.
Police and Crime Panel	A body that scrutinises the work of a Police and Crime Commissioner or elected Mayor, ensuring transparency, accountability and value for money.
Police Race Action Plan	A policing framework aimed at addressing racial disparities, improving trust and confidence, and ensuring fair treatment across policing services.
Protected characteristics	Characteristics safeguarded under equality law, such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Term or acronym	Definition or terminology
Restorative Justice	A voluntary process where victims and offenders communicate in a controlled environment to support healing, accountability and understanding.
Sexual Violence	Any sexual act or attempted act carried out without consent, including assault, rape and coercive sexual behaviours.
Special measures	Adjustments in court that help vulnerable or intimidated victims and witnesses give their best evidence, such as video links, screens or giving evidence in private.
Stalking and harassment	Persistent and unwanted behaviour that causes fear, distress or alarm, including monitoring, following, repeated messaging or other intrusive actions.
Trauma-informed approach	An approach that recognises the prevalence and impact of trauma, prioritising emotional safety, choice and control, and avoiding re-traumatisation.
Victims' Code	A legal code setting out the rights of victims of crime in England and Wales, including rights to information, support and participation.
WSU (Women's Safety Unit)	A dedicated unit was established by the West Yorkshire Mayor to tackle violence against women and girls in the region. The Mayor's Women's Safety Unit comprises of members from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, the county's Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP), and West Yorkshire Police.
WYP	West Yorkshire Police
YIAG (Young Persons' Independent Advisory Group)	A group of young people who provide constructive challenge and advice to public bodies such as the police on decisions affecting young people.
VCSE sector	Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise sector- Organisations including charities, community groups, faith-based groups and social enterprises that provide support, advocacy, services and community development.

Appendices





Appendix A

Victims' Code

1. To be able to understand and to be understood.
2. To have the details of the crime recorded without unjustified delay.
3. To be provided with information when reporting the crime.
4. To be referred to services that support victims and have services and support tailored to your needs.
5. To be provided with information about compensation.
6. To be provided with information about the investigation and prosecution.
7. To make a Victim Personal Statement.
8. To be given information about the trial, trial process and your role as a witness.
9. To be given information about the outcome of the case and any appeals.
10. To be paid expenses and have property returned.
11. To be given information about the offender following a conviction.
12. To make a complaint about your Rights not being met.

Please read the extended document below for full details of your rights under the Victim's Code.

Key link: [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales \(Victims' Code\) - GOV.UK](#)



Appendix B

Governance and oversight

The Mayor receives regular performance reports from the police and holds them to account for delivery and working towards a safe, fair, and inclusive West Yorkshire. The progress and impact of this strategy will be tracked through The Police and Crime Plan performance measures, Community Outcome Meetings, and oversight by the Police and Crime Panel.

The Mayoral Combined Authority works with statutory agencies and VCSE organisations to maintain strategic oversight through boards and groups, including the Local Criminal Justice Board's (LCJB) Victim and Witnesses Group.

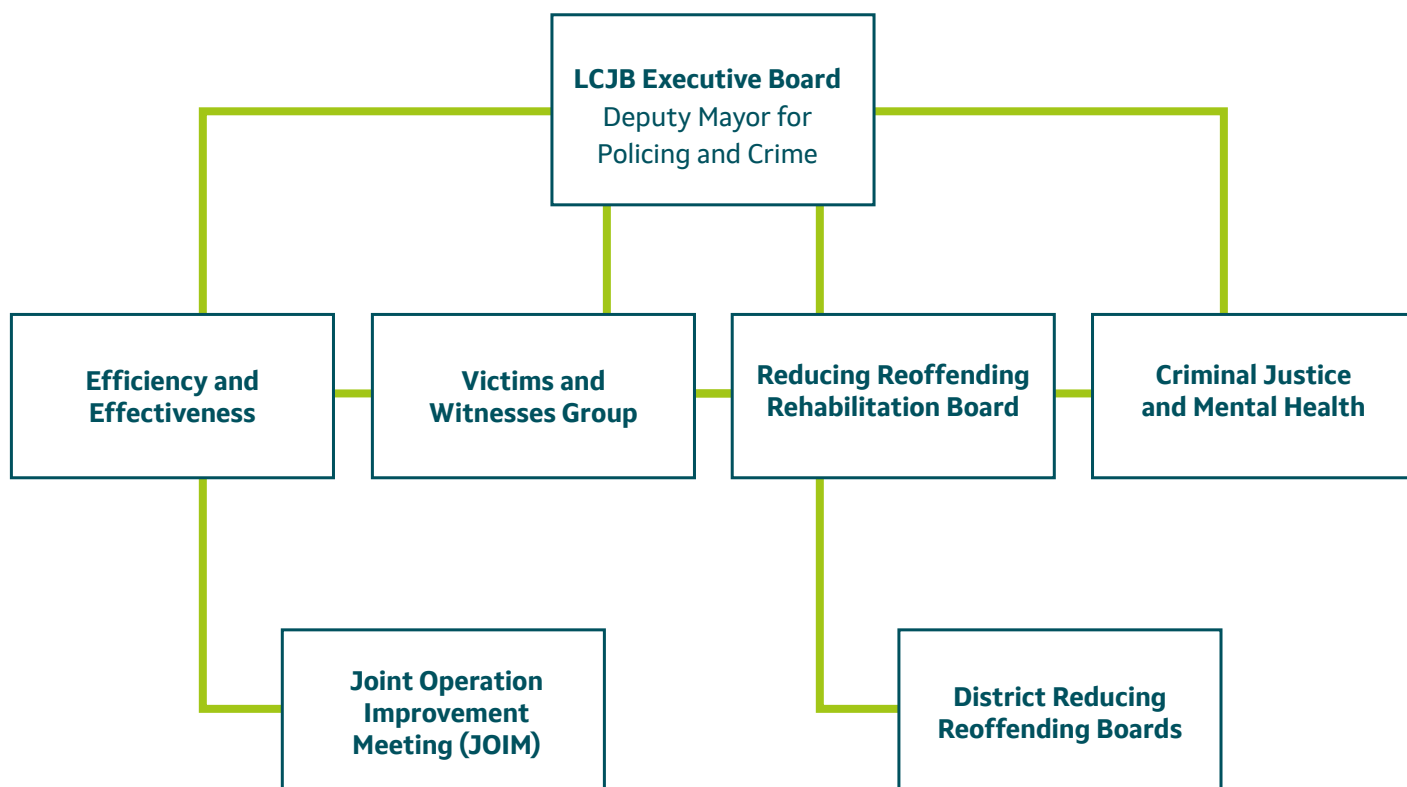
West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Police and Crime team also works with the police, partner agencies, VCSE organisations, and victims and survivors to ensure we deliver for those who are most vulnerable, putting them at the heart of our response. The Mayor will keep championing West Yorkshire's interests on the national stage through the Mayor.

This strategy outlines how the Mayor works in partnership with stakeholders in West Yorkshire and how we deliver change together with voluntary, community and social enterprises, the private sector, and local communities to improve the lives of all people across our region.

Appendix C

Local Criminal Justice Board

Chaired by the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Alison Lowe OBE, the LCJB brings together senior leaders from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS), police, Youth and Restorative Justice services, multi-crime and specialist victim support services, and public health to drive improvements in the criminal justice system and the experience of victims, survivors and witnesses.





Appendix D

Working in Partnership

We continue to work with partners and colleagues across the Combined Authority to ensure victims and witnesses are heard and supported across all communities within West Yorkshire.

Communities can be united by a shared location, faith, ethnicity or cultural heritage, a shared characteristic (such as LGBTQIA+ communities), or disability. Communities can be united by an interest or activity. We recognise that communities contain a diverse range of views, which cannot be represented by a single spokesperson. That is why we work with a huge range of partners across the statutory and VCSE sectors, including those made up of people with lived experience, to ensure their views shape our work.

The Mayor, with Police and Crime Commissioner powers, is in a privileged position to influence not just the police service, but other services and businesses that help to keep West Yorkshire safe, just and inclusive. This includes responsibilities across transport, adult skills, housing, and culture, and working closely with the business community to ensure change happens. We can only achieve success by working together for the benefit of victims and witnesses by:

- Commissioning and funding support services, including specialist services,
- Convening partners from across the criminal justice system to share learning and progress with systematic change,
- Advocating for positive change at a local, regional and national level,
- Amplifying the voices of victims and witnesses, ensuring their experiences shape our work.



Appendix E

Commissioning and Support Initiatives

Part of the Mayor's responsibilities is to commission services, including those that support victims and tackle reoffending.

To achieve the Mayor's priorities and outcomes as set out in the Police and Crime Plan, she commissions a number of different providers to deliver services and activities that benefit the communities of West Yorkshire, reduce crime and help victims and survivors to cope and recover, as far as possible, from the harm they have suffered and to tackle re-offending.

Policing and Crime Commissioning Strategy 2022-2024

The Mayor has launched survivor panels for all victims and survivors of sexual and domestic abuse, ensuring lived experience informs decision-making. The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime attends these panels.

The Mayor continued her commitment to strengthen support for victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse by funding 59 Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advisors across West Yorkshire including specialist roles to support those with protected characteristics. Of these, nine were to specifically support children and young people.

Drawing on learning from the Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworker Service that supports domestic abuse victims, the Mayor has commissioned a new service for victims and survivors of all stalking offences from 2026.

Safer Steps | Support to stay safe from stalking



The Mayor has commissioned a county wide Restorative Justice Service, giving victims the option to communicate with the person responsible for the harm caused to them. With specialist support, victims can be heard, ask questions and hold offenders to account in a safe, victim led way.

[Home › Restorative Justice West Yorkshire](#)

Peer commissioning report: [Lived Experience in Action: Commissioning](#)

She has also commissioned a West Yorkshire Victims Referral, Assessment and Local Support Service to provide a single point of access for anyone affected by crime or traumatic incidents across West Yorkshire. The service is open to victims, families and others impacted, at any time and whether or not the incident was reported to the police, helping people access the support that's right for them.

victimsupport.org.uk/west-yorkshire/

The Mayor is funding the Integrated Domestic Abuse Courts Pathfinder to strengthen how family courts respond to domestic abuse. The model builds specialist support into proceedings, helping children and families feel safer and ensuring the voice of the child is central to decisions through a more joined up, trauma informed approach.

stayingput.org.uk/pathfinder/

The Mayor's Safer Communities Fund has been running since 2021 and continues to provide key funding to community-based organisations and partners to deliver support for victims and survivors. Since April 2024 to date we have invested over half a million pounds across 44 different projects specifically focused on supporting victims, survivors and witnesses.

[Mayor's Safer Communities Fund](#)

Appendix F

Ministry of Justice grant for victims' services

Between 2024 and 2025, the Mayor of West Yorkshire successfully secured **£4,830,960** from the Ministry of Justice to support victims of crime across West Yorkshire.

This money was spent on 32 services which supported over 73,466 victims of crime.

This included:

- **£167,328** spent on services to specifically support victims of **Child Criminal and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**.
- **£1,404,825** to specifically support victims of **Domestic Abuse**.
- **£1,275,987** to specifically support victims of **Sexual Violence**.

Ethnicity

This grant is funded by the Ministry of Justice; the data uses the government's list of ethnic groups as outlined on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

Ethnicity	Percentage
White	54.22%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	1.99%
Asian/Asian British	12.85%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	3.18%
Other Ethnic Group	1.13%
Not Stated	26.60%

Sexual orientation

78% of those supported did not share their sexual orientation. Of those that did, 93% identified as heterosexual.

Age

Over 8% of victims supported by commissioned services were **under the age of 18**.

2.7% did not state their age, while those **18 or over** made up over **89%** of victims supported.

Just under 2 in 5 people (38%) supported were **aged 18-34**.

Gender split

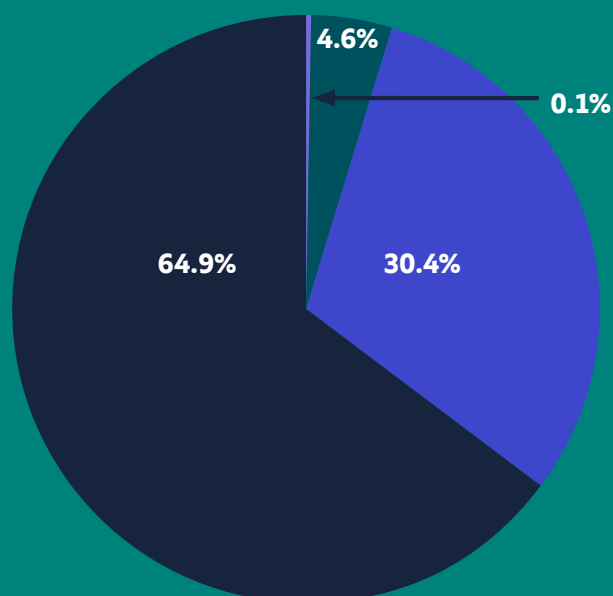
64% (47,067) of victims supported using this grant were **women, including trans women**.

31% were **men, including trans men**.

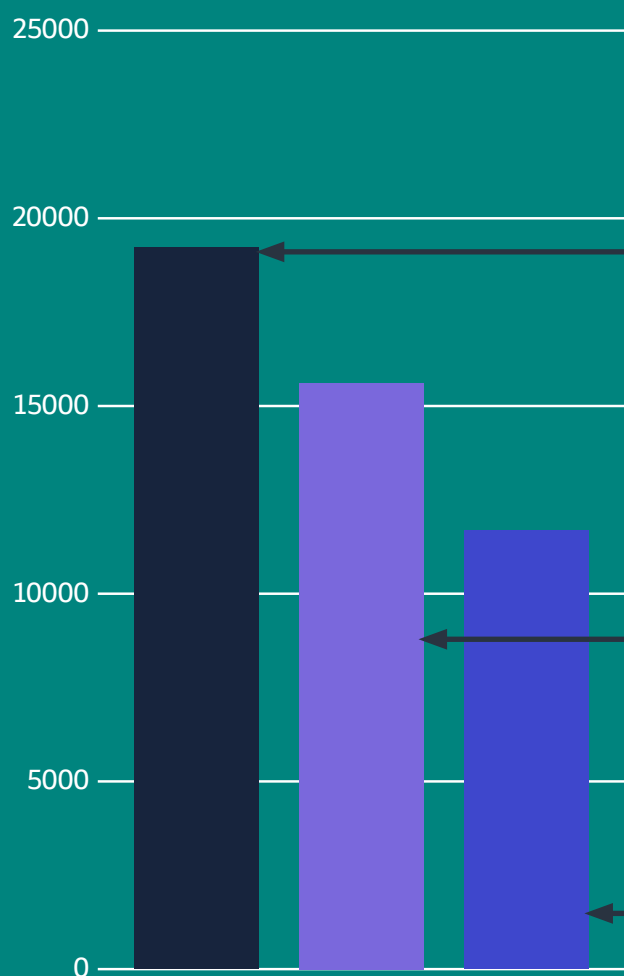
0.1% were **non-binary**.

4.9% did not state their gender.

* For reporting requirements to the Ministry of Justice these figures also include trans women and trans men.



Crime type



Crime type	Number
Burglary	2,939
CCE	85
CSA/CSE	2,802
Cyber crime	5
Domestic Abuse	19,063
Fraud	5,152
Hate Crime	1,942
Homicide	27
Modern Slavery	91
Sexual Violence	4,249
Stalking and harassment	15,699
Road Crime	40
Terrorism	1
Theft	3,198
Violent Crime with or without injury	11,893
Other Services for victims of crime	7,000



Appendix G

Language and identity & cultural and social sensitivity

We know that the words we use to describe people affected by crime are important. Although “victim” is a legal term, some people prefer “survivor” because it conveys strength and resilience – particularly in cases of sexual abuse, exploitation, or grooming. Others may find the label “victim” stigmatising or disempowering, especially men who have experienced domestic abuse or sexual violence. Our approach will be to ask individuals how they wish to be referred to and respect their choice.

Cultural, religious, and social norms can influence whether people feel able to access support. In some communities, seeking help or being identified as a victim or survivor can lead to fear of exclusion or loss of acceptance within family or community networks. These barriers can prevent people from engaging with services. We will tailor our approach to ensure support is accessible, safe, and culturally competent.

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**West
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**Tracy
Brabin
Mayor of
West Yorkshire**