

**BRIDGING THE GAP:  
AN EVALUATION OF THE  
LIGHTHOUSE INTEGRATED  
VICTIM WITNESS CARE  
PROGRAM**

**McCartan, K. F.,**

**Hoggett, J.,**

**Rumney, P.,**

**Marcon, A. R.**



University of the  
West of England

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY<sup>1</sup>

### Context

Despite the fact that most people experience crime as victims rather than perpetrators, victims have often been regarded as the forgotten actors within the Criminal Justice System (CJS). Historically, criminal victimisation has not been satisfactorily addressed, nor recognised (Campbell, 2005; Goodey, 2005; Rock, 1990).

By the early 21st century, however, criminal justice policy making has started to direct further attention and research towards victims. Victims have therefore started to play a central role in the policy, criminological and law reform agenda (Goodie, 2005; Joutsen 1998; Shapland, Willmore & Duff, 1985). In January 2012, the Ministry of Justice (hereafter MoJ) published a report, entitled: Getting it right for victims and witnesses (MoJ, 2012), which underlined the importance of adopting a more victim-focused approach within the CJS. The report observed that the Government should ensure that victims get the support they require and that their needs are fully met (MOJ, 2012:7). Additionally, victims should be provided with the necessary support prior to and during court proceedings, as research suggests this process can be overwhelming for them (Goodie, 2005; MOJ, 2012: 7).

In response to government recommendations, as well as the European Directive 2012/29/EU (European Commission, 2012), a new multi-agency Integrated Victim Care Programme has been implemented by the Avon and Somerset Constabulary and Police and Crime Commissioner, Sue Mountstevens. This programme, named Lighthouse Victim and Witness Care (hereafter Lighthouse), aims at supporting victims of crime, especially vulnerable victims – including victims of serious crime, the persistently targeted, intimidated victims - and those who have been highly affected by the criminal offence. In fact, the support provided by Lighthouse would not simply be based on the type of crime, but rather on victim needs.

### Evaluations Aims, Objectives & Methodology

The main objective of this review is to evaluate the outcomes of Lighthouse as well as compare it to available pre-Lighthouse victim care data. This will be achieved through the adoption of mixed methods design (Campbell, 2005; Cook & Campbell, 1979; Robson & McCartan, 2016), combining case analysis, ethnography, police data and qualitative and quantitative research.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr McCartan is the corresponding author. Please contact via [Kieran.mccartan@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Kieran.mccartan@uwe.ac.uk)

## Main Findings

### Pre Lighthouse

- The stated aims of Lighthouse to act as a single point of contact for a victim while involved in the CJS, signpost victims to support agencies and guide victims through the criminal justice process all relate to the service provision for victims and therefore the findings from the pre-Lighthouse data appears to provide a sound rationale and justification for the development of Lighthouse.

### Staff understandings and perceptions of the impact of Lighthouse

- Staff agreed that victims now receive a more holistic and cohesive service based on individual need rather than crime type and victims were being kept updated, informed and engaged during their journey through the CJS
- The Lighthouse led needs assessment of victims was enabling staff to get a much better understanding of their situation and that this was helping to develop a culture of ownership and accountability within the programme. However, there were still some teething problems in fully embedding Lighthouse within the wider culture of the police organisation
- The pre- and post-charge provision provided by staff and its relationship to Lighthouse aim of providing an enhanced level of service if you are a vulnerable victim, a victim of a serious crime or are persistently targeted (as per VCOP, 2015) needs clarification internally and externally.
- Lighthouse staff suggest that having outcome data from the agencies they are signposting victims to would enable them to be certain that victims were receiving the best support for their needs. In other words having 'cope and recover' data would allow staff to have greater confidence that the victims were receiving positive outcomes from the agencies they were putting them in contact with.

### Stakeholder understandings and perceptions of the impact of Lighthouse

- The stakeholders had a positive view of Lighthouse and its implementation, recognising that it was in early stages, but wanted more clarity, in places, about how it differed from the services that they provided to the victims.

- The stakeholder's main issue was the ability of Lighthouse staff to make appropriate referrals. Stakeholders felt that there was a varying and often inconsistent ability to judge risk when making referrals, which meant that sometimes inappropriate referrals were progressing through the system; this impacted upon the support they were able to give the victims.
- Although, stakeholders thought that Lighthouse had improved multiagency working and provided better, as well as more relevant information that they needed to help victims they did think that there were issues with it including feeling that it was imposed on them, driven by policy, being about funding, having a lot of duplication as well as poor streamlining of services in places.
- The stakeholders believed that Lighthouse's main role was procedural support and signposting, not to provide emotional support [i.e., to help victims cope and recover] which they viewed as their role.

#### Victim understandings and perceptions of the impact of Lighthouse

- Lighthouse staff built strong working relationships with victims which clearly included a strong element of trust. Victim praise often referred to the caring attitude of Lighthouse staff, their professionalism and willingness to follow up on particular issues. **There was little evidence of victims having to deal with multiple contacts from differing staff, a problem that had existed prior to the creation of Lighthouse.**
- The quality and regularity of communication from the point of first contact with Lighthouse and onwards through the criminal justice process, was generally praised. The flexibility of the service in terms of mode and time of contact was seen as important, as was the willingness of a single point of contact (Victim Witness Care Officer, VWCO) to provide information, practical help and support.
- The quality of this support was seen by most victims as being of a high standard and this assisted some victims in coping with the aftermath of criminal victimisation and preparing for court proceedings.
- Negative comments related to delays and the failure to provide important information, a victim having to repeatedly call to chase up a court date and a very poor initial contact with a member of Lighthouse staff who failed to provide key information and follow up in an

appropriate manner. A number of victims expressed frustration at the lack of direct contact with Lighthouse staff because a parent was the point of contact.

## **Recommendations**

### *Victim communication*

- Lighthouse should take steps to ensure that victims who have parents or others acting as the first point of contact are still able to speak directly to VWCOs.
- VWCOs need to warn adult victims and witnesses that a trial may be reported in the media and this may (in non-sexual offence cases or those involving minors) lead to the naming of the victim and/or the area where they live.
- Victim feedback tools need to ensure the reasons underpinning positive or negative experiences are captured in greater detail. Lighthouse should explore how it can better capture qualitative feedback from all victims of crime, including victims of sexual violence.
- Contact with victims should continue to be made in a consistent, timely manner with information and support being provided throughout the victim's journey in the criminal justice process. However, we would recommend that steps be taken to ensure that this good practice is adopted in every case.

### *Partnership working*

- Lighthouse should involve stakeholders more in the decision making process regarding suitability of referrals and co-ordination of where non-high risk referrals should go. By doing this, Lighthouse would be able to involve stakeholders more in its day-to-day working, further promote positive working relationships with stakeholders and streamline its service to victims.
- Co-location of police and stakeholder services positively impacted the working relationships and victim outcomes for Lighthouse.
- In conjunction, and through better data sharing, Lighthouse and other agencies in the criminal justice system should work in tandem to provide information regarding trial outcomes at the end of the trial process to victims in a timely fashion.

### *Staff workload and training*

- A clarification of work load with regards to pre and post charge victim and witness care and a focus on making sure that Lighthouse staff are not unduly overburdened as a safety net for victim referrals from call handlers. Only those requiring an enhanced service should be referred to Lighthouse staff.

- Better adapted and fit-for-purpose staff training, especially in certain specialist areas (i.e., Sexual Violence or Abuse; Domestic Violence; Mental Health; Drugs and Alcohol).

#### *Cope and recover*

- A reconsideration of the role of Lighthouse in “cope and recover” as there is a disparity between the different stakeholder populations about what this means.
- A better capture of the victim experience of Lighthouse, as well as “cope and recover” information from stakeholders is needed for continued evaluation and review.

#### *Branding*

- Re-consider the idea of a ‘single point of contact’ and replace it with ‘central point of contact’ to avoid any confusion and concern for all parties involved.

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# LITERATURE REVIEW

In January 2012, the Ministry of Justice (hereafter MoJ) published a consultation paper entitled *Getting it right for victims and witnesses*, which underlined the importance of reform within the Criminal Justice System (hereafter CJS) in relation to victims of crime (MoJ, 2012). Previously, the policy and law reform agendas tended to focus on perpetrators and their crimes, neglecting victims and their needs (Goodie, 2005; Joutsen, 1998; Shapland, Willmore & Duff, 1985). By the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, further attention has been shifted towards victims and their needs (Davies et al., 2007; Goodie, 2005). As suggested by Davies et al. (2007), a range of victim-focused provisions and assistance schemes have been introduced in many social and legal systems worldwide within the last few decades; such schemes have been developed either as entirely independent from government and the CJS (e.g. charities and voluntary groups), and/or provided under statute (Davies et al., 2007).

In spite of their actual source, changes to victims' policy and practice have significantly improved victims' experience of the CJS (Davies et al., 2007). Improving the CJS's treatment of victims can also have a positive impact on the effective functioning of the justice system itself (Kilpatrick & Otto, 1987). The CJS and its agencies rely upon the cooperation of victims and witnesses; for instance, the police would not be able to apprehend assailants had the crime not been reported by victims in the first place (Davies et al., 2007). It therefore seemed necessary for legal authorities to invest in victims and victim support (Skogan, 2005). Lawmakers and program administrators maintain that improving the quality of treatment of victims increases their satisfaction levels as well as decreases their psychological trauma (Davies et al., 2007).

Within the past few years, extensive work has been carried out concerning the implementation of victim-orientated programs, with an emphasis on victim satisfaction. As suggested within the Ministry of Justice paper *Getting it right for victims and witnesses*, victims ought to be getting swift and sure justice which punishes the offender thus protecting future victims from trauma (MoJ, 2012:3). It can be argued, however, that victims do not solely seek for offenders' punishment, rather they need further sympathetic support for them to recover, or at least partially recover, from their victimization experience (MoJ, 2012; Goodie, 2005). Research with crime victims further suggests that victims seek recognition and participation in the CJS (Wemmers & Cyr, 2004). As sustained by Edwards (2004), there are four types of victim participation. The first type is being in control, where the victim plays a decision maker role within the justice process. The second type is

consultation, also referred as 'passive participation', where authorities seek and consider victim's opinions when making any decision around the case. The third is information provision, and lastly victim's expression. Victims have a right to be supported, to be informed about procedural processes as well as the right to fully express their concerns and views within the criminal justice process (Wemmers, 2008). Satisfaction with the criminal justice system and its agencies is also positively interlinked with post-trauma adjustments among victims, especially victims of violence (Wemmers, 2008). The nature of interactions with the police can also impact victim recovery from trauma, satisfaction with the police, as well as cooperation with the justice system (Foley & Terry, 2008). Procedural fairness is highly therapeutic as it allows victims to feel valued and respected (Tyler, 1990; Van de Bos et al., 2001). Respect, recognition, support and information are in fact highly important as they facilitate victims' experience of the criminal justice system as a whole (Wemmers, 2008).

Often police effectiveness is evaluated on the basis of crime prevention strategies, yet increased awareness around the effects of crime on victims, led to the development of victimological research and literature around victims' needs and expectations (Lurigio & Resick, 1990; Foley & Terrill, 2008). A number of studies focusing on victims and their rapport with the police force suggest that treatment by officials, including tone and style through which officers deal with a specific instance, can drastically impact the outcome of a case and their rapport with victims and the general public (Sherman, 1998). A significant body of the literature on victims revolves around the impact of serious crimes, such as sexual offences, because they tend to have a serious and detrimental effect on victims (Campbell, 1998; Campbell, 2001); further studies, however, also suggest that non-sexual crimes, e.g. robbery and burglary, can also induce psychological trauma among victims (Lurigio & Resick, 1990). Police sensitivity, concern and comforting strategies can, however, encourage victims to cope with such psychological trauma (Burleston, 1990). In addition to victims' psychological recovery, police behavior also affects victims' satisfaction with police handling of victimization (Reisig & Parks, 2000). Emotional support and empathy are highly linked to victim satisfaction and, as sustained by Mastrofski (1999), police responsiveness, compassion and listening skills also play an important role in the evaluation of victim satisfaction.

Foley and Terrill (2008) studied the nature of police-victim encounters. A number of 1,865 encounters from a large-scale observational study were examined to grasp a better understanding of the police-victim relationship and the effects of police comforting behavior on victims (Foley & Terrill, 2008). A variety of victim-based variables were examined within the study, respectively: age,

sex, race, social factors and wealth. Many of the predicted narratives around victims-police relationships were demonstrated within the study. For instance, female victims and victims displaying signs of mental instability were more likely to be comforted than those victims that were either male or that were not physically involved in conflict (Foley & Terrill, 2008). Male victims, in fact, were more likely to be blamed by officers rather than comforted (Foley & Terrill, 2008; White & Kurpius, 2002). Those with middle or upper class backgrounds were more likely to receive comfort compared to lower class victims (Foley & Terrill, 2008). Their findings further suggest that socio-emotive behavior, from listening and reassuring to provision of information, can positively impact victims' recovery, and benefit the police force and the justice system as it enhances cooperation and victim satisfaction (Tewksbury & West, 2001). Their findings also suggest that, whilst police education and experience might be regarded as fundamental factors towards better performance, education and experience are inversely proportional to socio-emotive responses (Foley & Terrill, 2008). Despite the limitation of the model adopted within their research – one has to take into consideration external validity: the capability of a research to be replicated across time and population (Druckman et al., 2011). The research showed that overall, police comforting behaviour only applied to a limited number of encounters, roughly 24% of their registered encounters. This research study suggests that most victims, as they tend to be males and/or falling in to lower classes, are not provided with the necessary emotional support even though the latter could allegedly increase their satisfaction and cooperation levels with the police (Tyler & Fegan, 2008).

As previously mentioned, procedural justice is regarded as a fundamental predictor of victims' satisfaction with the criminal justice system and the police (Murphy & Barkworth, 2014). Neutrality, respect, trustworthiness and voice were regarded as among the core elements of procedural justice (Tyler & Murphy, 2011). Fair procedural justice policing can further enhance victims confidence in police (Tyler & Huo, 2002), it can also increase their perceptions of police legitimacy (Murphy, Hinds, & Fleming, 2008) and foster cooperation and general willingness to assist the police (Murphy, Tyler, & Curtis, 2009; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Fegan, 2008). Despite research consistently showing procedural justice to be highly beneficial for legal authorities, it is still rather uncertain the extent to which procedural justice influences victim satisfaction (Murphy, Mazerolle & Bennett, 2013). Often victimization goes unreported to police (in Murphy & Barkworth, 2014:178) and this is due to a variety of factors including: distrust of police, previous negative experience with legal authorities and/or victims' not viewing the criminal endeavor as worth reporting (Skogan, 1976, 1984). Negative experiences and secondary victimization – where victims of crime are victimized by legal authorities (Martin & Powell, 1994) can further enhance a disparity between citizens/victims and

legal authorities, thus reducing victims collaboration with the justice system (Martin & Powell, 2014). As suggested by Tyler and Murphy (2012), individuals evaluate police responsiveness and effectiveness based on the nature of treatment received from legal authorities, rather than simply looking at the outcome of their situation. Research suggests that higher levels of fairness produce higher satisfaction levels among the public (Tyler & Murphy, 2011; Tyler & Blader, 2003).

There are various explanations as to why such practice can be so effective in shaping positive attitudes and behaviour. Two of the most prominent explanations are the Group Value model and the Group Engagement model (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2003). The models define procedural justice as a product of social identification, whereas police and legal authorities are regarded as representatives of the state and, as such, they are a manifestation of the beliefs and norms of a given society (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2003). The process of procedural justice reaffirms a sense of group identity among citizens: this sense of belonging and social membership pushes individuals to abide by society's norms and beliefs (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler, 1990). The synergy between the individual's self-worth and the idea of group membership allows citizens to feel valued within a determined society. When treated in a fair manner, individual's self-worth is enhanced and their attachment to society is once again reaffirmed (Huo, 2003; Murphy, 2013a). Contrarily, when individuals are not treated fairly, their allegiance to group norms and cooperation with legal/group authorities is dismantled; a sense of marginalization and exclusion favours negative attitudes towards authority, thus suppressing any form of assistance or cooperation among citizens (Huo, 2003; Murphy, 2013a). It can therefore be claimed that through victims' fair treatment, legal authorities can effectively validate and recognize individuals' victimization (Colquitt, LePine, Piccolo, Zapata & Rich, 2012).

In a study by Wells (2007), victims of crime were interviewed as part of a police department's quality service audit to rate police officer performance. Victims were asked to provide feedback around the performance of the officer that dealt with their case. Wells' (2007, 2011) findings show that, for those victims who were more concerned with outcome-oriented behaviour, procedurally fair treatment was not rated as highly as predicted. There are, however, quite contrasting views and discrepancies around the importance of procedural fairness and optimal outcome-oriented behaviour. Whilst Wells' (2007, 2011) study assumes that victims of domestic crime are more inclined towards outcome-oriented behaviour, thus they mostly focus on officers being highly professional (e.g. officers contacting them when expected), others argue that victims of domestic abuse mainly value legal authorities based on procedurally fair treatment (Elliott et al., 2011). In

2009, Murphy and Barkworth randomly selected 2,088 participants through the adoption of a stratified random sample technique; the questions they asked participants covered various areas around policing and policing encounters, including attitudes towards police, satisfaction with police encounters and activity, as well as their victimization (Murphy & Barkworth, 2014). The main areas of interest, however, revolved around police effectiveness, outcome-related favorability, willingness to report a crime and procedural justice. Only 58% of the participant responded to the 360 questions provided, thus reducing the total number of participants to 1,204. The participants were then divided in to two main categories or variables, property crime victims (theft, burglary, vandalism etc.) and personal violence victims (physical assault, domestic violence, sexual violence etc.) (Murphy & Barkworth, 2014). Those who had received a favourable outcome were more likely to collaborate and to report crimes in the future to authorities; however, when procedural justice was mentioned within the questions, the importance of outcome favourability was overshadowed by fairer treatment (Murphy & Barkworth, 2014). The findings further support the idea that the actual victimization context is fundamental in determining the extent to which procedural justice matters to victims. As supported by Tankebe (2013), victims of crime were more likely to cooperate with the police whenever they felt the latter acted in a procedurally fair manner towards them. Increased attention has therefore been paid towards the implementation of operational policing models that would treat victims fairly and would essentially encourage victims to cooperate with legal authorities (Martin & Powell, 2014; Murphy & Barkworth, 2014).

Following the European Union Directive on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime (2012), a new commissioning framework has been developed within England and Wales to provide victims with a mix of local and national support services in the aftermath of a crime (MoJ, 2013). Whilst the Ministry of Justice would still play an important role in the provision of victim specialist support, particularly for victims of serious crimes, such as human trafficking and sexual offences, it seemed rather impractical for the central government to determine the type of support and funding needed at a local level (MoJ, 2013). The new model, introduced in 2014, aimed to offers victims a more personalised service to help them cope with their experience of crime. Through such a framework, victims' emotional and practical support services were to be commissioned on a local level by Police and Crime Commissioners (hereafter PCCs), as the latter are regarded to be more equipped in understanding citizens' local needs (MoJ, 2013). Additionally, PCCs are accountable to the public in relation to the funding decisions they make around services provision. When measuring the success of such a model, it is important to notice that, rather than focusing on the actual number of contacts or referrals made to other services, support services will be monitored on how they have

helped victims to 'cope and recover' from their experience; this again shows the shift from a outcome-based to a more victim-focused approach (MoJ, 2013; Wells, 2007, 2011). Cope and recovery are highly important social tenets as they allow victims to feel valued within society, yet they also emphasize wellbeing, health, inclusion and personal empowerment (MoJ, 2012). As suggested by Fredrickson (2001), positive emotions are positively correlated to the process of recovery from negative experience, e.g. criminal victimization. Contented people, in fact, when compared to their less contented peers, are less likely to display symptoms of psychopathy, and tend to display increased coping abilities (Diener & Slingman, 2002). Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) introduced a model, namely the sustainable happiness model, which states that individuals' happiness is determined by three main factors: a genetically determined happiness, happiness-relevant circumstantial factors, as well as happiness-relevant activities and practices (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). The model, tested in a number of randomized controlled studies, further suggests that happiness is associated with stronger social relationships (Harker & Keltner, 2001), superior work outcomes and prosocial behaviour (Williams & Shaw, 1999). When looking at victims of crime in particular, they have diverse needs and requirements that ought to be met to facilitate their coping mechanism and prosocial behaviour (MoJ, 2013). The Ministry of Justice (2013), has pointed out that in order for victims' needs to be met, service providers ought to work in partnership to deliver pragmatic resolutions to their victimization. Victims of crime have diverse needs which can vary according to age, social groups, gender as well as the type of crime(s) they have experienced (Goodie, 2005). Such needs can be grouped in to five main broad areas respectively: health and well-being, feelings of safety, re-integration and social interaction, feeling informed and finally, improved experience of the CJS.

The victim-focused approach provides that this diversity of needs should be reflected in the range of support available to victims. In fact, the services and interventions offered are to be tailored to victims' personal circumstances and requirements (MoJ, 2013). Due to the wide variety of support needs, it can be rather problematic to establish a single outcome measurement approach. As suggested by Einser and Malti (2012) most policy implementation in social welfare and policing are introduced with little consideration of their effectiveness and whether or not such policies have managed to achieve the intended goals. When analyzing the impact and outcomes of a specific service, as asserted in the Measuring Outcomes for Victims of Crime document (MoJ, 2013), it is appropriate to firstly, establish what the objectives of the offered service are prior to any further analysis. Service commissioners or PCCs, are responsible for identifying the services and provide information regarding the progress and the outcomes of the service itself. Among the main goals of

the framework, is the need to help provide clarity around securing outcomes for victims as well as establish performance monitoring (MoJ, 2013). Outcome reporting is a fundamental requirement in relation to programs evaluation, as it ensures that the outcomes are appropriate for the delivered services. Increased focus has been paid towards evidence-based research and outcome-focused commissioning frameworks across public services. Across northern Europe, there has been an increased demand for evidence-based research for policy intervention and prevention strategies (Einser & Malti, 2012). For instance, in Sweden the government regards evidence-based research and practice as an essential factor to improve the quality of care and services offered (Einser & Malti, 2012). In 2006, the Stockholm Symposium of Criminology and in 2009, the European Society of Prevention Research have brought together policy-makers, practitioners and researchers to establish implemented preventative measures to reduce violence. It can be argued that, despite recent research shifting away from concerns with crime risk factors, most evidence-based research still revolves around preventative measures aiming at reducing violence and crime within society, rather than looking at victims of crime and victim implementation policies (Goodie, 2005; Eisner & Malti, 2012).

Most information regarding theory and practice around commissioning does not specifically address the victims' service sector; therefore, it can be rather problematic to identify efficient measures (MoJ, 2013). Victims services have to address victim specific outcomes, to help victims cope and recover from the immediate impacts of the crime and the harm endured (Goodie, 2005; MoJ, 2010, 2012). Often victims are contacted on multiple occasions by a number of services and agencies regarding their victimization experience, and this can be rather time consuming for both victims and the various agencies involved; thus, commissioners and service providers have to collaborate and agree on the outcomes that can be easily measured. There are other factors that need to be taken into consideration when researching on victims of crime. First, one has to establish when it is appropriate to collect data in order to minimize any plausible distress among victims/research participants (Goodie, 2005). Data protection factors also are to be prioritised to protect victims. As sustained by Labott and colleagues (2013), survey research could potentially enhance distress among those participants that are emotionally vulnerable. As anticipated, most victims involved with the Lighthouse are victims of sensitive crimes, including domestic violence and abuse. It can therefore be rather difficult to collect victim survey interviews (Rosenbaum & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2006) as the mere reminiscence of their victimization experience can be emotionally challenging and it could stigmatise victims (Rosenbaum & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2006). Interpersonal and intrapersonal violence and general risky behaviour are conceived as sensitive



topics due to their personal impact on victims and the individuals involved (Rosenbaum & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2006). Conducting research could pose a threat to victims; the information shared could even incriminate them or damage their reputation should it become public knowledge. Evidence-based research and outcome measurement are fundamental in order to establish best practice; however, with victims' involvement, one always has to consider the impact on participants of being asked to disclose personal information as well as the implications of methodology (Goodie, 2005; Rosenbaum & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2006). When conducting research, participants' safety has to be ensured at all times, thus one also has to consider the evaluation of possible risks and benefits of taking part in the research process. One of the main risks involved is victims unwillingness to participate due to latent emotional risks that might arise from participation; for instance, the recollection of their victimization could cause potential trauma or if participants are asked if they participated themselves in a criminal endeavor (Rosenbaum & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2006). Nonetheless, it is important to underline that current empirical data does not entirely provide a clear image around the extent to which participation could produce prospective deleterious emotional responses among victims (Mark & Sloan, 2005). There are contrasting opinions around this; some assume that trauma survivors adopt a self-preserving strategy or amnesia, as an avoidance mechanism to completely obliterate any painful memories (Briere & Conte, 1993; Mark & Sloan, 2005). Others instead suggest that debriefing, thus the mechanism of sharing past-trauma information with someone (e.g. police officers, psychologists, support workers to name a few), could be highly therapeutic for victims (Pennebaker, 2003).

Further empirical research around the effects/impact of research participation needs to be accomplished, especially with regards to victims of crime. Newman and Kaloupek (2004) conducted various studies which examined the effects of participation in trauma-related research. The data had been collected over the previous 8 years from their publication in 2004. Various methodologies and different population samples were adopted within their studies, yet they concluded that for the vast majority of participants research participation was regarded as a positive factor in relation to their emotional reactions, thus most of those who took part in to the research admitted they did not regret participating in the trauma-related study (Newman & Kaloupek, 2004). Despite their findings, due to the lack of consistent evidence, it can be inferred that neither the trauma nor its consequences are to be considered as homogenous phenomena in relation to research participation (Newman & Kaloupek, 2004; Rosenbaum & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2006). Individuals' reactions to interpersonal and intrapersonal violence can vary, thus a more topic-specific research is needed in order to understand the effective impact of victims participation in a research study (Rosenbaum &

Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2006). Data collection methods might negatively influence participants, due to the level of anonymity and confidentiality they offer to participants (Rosenbaum & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2006). Victims' perceptions of cost-benefit ratio is also rather important with regards to research participation; for instance, trauma recollection can have a higher personal cost when participants are asked to respond in person or in writing, compared to those scenarios where participants are asked to complete generic vignettes (Rosenbaum & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2006). Research participation can also be affected by other factors including, age, gender, culture and personal circumstances; the context of data collection itself also affects participants and victims. When individuals have experienced sensitive events, the act of being investigated around such event can cause them to feel distressed and unwilling to co-operate. Willingness for victims to participate as well as the accuracy of the information disclosed can also impact the validity of the research and the outcome measurement of the program itself, thus contribute to sample selection bias (Rosenbaum & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2006). Among the barriers in relation to victims' participation with the criminal justice process, there can also be language barriers, for instance many immigrants cannot easily communicate with police investigators or police staff, therefore it can be challenging. Distrust of the legal system, might further deter victims to participate to the program (Rosenbaum & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2006). Further social and cultural barriers might deter victims (Rosenbaum & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2006).

The Lighthouse Victim and Witness Care program has been developed within Avon and Somerset Constabulary to improve victims' experience and satisfaction with the police and the Criminal Justice System in light of objectives set out by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ, 2012, 2013). Lighthouse seeks to provide an 'enhanced' service to three categories of crime victim who require additional help and support, specifically: victims of the most serious crime (e.g. sexual offences, attempted murder, domestic abuse, hate crime); persistently targeted victims and vulnerable and intimidated victims (e.g. victims under 18, those with physical disabilities or mental health conditions) (Steadman, 2014: 13). Prior to the creation of Lighthouse, research conducted by Avon and Somerset Constabulary suggested that 27% of crime victims fell within these categories, equating to 18,562 victims in 2012/13 (Steadman, 2014: 14). These categories reflect those set out in the Ministry of Justice's Code of Practice for Victims of Crime which sets out a wide range of 'entitlements' that a victim of crime should expect to receive from the criminal justice system, along with victim services which must meet certain minimum standards (VCOP, 2015). The three categories of victim discussed above are also entitled to 'enhanced entitlements' which covers a wide range of individually tailored support measures and once a victim is identified as falling into one of the three categories the

service 'must ensure that this information is passed on as necessary to other service providers with responsibilities under this Code' (VCOP, 2015: para. 1.6).

The service offered by Lighthouse operates through the creation of Integrated Victim Care teams that are intended to:

*'guide a victim through their journey from first point of contact with the police, through the investigation and on to the end of the criminal justice process. The aim of the new teams will be to provide greater ownership of the whole journey of a victim, reducing handovers and providing a 'single point of contact' approach. This will radically simplify the landscape for victims'. (PCC, 2014: 2)*

Lighthouse is concerned with 'transforming our approach to victim care' (Steadman, 2014: 7) and is intended to provide a more victim-focused approach which includes high quality support and advice to crime victims and witnesses when they need it and to provide referrals to other agencies when appropriate (Steadman, 2014).

The development of this service was a response to 'shortfalls in victim service' and the PCC strategy of prioritizing the needs of crime victims. Specific problems included a need to be able to better identify enhanced victims; information was lacking in order to provide a follow up service for victims and police and CPS case files were not flagging up a significant number of vulnerable victims. As a result, large numbers of vulnerable victims were not being identified. As the Business Case noted: 'If we are not able to identify those victims of crime that come under the new VCOP definition of serious crime, vulnerable, intimidated or repeat, we cannot robustly identify those who should receive an "enhanced service" and referral to support' (Steadman, 2014: 14). **Further, it was evident that some victims of crime had contact with many different people as their case progressed with the attendant danger that this could lead to confusion, unnecessary replication and annoyance or distress to victims (Steadman, 2014, 11; Police and Crime Commissioner Victim's Survey, 2014).** Victim feedback also suggested that while there was high satisfaction at the point of first reporting this declined over time suggesting a need for better follow up. The Business Case notes: 'At each stage of the criminal justice process, the needs of the victims were simple: information; support; updates and a named contact. However, victims reflected that the very things they wanted most were the very things they felt they were missing' (Steadman, 2014: 15).

The creation of Lighthouse is intended to address these and a number of other issues and 'ensure victims are engaged and supported during their end-to-end journey, and will provide a more 'single-point of contact' approach ...' (Steadman, 2014: 7). A number of specific objectives were set out in the Business Case for the creation of Lighthouse (Steadman, 2014) and while they may overlap to some degree, they provide a clear vision of what the Lighthouse service is expected to provide:

*Victims will:*

*Be treated as an individual, in a friendly and professional manner*

*Be able to contact us when they need us, and in a number of different ways*

*Be provided with updates on their case, when and how they want them*

*Have their needs assessed as soon as possible after they report a crime to us*

*Be able to access additional support to help them cope and recover, if they need it*

*Benefit from a more victim-focused approach to delivery of restorative justice.*

....

*Know what to expect at every stage of the journey*

*Be engaged with criminal justice agencies and service providers ... [and provide] high quality support from their first point of contact with us*

*Benefit from a strong victim needs assessments and referral mechanisms in place to ensure they have the right level of support when and where they need it*

*Have access to channels of support other than the police should they choose not to report a crime directly. (Steadman, 2014: 7-8)*

The current research study is going to evaluate the impact of the Lighthouse program with regards to victim and witness care in light of relevant objectives set out above, along with VCOP 2015. This will be achieved through the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data covering the first 15 months' operation of Lighthouse.

# RESEARCH METHODS

This section will talk through the aims of the current Lighthouse evaluation, its methodology and why this methodology was used [especially why a mixed methods approach was the most relevant], before ending with some of the challenges that the current project presented and their potential impact, if any, on the outcomes.

## AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The 2012 Ministry of Justice paper *Getting it Right for Victims and Witnesses* set out the new Government's strategy to implement services for victims and in response to this, PCC Sue Mountstevens and Avon and Somerset Constabulary recently implemented a new initiative aiming at improving victims' services and support, namely the Integrated Victim Care Programme, otherwise known as Lighthouse. The current research, through a mixed methods approach, will be a process and impact evaluation (Robson & McCartan, 2016) examining what Lighthouse is, whether it is working effectively, the impact has on the victim, their journey and their ability to "cope and recover". The evaluation examines the first 15 months' operation of Lighthouse.

## RESEARCH PARADIGM

This research brings together a range of data from different sources using a mixed methods approach combining both case analysis, ethnography, police data, qualitative and quantitative research (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This research speaks from a pragmatic research design (Robson and McCartan, 2016), using triangulation across a series of multi-faceted data sets which are reliable and valid in light of the complexity of Lighthouse. The main data sources that we will be using are:

1. *Data collected from pre-Lighthouse victim experiences (N = 201).*

From pre-Lighthouse data it is evident that across several measures information and communication are seen as crucial: Information about what happens next, information concerning the criminal justice process, updates about the progress of the case, and

information regarding a named person who could be contacted where the victim had questions about the case, were seen as particularly important to victims of sexual offences, hate crime, assault and domestic abuse. Information about counselling/support and an independent source of advice and support was seen as particularly important in sexual offence cases, and to a somewhat lesser degree for other categories e.g. domestic abuse, hate crime, assault and robbery.

2. *Interviews with Victims (N = 6), Stakeholders (N = 12) and Lighthouse staff (n = 7).*

A range of individuals involved in Lighthouse were interviewed as part of the research project, selected from a larger sample of participants provided by the Lighthouse team, the aim being to triangulate the process and impact of Lighthouse. The research looked to interview (1) victims, (2) Lighthouse staff and (3) stakeholders (i.e., 3rd party organisations involved including, victim support, IRIS, etc.). In designing the semi-structured interview schedules it was agreed that all the participants, regardless of which of the 3 groups that they come from, would be asked the exact same questions in the same way as it would allow for greater reliability, validity and better data analysis. It was decided that we would interview the stakeholders and Lighthouse staff first, the reason for this being because recruiting victims can be challenging therefore it is important that they have the longest sampling frame.

3. *Ethnographic research.*

This will be carried out by the research team at each of the three Lighthouse hubs to critically assess the structure of the Lighthouse as well as to see if there are any potential disparities within the hubs (respectively Bristol, Keynsham and Bridgwater).

4. *Additional victim data (N =22)*

Additional victim data was collated when the research team recognized that they would not obtain a larger enough victim sample for the qualitative interviews. After having a series conversations with the office of the PCC it was agreed that we could have access to feedback from victims detailed in Lighthouse Good News items featuring positive client feedback,

victim data from an internal report examining questionnaire responses from victims of serious sexual offences, feedback from victims in a Lighthouse performance review, Lighthouse Survey Results and a secondary media source featuring one victim. Careful attention was given to ensure there was no replication of the same victim feedback from these various sources. This additional data added another 22 victims to the analysis.

## **SAMPLING**

The research team will ask research steering group (which involves members of the staff from Avon & Somerset police, the OPCC and Lighthouse management) for extensive list of appropriate Lighthouse staff, stakeholders and victims to select participants from; therefore the research will use purposive and snowball sampling techniques (Robson & McCartan, 2016). The final list of participants will only be selected by the research team and will remain confidential. All participants will be interviewed by a member of the research team (police – Dr James Hoggett; Victims – Professor Phil Rumney; stakeholders – Dr Kieran McCartan) using a standardised set of question (appendix 2, 3, 4) having once signed the consent form (appendix 1). All participants will be treated the same.

1. Victim participants were initially obtained through recommendations from Lighthouse staff as well as stakeholders. It became apparent that this process needed further refining, as the research team was struggling to get victims to engage in the research project, and the PCC placed an advert on their website calling for victims to self-identify. The research project struggled to obtain victims to interview (see challenges section) and had to utilise other forms of victim data.
2. A list of stakeholder and stakeholder organisations names will be provided to the researchers, from the list a series of names will be shortlisted and then contacted for interview.
3. A list of Lighthouse staff names will be provided to the researchers, from the list a series of names will be shortlisted and then contacted for interview.

## **SAFEGUARDING & ETHICS**

The research project obtained UWE ethical permission prior to consent; in addition, the research project adhered to the ESRC (2016), British Society of Criminology (2016) and British Psychological Society (2010) ethical guidelines.

Participants will provide written consent on a prepared form before the start of the questionnaire and/or interview.

Both consent forms and interview transcripts will be provided to participants in paper form, as they do contain personal data they will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office on Frenchay Campus. Once the project has been completed, the documents will be destroyed in confidential waste. All the research tools will be completely anonymous and will not contain names or identifiable details.

Participants, in the qualitative portions of the research, will have to sign a consent form prior to the start of the research stating, among other things, that they may withdraw from the study at any time prior to the evaluation of the data and this will be reiterated verbally at the start of the session.

Victims will not be asked to provide information regarding their experience of crimes nor their personal history. The research itself aims at gathering information about the impact and the effectiveness of the Lighthouse Integrated Victim Programme. Participants would have already been in touch with the Lighthouse or previously got in contact with the police as well as other referral agencies, and thus understand the role and responsibilities of the organisation. Nonetheless, the sensitive nature of the material covered within the research may trigger emotional reactions and stress. Consent forms will be provided to victims/participants as well as briefing materials and, when appropriate, debriefing will also be provided to victims. Anonymity and data protection will be always assured throughout the project, and no judgements will follow victims/participants' responses. The researchers will also ensure that contact details of relevant specialist will be available to participants both in writing and verbally. One issue that might arise within the research is a disclosure during interviews; where an issue of public protection is raised and gives cause for concern, or when and if an individual identified in the interviews is in significant and immediate danger. In such occasions, the researchers will be obliged to take action in response to that disclosure. UWE Safeguarding procedures will be activated. The whole team is aware of what to do in this situation – i.e. stop the interview and pass on the information to staff and other agencies where relevant and activate UWE safeguarding policy. Additionally, prior to interviews, the



researchers will ensure that participants fully understand the implications of making a disclosure and the duty to pass that information on.

## **DATA PROTECTION**

All computers used in the research are password protected. The device used to record interviews will be password protected. When not in use the recording device will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked staff office on the Frenchay campus. Data stored on computer will be encrypted and the computer will be password protected. Only UWE research team members will have access to the data either in the form of recordings or transcripts. No data will be taken off campus. Once the study has been published all data relating to the project will be destroyed securely in confidential waste. The transfer of data amongst the research team will only be done by password protected memory stick and never email. The memory stick will be wiped or destroyed at the end of the project. The audio recordings of the interviews will be erased once the project has been finalised

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

The research is using a mixed methods approach so that it can look at the process and impact of Lighthouse from multi perspectives to obtain the best understanding of it, which means that there are multiple methodologies and data analysis techniques being used. The research will analyse each piece of data in the way that is most appropriate for it, using thematic analysis with qualitative data sources and numeric analysis for quantitative data sources, which means that we can see what the different data sources are telling us in their own right and how they are building on each other (Robson and McCartan, 2016). As there is different data sources being used in the evaluation it is important to recognise that not all of these will be of the same size and scope, therefore meaning that the results as well as analysis have to be considered within their own contexts.

## **CHALLENGES AND REFLECTIONS**

The OPCC was very forthcoming coming in supporting the research, in giving the team access to the three Lighthouse hubs and facilitating good working relationships with the police. The research team was given unqualified access to Lighthouse hubs, Lighthouse staff and Lighthouse data; this made the research very straightforward and enabled us to sample effectively. We did not have issues obtaining Lighthouse, police and/or stakeholder participants for the qualitative portion of the research; however, obtaining victim data was an ongoing issue. The research team had difficulty in gaining access to victims, both pre and as part of Lighthouse, to speak about their experiences; however, it must be stated that this is an issue with the arena of victim research with many people who have been victims of crime not wanting to discuss their experiences. Across the life of the

evaluation, with the support of the OPCC, we tried many different approaches to obtaining victims, including, putting a call out on the OPCC website, asking Lighthouse teams for referral's, asking stakeholders for referral's and sitting with Lighthouse teams in hubs so that victims could be referred post their Lighthouse conversation; all of which resulted in a small sample. Even when we obtained victims to speak to some of them dropped out prior to interview or where not appropriate, based on experience and crime, to be interviewed. In light of the victim sampling difficulties we experienced the team, in conjunction with the OPCC, agreed to look at other forms of victim data to bolster the sample, including, victim satisfaction surveys, informal and formal feedback. The victim data was challenging to obtain and therefore to obtain a robust analysis of, this must be kept in mind when examining the data and if we were to replicate this study we would need to completely rethink our victim sampling strategy. However, difficulties capturing victim data experienced in this project provides a clear learning point for the services seeking to help victims cope and recover and who under the new commissioning framework will need to be able to demonstrate this.

Another area of the research that proved problematic was the pre and post Lighthouse comparison as the data being examined post Lighthouse was not comparable to data that was collated pre Lighthouse; this meant that we could not do a like for like comparison. This was problematic because it made it difficult to determine if Lighthouse was the factor that changed victim's experiences in the criminal justice system as opposed to an additional unknown factor. The data pre Lighthouse that we could obtain allowed us to understand victims perceptions of what made a good service which we could then compare to post Lighthouse data.

# RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This section will discuss the main findings of the research project, it will discuss each part of the project separately and then draw parts together to discuss the overarching results and how they link to the previous literature as well as research objectives.

## **1. Pre-Lighthouse quantitative and qualitative data analysis:**

The following section includes summary quantitative and qualitative analysis of data gathered from 201 respondents who provided information about their experience with the CJS prior to the Lighthouse programme. Victims were from a range of different crime types and demographics and were asked to fill in an online survey based on their personal experience with the criminal justice system and its agencies. Such questions aimed at enabling victims of different types of crime to provide additional information regarding their victimisation experience. To facilitate the analysis of the results, quantitative data has been aggregated to focus upon the three most important and least important issues (those issues that survey respondents commonly identified as most or least impactful on their experience of the CJS) faced by victims at different phases in their involvement with the Criminal Justice System. This data will be triangulated with data provided by victims in qualitative surveys and arranged under emergent thematic headings to help identify positive and negative victim experiences pre-Lighthouse. The three main headings are respectively communication, support and rapport.

### ***Communication***

Within the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, it was generally agreed that information and reassurance in relation to the case and the available services, including the CJS processes, were regarded as highly important by victims when they first reported the crime. Communication was also primarily important in terms of their perceptions of receiving what they needed.

### ***Were their needs met?***

Victims were asked if they received what they needed, throughout their interaction with the criminal justice system. Pre-Lighthouse statistical data suggested that providing information about what happens next, followed by the general progress of the investigation are widely considered as influential factors impacting on positive experiences among victims of various types of crime.

Qualitatively, victims described the positive impact receiving such information had, for example;

*'The police were brilliant at keeping me informed ... were exemplary. It was above reasonable expectation.'*

Contrarily, victims' also explained the negative impact of not receiving such information. This lack of communication and also a lack of a single point of contact were often mentioned by victims of crimes as an issue of concern. For instance, a victim reported the complexity involved in communicating with criminal justice agencies, in particular the police, due to staff rotation:

*'It was hard to communicate with the police. Officer in charge always changed, not on duty, no updates. One of the inspectors told me that it is too expensive to investigate my evidence...I was constantly begging for updates.'*

The constant change of officers or persons in charge might further increase stress levels among victims as they would have to continuously repeat themselves to different agencies and on multiple occasions. This can further aggravate their feelings of victimisation. One of the victims surveyed stated that at times they had been asked questions that were not even relevant to the occasion, as if the agencies involved were merely carrying out administrative tasks- thus showing a certain lack of empathy towards victims of crime and their communication needs:

*'I had to make repeated calls and often had to keep giving the same information about myself and the offender, date of birth, height etc. - information that is recorded and does not change. Sometime I was asked questions which were clearly from a list and not relevant.'*

#### *During trial and post-trial*

Statistically victims of crime regarded being kept informed about court procedures as highly important (this statistical aggregation does not include victims of anti-social behaviour for which no data was available). As discussed by a victim, information around court procedures can further empower victims and increase their chances of providing an 'impact statement':

*'I think it's important for victims to know the process; what the charges are; when court appearances happen and where; that a victim has the opportunity to make an impact statement, describing effects of the crime upon the individual...I personally would have benefited from being involved in the prosecution - it would have been more empowering.'*

Another victim advocated that, lack of communication can have negative effects on victims as it can further traumatise them:

*'The court process itself was poor. The dates kept on being changed and witness support was calling me with incorrect information all the time which was very upsetting and traumatic.'*

Most victims further suggested that, in order to cope with their victimisation and recover from the experience itself, they should be provided with ongoing updates about the progress of their case:

*'We were not told what was happening or why...The lack of communication has been very difficult to cope with.'*

### **Support**

A second theme that arose from the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data was the importance of support pre and post-investigation. A number of victims described the impact that the professional and supportive behaviour of the various criminal justice agencies involved had on their experience:

*'The network of people around me provided by yourselves/other agencies could not be faulted in any way....The support we received was brilliant...they helped us through.'*

Victims felt that having a general awareness of what follows next can help them cope with what could otherwise be a rather stressful and overwhelming time. Correspondingly lack of awareness resulted in a poor experience. As a victim explained:

*'Giving evidence at court was extremely difficult: arriving at court with the defendant also using the same public entrance...Being asked inappropriate, irrelevant and offensive questions by the defence. Having to recall dates and times of a large number of incidents. Being made to read out letters and messages from the defendant including swear words. Having no redress or method by which to complain about the process. Having no opportunity to challenge anything the defendant said. Having to leave the court, again with the defendant in the public area, as he had been found guilty but bailed for sentencing.'*

Some of the victims felt that further support and attention was instead shifted towards the perpetrator rather than the victim:

*'When you are the victim of a crime the criminal has more rights than you do throughout the whole process.'*

Support and reassurance were deemed to be essential by some of the victims; a victim further suggested that reform is needed within the system as lack of support can increase discomfort and discourage victims from reporting crimes in the future:

*'As a victim I needed the reassurance that I was doing ok and the right thing and I don't feel I got this...Support is essential. Reform is needed. Had I known what it would be like I would never have agreed to give evidence and would be reluctant to do so again or to advice others to put themselves through it.'*

One of the victims, instead, was very pleased with the support received – thus showing discrepancies among victims' experiences and opinions regarding the support they have received:

*'The support we received was brilliant - victim support was very good, they helped us through. The police put us in touch with an agency that helped the children to deal with the effects of the crime. This was an independent agency that really helped.'*

Quantitative data further shows that mental and physical health support, followed by family and friends support were regarded as highly important by victims in their efforts to recover and cope with the effects of crime. Additionally, there have been a few contrasting opinions with regards to the support of external agencies including the voluntary sector and the police. For roughly 6 out of the 11 types of crimes that have been looked at within the survey, help from the police and support from the voluntary sector were regarded as rather important for victims - although to a lesser degree when compared to family and friends support. However, 5 out of 11 also sustained that help from another criminal justice agency and the police were regarded as the least important factors for their recovery, followed by support from voluntary sector organisation and the council/housing social service.

Within the questionnaire, victims have also been asked whether or not they felt they were provided with advice on how to access ongoing services and support. For the most serious crimes, including sexual violence and assault, they felt that they have not received enough support. For instance, one of the victims commented:

*'I wasn't signposted by the police to any outside support agency. I understand that the police are normally very good at signposting to outside agencies; but it is vital it happens for every victim.'*

For serious crimes personal safety, security and crime prevention advice are very important factors that would be able to support them during and post-trial; while aggregate quantitative data suggests such needs are not as important for other types of crime including theft and vehicle crimes.

## **Rapport**

A third emergent theme was the rapport between victims and criminal justice agencies. Victims were keen on being provided a named person to contact when they had any further enquiries concerning the investigation and court processes; this was inferred from both quantitative and qualitative data.

*'The police I dealt with were amazing. Officer X was fantastic, he even called me at half 10 at night as per my request to confirm the arrest. They always had time for me and were never anything other than supportive.'*

Some further comments identified issues of professionalism in terms of the swiftness through which cases have been dealt and the high level of support provided as important:

*'Efficiency and speed was very good on behalf of the CPS...The police I dealt with were amazing...They always had time for me and were never anything other than supportive...they really made me feel supported.'*

Within the survey, victims also suggested that it would be highly beneficial for them to have the opportunity to visit the court in advance, in order for them to feel more comfortable with the new surroundings, and for assistance from professionals with regards to personal safety, security, crime prevention and further practical help – e.g. assistance in completing forms.

Some victims had really positive comments with regards to the support provided and the rapport they had with the agencies:

*'If it wasn't for the witness support team I don't think I could have gone into court and given my evidence, they were superb.'*

## **Conclusions**

Data suggests that these three thematic issues (communication, support and rapport) have the greatest impact on victim experience (positive or negative) regardless of the outcome of their case within the CJS. In other words, pre-Lighthouse data suggests that it is the way victims experience interaction with the CJS rather than the outcome of that interaction that appears most important in generating positive attitudes towards the CJS and its agencies. There is now a large body of theory and research that supports this finding. For example, Greenberg (1993) argues that people's experience of the CJS is not influenced by retributive justice (extent of punishment to offender) but by what is termed interactional justice. Greenberg (1993) identifies two dimensions of interactional

justice, interpersonal and informational justice. Interpersonal justice looks at the way in which legal authorities and third parties involved have interacted with the victims, the politeness and respect displayed towards them while executing procedures (Colquitt et al., 2001; Greenberg, 1993). Informational justice relates to the explanations provided to victims regarding procedures and the reasons as to why certain procedures have been put in to practice (Greenberg, 1993). It is widely suggested within the literature that the lack of dignified treatment and lack of information are a primary source of victims' dissatisfaction (Johnson, 2007; Shapland et al., 1985). This links clearly with the pre Lighthouse data.

Moreover both these dimensions of interactional justice link to issues associated with what is termed procedural justice (Tyler, 1990, 2006). A now substantial body of work from the USA and Europe has found that the way in which agencies of the CJS treat the public is the biggest determinant of people attitude and behaviour towards those agencies. According to Tyler (1990) where agents of the CJS system treat people in a fair, proportionate and respectful way then people will view those agents and the organisations they represent in a more favourable manner regardless of whether that involvement with the agents results in a positive outcome for them. From a victim perspective then, it is the way in which people are treated rather than what actions or outcome might arise from that treatment (e.g. the person who caused the victimisation being punished accordingly) that have the greatest influence on their experience of the CJS and subsequent attitudes towards it (Tyler, 2006).

Further analysis of the 20 satisfaction surveys collected by Avon and Somerset appear to support this idea. In 15 out of the 20 surveys the strongest correlation between victim's ratings of their whole experience (either positive or negative) was their ratings on their treatment (positive or negative). This was regardless of any actions taken or not taken (outcomes). Where victims reported positive experience of their treatment (level of satisfaction) then overall experience was similarly positive. This was true even where victims reported high levels of negative experience (high dissatisfaction) with the actions (outcomes) that occurred during their involvement (6 cases). Similarly victims could report high satisfaction with actions taken but high dissatisfaction with treatment thus rating their overall experience similarly dissatisfactory (2 cases). While the sample is of course very small three quarters of the samples overall experience was linked to treatment by the CJS, which support procedural justice theory and also acts as a clear explanation about why communication, support and rapport appear so important to victims from the wider pre Lighthouse data set, as these themes clearly relate to treatment. The stated aims of Lighthouse to act as a single point of contact for a victim while involved in the CJS, signpost victims to support agencies and



guide victims through the criminal justice process all appear to relate to the treatment/service the victims receives and therefore the findings from the pre-Lighthouse data analysis appears to provide a sound rationale and justification for the development of Lighthouse.

## **2. STAFF UNDERSTANDINGS AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF LIGHTHOUSE**

Interviews were conducted with 7 staff members from across the three Lighthouse hubs. A number of interesting and interlinked themes emerged from the interview data collected which help shed light on both process and impact issues associated with Lighthouse and which have relevance for both victims and staff.

### ***Understanding the aims and purpose of Lighthouse***

In terms of Victim Witness Care Officer (VWCO) understanding of the aims and purpose of Lighthouse there was clear agreement about what these aims were. VWCO's identified a number of common aims for Lighthouse which clearly linked to different aspects of the Ministry of Justice Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (VCOP, 2015). For example VCOP (2015) states that you are entitled to an enhanced level of service if you are a vulnerable victim, a victim of a serious crime or are persistently targeted. VWCO's stated that it was these types of victims that Lighthouse had been established to help and which they now focused upon;

*The main aim of the Lighthouse is to provide, um, the vulnerable, intimidated, persistently targeted victims or VIPs with that enhanced service (Lighthouse staff, 3T).*

VCOP (2015) also states that as part of the enhanced service victims should receive information on what to expect from the criminal justice system and again staff identified this as a key aim of Lighthouse;

*I think the aim is to make sure a victim of crime has an easier path through the criminal justice process. And that they as people are listened to much more early on than what they probably have been in the past and then obviously to offer them our support and other support services as and when they need it, if they need it. (Lighthouse staff I1).*

This help and guidance throughout the victims involvement with the criminal justice system was identified as of great importance for supporting the victim through this process and a key aim for Lighthouse;

*In terms of the aims of what we are looking to do, obviously, we are looking after victims better rather than just getting them to go to court, and making them feel like they are*

*supported and that there is stuff there to help them through the process, cause it's, you know, it's easy when you are dealing with something day in and day out to kind of think, oh well this is alright; but for somebody to go to court for the first time, it's actually really traumatic. When you speak to some of the people they are really nervous and some of the things they are nervous about they are quite minor things, and you can put their mind to rest. So, it's nice to be able to do that. It's nice to be able to speak to someone and say, oh I am really concerned about this and then when you go through it with them, they sort of say 'oh, oh actually it's not as bad as I thought'. So it's nice to be able to allay people's fears in that way (Lighthouse staff 1T).*

As per VCOP (2015) Lighthouse staff also clearly articulate that the enhanced service they provide victims will involve carrying out a needs assessment to help work out what support victims need and then using this assessment to tailor referrals to other organisations who can then offer support to the victim;

*We pick up the phone to them [victim], introduce ourselves and go through a common needs assessment with them and just talk to them about how their feeling, go through safety things with them, make sure they're happy, offer them support services and our service as Lighthouse, offer them our details and make sure they know they can come to us if they need to. We also go through the process of how the case is going to go (Lighthouse staff I1).*

What Lighthouse staff also identified clearly however is that it is not their role to provide support to victims directly beyond simply being a single point of contact and listening to them. Instead staff recognised that their job is to identify victim's needs and then engage partner agencies to become involved who will meet those needs and support the victim;

*It's hard, because we are not actually a support service ourselves. We're a signposting agency; it's what we have been referred to. So, in terms of someone picking up the phone to me and having a chat for ten minutes, is not something that we are supposed to be here for. This is a bit of a shame really, because we are not actually trained but it would have been something I would have liked to offer. Because sometimes, a five minute phone call is going to be beneficial to them, but it's not something we can provide. We are a signposting agency. So, in terms of support, pre-charge is not something we know really much, apart from signposting to other support agencies. Post-charge if they have got concerns about going to court or what the actual process is like. We can advise and support them, you know, a little*

*bit through to that. But in terms of our actual support, we don't really do it, we signpost to other people. (Lighthouse staff 3T).*

Staff identified that one of the key ways in which Lighthouse could provide the enhanced services to victims was through communication, acting as a focal point for victims, investigating officers, and support providers so that everyone was working together for the victim and communicating through the VWCO as a single point of contact;

*If you picture a spider diagram, you've got the victim in the middle and everyone's trying to contact the victim so all the spikes coming out of the spider – that was the victim. So what we wanted to do was replace the central point with the Victim Witness Care Officer and put one direct communication link down to the victim, so really it's to kind of take the victim out of the middle, put a Victim Care Officer in who knows a little bit about the process, understands the court process with one direct feed. And then that was also to work alongside the officer in the case. So we would have really strong links with lots of different organisations, co-located so we could very quickly and dynamically be able to support that victim through horrific times (Lighthouse staff I2).*

### ***Achieving its goals?***

In terms of whether VWCO's believe that Lighthouse is successfully achieving the aims set out for it staff were overwhelmingly positive. However they also suggested that there has and continues to be some teething problems that need to be resolved. These successes and problems will be discussed in turn. In relation to the overall success of Lighthouse in terms of staff perceptions about whether they are proving a good service to victims, staff suggested that those they had worked with and spoken to had generally responded well to Lighthouse. For example a member of staff stated;

*It's definitely achieving it. Having worked in the Liaison Unit previously, so picking it up at that late stage of charge and then obviously you would speak to people potentially for two years. But when you're working with them throughout the investigation you understand their journey a lot better. You can definitely have that better relationship with them because they haven't had to explain themselves several times as you've spoken to them from the start. So, if they've had ups and downs throughout that process, you've been with them along the way. So, come to charge and go through that court process, which is really difficult, you've already got such a good relationship with them, so it's definitely beneficial to the victim (Lighthouse staff I1).*

While another staff member discussed how;

*In terms of putting victims first I really think it does, I'm not entirely sure what was there before, but when you speak to people, the majority of the time they are really pleased to hear from you, even if it is 'actually, I'm fine but thank you for calling'. I really like that because I think they feel, 'oh brilliant, someone's listening to me, I'm being taken seriously. They are looking into it, and even if they can't do anything I've been told why they can't and I've been told what to do in the future and what we can get anyway'. So it's not there yet, but we didn't expect to be there yet, but we're on the right road with it (Lighthouse staff I3).*

In terms of why staff believed Lighthouse was achieving its aims a number of processes that had been put in place were discussed in terms of the ease and speed with which they enabled staff to support victims. For example a staff member described how;

*I think simply its communication. It's being able to very quickly go to an Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor and say 'I've got this person at the end of the phone that needs support now, are you able to help?' That's a massive benefit, before it would have been an email sat in an email box, it could have been delayed, we don't know what's going on. I think it's preparation for court as well, being able to build people up for court. Because previously the victim might not know about court until charged and then a couple of weeks later they were in court, but if we can talk about court even before they're charged, and start to kind of drip feed the idea that you might have to go to court, building up a bit of confidence just so that it's not a big shock. Some people find it really hard to go to court, so that also helps (Lighthouse staff I2).*

Another staff member suggested that it was the ability of VWCO to work with the victim throughout the duration of their case (pre charge to post charge) that enabled them to get to know the victim and really help make sure they were getting the best support available to get over the trauma of their victimisation;

*Certainly I think, having that holistic approach from pre-charge, from the minute an incidence is reported, that initial contact with the victim, taking them all the way through the Criminal Justice System (CJS), and if it does end up in court I certainly think Lighthouse is achieving that based on the feedback that we have received from victims (Lighthouse staff 2T).*

Additionally staff members identified how that first point of contact was important and how most victims were appreciative of this phone call. They also identified that it was often necessary for them

to differentiate themselves from the police when making this first contact as some victims were apprehensive about speaking to a police officer. For example, a member of staff noted:

*The majority of times it has been quite successful and they appreciate the phone call. You have to establish as well that you are not a police officer because sometimes they think you are a police officer, and you say no I am a civilian police staff, victim support side of things. So you have got to establish that with them but generally, sort of they acknowledge it, they are appreciative of the phone (Lighthouse staff 3T)*

### **Understanding victims**

Staff members all identified how it was vitally important for them to have background knowledge about the victim and the offence they had been a victim of before making contact with them. They suggested that this not only enabled them to empathise more with them but also allowed them understand the best way to approach and speak with and thus gain the trust of victims;

*I find that even if I don't fully understand where that person is coming from, the fact that we do background checks and we look at that person, it allows us to have a good understanding of what they're experiencing. I think we look at the character of the person so we've got that empathetic nature, but we're also good at rationalising and looking at what that person needs. So yeah, I haven't found that a struggle (Lighthouse staff 13).*

Another noted that;

*Yeah, I think you do get a feel, I think the whole point of when we get given an initial job and we do those background checks on the people that are involved, you kind of...you have an overview of what's gone on there. Doing those checks gives you a feel for the person in this situation and you don't go in to it cold (Lighthouse staff 1T).*

The ability to understand and learn from this was seen as particularly important for those individuals who were repeat victims, it allowed staff to understand not only the issues they faced but also why Lighthouse and the support it can offer may not have been successful previously thus hopefully altering their experience and outcome the next time. As a staff member explained;

*Case by case, there's some people we've really been able to engage with, really been able to go over and above, but that's very much reliant on the Victim Witness Care Officer and also the time that we contact. We get daily repeat victims into our workflow who don't want to engage, who aren't happy with the service or don't want to engage and I think that's sometimes a bit of a negative onto the staff. You think this time might be the time that we*

*get that chance. I think that's where the Victim Witness Care Officer comes in because they're able to understand the situations, because they're able to see, if they're constantly seeing the same person they can figure out what didn't go right last time so they can do it differently this time (Lighthouse staff I2).*

Finally, staff explained how because of the range of backgrounds people come from who come in to contact with Lighthouse being able to understand and speak with each individual differently was important. To achieve this having background knowledge and understanding of the person they were talking with was of vital importance. As a member of staff described:

*We have got different victims from different backgrounds, from different cultures, from different experiences and certainly the relationships which we built with those victims help to further understand those situations. The barriers in terms of getting victims to court and things like that, um, could be in terms of the risk, so for example you have got a high risk domestic violence victim that could be fearing in terms of giving their evidence, we have to be very mindful of things like how we contact that victim, whether it is safe to send a letter is it appropriate to send a text message, are they able to receive a call on a particular number? All that sort of thing comes in, in to play. And if we can have those conversations and set the best method of contact that can obviously make a real key difference to that victim (Lighthouse staff 2T).*

### ***Multiagency work to facilitate and support Victims needs***

Understanding the victim and building a rapport with them was seen as key to being able to make sure the right support was being offered to the victim to maximise the benefits they received from Lighthouse. Part of this involved making sure Lighthouse staff was aware of the different support agencies available and how these could be accessed by or for the victim. As described by a member of staff;

*We offer lots of different support. We have a website that we can refer to that offers a vast amount of different agencies. We also have a victim support booklet which again offers more agencies than I could name that help for loads of different things. They cover everything from emotional support to psychological support to housing. We do crime prevention and drugs, alcohol, mental health. Everything, literally everything (Lighthouse staff I1).*

In terms of discussing how the referrals to these different agencies work the same member of staff described how;

*We've got different pathways, sometimes we refer by email with our victim support and domestic abuse advisors, and if we support to SARI which is support against racial incidents, those referrals are done directly by email through the computer system we use. But then the ones that we haven't got direct contact with that work with us within Lighthouse, it could be a phone call, it could be sometimes self-referral, so we can give the information to the victim and they can seek advice go direct and self-refer. So there's lots of different ways that we refer. Sometimes we send letters and leaflets, and that leaflet then tells them how they can refer themselves. It seems to work (Lighthouse staff I1).*

In terms of working with other support agencies staff discussed being able to work with and refer into agencies who are co-located with Lighthouse as well as those who were not. They also identified that they constantly search for and find new agencies to meet the needs of the victims they are working with. As a member of staff described;

*In the office we've currently got Victim Support, they deliver emotional support through volunteers, we've got 3 domestic abuse advisors – independent, they're also employed by Victim Support, we've also got a NEXT LINK worker who is Bristol's main domestic abuse charity, so that's our main link with them. Every Monday for a couple of hours we get somebody from SARI come and sit in, talk to staff about any of the hate crimes that are going on in Bristol. So currently that's the stuff we offer in house and then externally, along with SARI we've got all the Bristol hate crime services like MIND, Brandon House etc. But anything where they offer a service we would look to refer in. We're not ring-fenced to only offer these voluntary services, on occasions I've thought 'Oh, I haven't heard of that before' type in into Google and see what comes up. I think a lot of it is because we're trying to find our ground, especially with being so new, and the problem we get is a lot of these services change quickly as well, so it's constantly 'they've lost their funding, where do we go now?' So it's constantly reviewing (Lighthouse staff I2).*

Staff members described how referring to agencies who they did not work directly with on a face to face basis was not problematic, however they did find working with co-located support agencies slightly easier and more effective. For example discussing whether co-located agencies are easier to engage and work with a staff member stated that;

*I would say equally receptive, but it's easier to do it in house. Just because you've got that face- to-face, you know that person, I think it adds a little bit more trust because you know that works going to be done. It's human nature isn't it, just the way you work, you know that*

*person, you have that relationship, you have that professionalism and you'll be able to deliver that job. When you're constantly talking over the phone or on email you lose that a little bit. However, we have got some very good services out there who will keep us updated with what's going on, makes sure we're in the loop at all times (Lighthouse staff I2).*

However staff did identify that they were beginning to build good relations with some agencies who weren't co-located simply due to the amount of people they were referring to them and thus the amount of contact they were having with people within these agencies. For example a staff member noted how;

*Even though they are not co-located, we are having so much contact daily because they are dealing with high risk DV victims who are our victims that we are trying to get to court. We have to have those conversations on the phone, the fact that we are talking daily is really helping with our relationships. It would be good if we could co-locate and obviously it is a lot easier, practical and things can happen quicker if you are sat next to somebody but certainly I wouldn't say just because they are not, we haven't got those relationships, because we have" (Lighthouse staff T2).*

Despite this, overall the favouring of the co-location of support agencies with Lighthouse staff was shared among other interviewees as through co-location they could be sure the victim was receiving the support they needed from these agencies. As a staff member said when talking about their confidence in the agencies they refer victims to;

*With certain organisations, especially the ones that are in the office, I'm extremely confident. I know exactly what these people do, how hard they work and how much time they put into trying to look after that person. With other ones we would literally never hear from them again" (Lighthouse staff I3).*

Staff members also discussed how they believed that Lighthouse was perceived well by other victim support agencies and the partners they worked with despite it being such a recent development. For example a staff member when asked about how they thought Lighthouse was perceived by other support agencies said;

*The majority I think definitely [view it] positively. I haven't personally spoken to any support agency that hasn't wanted to help, they've all been very approachable and usually very helpful with us and giving us information, And it is, like I said before, speaking to the same people, I think that is helping quite a lot. I think that they view it positively (Lighthouse staff I1).*



### ***Referral and Communication issues***

Despite positive staff feedback about multiagency working and support, staff also identified a number of issues in relation to the services provided. These related to issues of communication, problems with some providers and gaps in service provision which will be discussed in turn.

In terms of communication VWCO's suggest that often they feel like they are the organisation that do all of the communication and that this proactive interaction is not reciprocated enough from some agencies. This leads to some frustration but also concern for the victim as the staff member is not sure what has been provided to the victim nor how it has been received by them.

*The tricky thing is, it's all about communication as well which works both ways...But I feel that everybody wants the Lighthouse to communicate with them. But they are not prepared to communicate with us. So, it's all about communication and everyone wants us to communicate outwards but they don't want to communicate to us. (Lighthouse staff 3T).*

Another staff member identified how they do not receive feedback from the agencies referred to about what has been done for the victim and therefore are left feeling unsure how helpful Lighthouse has been for that victim;

*I would love to know that the victim I spoke to over the phone...if I have identified their needs, so I referred them...that they are getting that support and their needs are to be met. Otherwise, what's the point? (Lighthouse staff 2T).*

Additionally staff discussed how because of the lack of feedback and communication they receive from some of the agencies referred to they cannot be sure of the quality of the service their victims receive unless the victim actually comes back to them to let them know;

*The avenues definitely, sometimes the actual support I question because I've had a victim before who, we're told, we're given a list of people who can give support and what support they can give to those people. I once referred a lady to this support that I was told was applicable to the support that this particular lady needed, and she phoned them and she phoned me back and said 'they won't help me'. So the avenues definitely, there are avenues to use out there and we can do our best to offer them and try and refer them to the right people, but there are a couple of agencies that aren't maybe as good as they pretend to be. They tell us they offer all this, but when you actually refer these people, they're not getting the help that they need (Lighthouse staff 12).*

Building from this, staff members also identified that there were gaps in the service available to victims in some areas. For example a VWCO described how;

*There are definitely holes in the referral pathways that we have, we get things coming in maybe time and time again that we need to set up a really good referral for like mental health is one of them, drugs/alcohol, things like that (Lighthouse staff 12).*

Another staff member suggested some of the issues about gaps in service is that they are constantly changing (for example due to funding) so it is difficult to know for sure what services are available where and for who;

*The problem is that these pathways, we can set them up all day long, but the way that services are commissioned, it means that they might not be there in 5 months' time and we're going to have to do this work again. There's always going to be an element of that in our role because it's an ever changing environment for us. It's embarrassing if I speak to someone and say 'listen we've got this really good organisation called this and I'll put you in touch with them' and then they call me back in a weeks' time saying 'yeah, they're not going on past October so...'. Or they might not call me back, I might be left with a dead end and thinking right no one's there again and I find it really embarrassing. I think I should be able to say to someone 'listen, this is there at the moment, if they can't fit you in, we know this is coming in, in the New Year and this is who you'll be able to talk to, so just hold in there, call me if anything happens but there will be something on the horizon for you (Lighthouse staff 13)*

Another staff member described similar issues and how to overcome this they are constantly researching services online but that this is very time consuming;

*I tend a lot of the time, I tend to, once I have looked at the situation, I'll Google. Because what I found, I was referring people to agencies and when you look they have run past because they have run of funding so I always look on Google and make sure that what I have got, obviously not the agencies we deal with all the time, but anything new or different we haven't done lately I will check it because there is nothing worse than oh yeah go to this website and then they go and its shut down. So you just have to keep up to date with who is staying and who is getting money really, which is really difficult (Lighthouse staff 1T)*

As previously noted, co-location of support services was universally viewed as a good thing. Staff suggested that it aids relationship building between Lighthouse staff and support services, leads to better joined up collaborative team work, communication and overall allows staff to have greater

certainty that victims have received a good service. Non co-located services are viewed as slightly more hit and miss in terms of the services they provide victims (some had shut or changed when victims had been referred to them) so staff were concerned about the implications for victims satisfaction and cope and recover. A centralised list of all commissioned services continually updated would help staff rather than having to spend a long time trawling the internet to try and identify and find relevant services.

### ***Lighthouse acting as a safety net?***

One of the positive issues identified by Lighthouse staff was how it was able to help pick up, identify or make sure vulnerable victims were not missed within the system, acting as a kind of safety net for the Constabulary. A member of staff described how being able to look at the context of an incident and the background history of a victim enabled them to identify issues of vulnerability that at first glance may not be apparent. They could then take action to try and contact and work with that victim whereas previously this vulnerability issue might have been missed;

*I think the staff themselves probably question some of the reports they get sent, especially when it comes to domestic abuse, some of the – I hate to say it – the lower level domestic abuse, the standard risk, so arguing over an X Box controller or a telly remote, they would see that as very minor in the one incident and this is when we've got to be really key on our training because that incident might be minor but it might have been the tenth time it's been reported that week and how do we know the next one won't be major? So let's just look at the bigger picture rather than that one incident and try and tackle it and not put your police glasses on and try to smooth over this, let's tackle it as a bigger picture (Lighthouse staff I1).*

Staff also discussed how at the moment they are receiving a high level of referrals that do not fit the vulnerable victim criteria and therefore Lighthouse shouldn't be working with them. They identify that this is linked to increased concern within the constabulary not to miss vulnerable victims but that this is having an undue impact on their caseloads and taking time away from those victims who should be receiving the enhanced service. For example a member of staff explained how;

*Because we are all quite new and we want to provide that safety, yeah, actually I think it might be, but we are finding at times they might have written scared or something against the enhanced service, then it's ok, they might be scared but actually are they vulnerable are they an enhanced victim, if you like, for our service. We are looking at using our own professional judgement management, when we get incidents in to think is this a vulnerable victim or not. Have they just used it as a way of triaging it and I am not quite sure so we need*

*to have those conversations and the management team. Have a discussion as to whether it would be appropriate. Because not everybody wants a call from a Lighthouse service, Victim Support whoever and what we need to be careful of is we don't um overload the system, so that we deal with everybody and we need to keep it for those in most need; because we don't have the resources so it is not an enhanced service if we are dealing with everything (Lighthouse staff 2T).*

Despite this, another member of staff suggested that the call handlers are getting better at identifying vulnerable victims and making sure they are flagged to Lighthouse while the VWCO's are also getting better at identifying vulnerable and non-vulnerable victims and thus who should have enhanced service. However staff members also guarded against complacency and suggested that vigilance is important in making sure they don't miss anyone and give vulnerable victims the enhanced service VCOP (2015) states they should receive;

*We have done extensive training with the Incident Assessment Unit at Headquarters. They're the people that assess vulnerability and for them to come into our unit. They are doing a really, really good job in my opinion, it's very difficult for them to assess vulnerability when someone's on the end of the phone, because a lot of it is phone work, which there are some cases where I'm like 'well that's not vulnerability' but there's some cases that are cracking, they've done a really, really good job and that's the majority of the cases. It still needs to go further, we will never know if we're missing someone until something happens. We do need to constantly be proactive, constantly training, constantly running reports to see if we're missing anyone just so that people don't slip through the net (Lighthouse staff 12).*

### ***Cope and recover***

The MOJ (2012) report Getting it right for victims and witnesses identified that in future Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC's) will be responsible for the commissioning of most of the emotional and practical support services for victims of crime that are provided locally by the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. The report suggested that key to commissioning would be the ability of these services to help victims to cope with and recover from the impacts of crime. While the terms cope and recover remain rather unspecified and though Lighthouse itself refers into such services rather than providing them directly themselves, staff did identify that they had both a general understanding of these terms and also that Lighthouse could play a small but important role within them.

Staff discussed how acting as a central point of contact with a victim and managing their case throughout the victims involvement with the CJS enabled them to build rapport and thus help support the victim in the short term. Staff linked this idea of support to helping the victim become more resilient and therefore better able to 'cope' with their current circumstances. For example a member of staff explained;

*Lighthouse's role, in terms of coping is helping to build that victims' resilience so...lots of things go on, lots of tragedies, lots of things they are involved in. However, if they have got that single point of contact, if it's getting a bit too much or they are not quite sure about when they are required to go to court and how am I going to get there and the rest of it, rather than to go through 101, trying to speak to the officer who might be on rest days, all of that...if they know they are going to have somebody on the end of the line that are managing their case from the victim side of things, and actually going to court then that can help build that resilience because it removes some of that panic. So, certainly that's how I feel, we can start building resilience (Lighthouse staff 2T).*

This linking of resilience building to helping victims 'cope' in short term with the impact of the crime was also discussed by other staff members. They also suggested that Lighthouse could have longer term benefits for both the victim and constabulary in terms of their ability to help the victim recover. For example a VWCO discussed how;

*I mean, I think...I suppose if people get a good service from the start of the process, then their overall experience should be easier, shouldn't it? That's the whole point of us, it's easier. I guess, it can be long term, because it will help them get through that period in their life where they are going through something horrible and move on and forget about it, if the right support has been put in place. I guess, it's got long term benefits, if it's done properly because then people would go away and think, well actually Avon and Somerset aren't too bad, you know. They have sort of deal with me quite well (Lighthouse staff 1T).*

However, in order for Lighthouse to be able to play a bigger role to help victims cope and recover or to be able to ascertain that the services they were signposting were doing this staff identified that greater monitoring was needed. Staff explained that often they were unaware of the outcomes for victims once they had been signposted to other agencies and also that Lighthouse itself did not have a follow up service. For example a VVCO described how;

It would be nice in quite serious cases to have that kind of aftercare and be able to check on them maybe after a month or two months and just see how they are and make sure that

they haven't had any further problems, that they are coping and they are getting on ok and their lives are a lot better (Lighthouse staff I1).

Similarly other staff identified a need to try and capture information about how well Lighthouse and the agencies it refers victims to have helped them to cope and recover. However they also identify the difficulties of this. For example;

*It's going to be interesting because it's trying to put victims into a box, have they recovered, are they coping? Sometimes it's so grey it kind of fits all of them. There's so many different incidents happening at a time it might be fine today, but tomorrow could be not good, so it's going to be interesting how Lighthouse are going to capture, how we feel victims are in cope and recovery. But we do need to start capturing some sort of feedback. We have our survey which is on our website for some sort of feedback. However we don't have any cope and recover feedback.*

*There is a couple of ways were looking at doing it. We could have a common needs assessment, put a number that the staff rate, like a 1-10 scale, how they think the vulnerability is at the start and then at the end. We could then run the stats off the two. I think that's our initial ideas at the start. We're certainly looking at putting something in with the Home Office Target. What we don't want to do is to burden the staff anymore with admin work, because we're here to support victims, not to fill out a spreadsheet (Lighthouse staff I2).*

All staff was able to articulate an understanding of what cope and recover meant. Staff suggested that Lighthouse can play a key role in helping victims to cope in the short term by enabling them to voice their issues and feel listened to. This support during a possible time of crisis was seen as helping to create some stability and enable victims to prepare for the longer term (recover). However staff voiced frustration that they were not sure what the long term outcomes for victims actually were as there was no feedback or data capturing tool in place to enable understanding of the impact that other support services had had on victims. This lack of follow up meant that staff felt it was difficult to judge the overall service provided to the victim from Lighthouse (directly or from signposting to other services) and therefore difficult to gauge issues of cope and recover.

### ***Lighthouse operational issues: Training***

One of the key issues that all staff discussed was the training received. Generally, it was seen as being inadequate for the role and something that had caused operational issues and concerns for

staff. One staff member described how the training when they first joined did not prepare them for the role they were now performing;

*I started the training with everybody else in September; I had a month of training, which was not all that successful to be perfectly honest (Lighthouse staff 3T).*

Another member of staff explained that they think the training lacked sufficient time and resources to adequately prepare staff for the role;

*I think it [training] has been very stretched, the resources and the training have been very stretched (Lighthouse staff 2T).*

Another member of staff explained how for those coming straight into the organisation and who were also new to working with victims the training failed to meet their needs;

*We didn't get enough training. We were just, on the job training. Don't get me wrong, we get a lot of people coming in from like side agencies to give training sessions and we are having a lot now, people coming in and doing training with us, but I think, the training package was poor, if I am honest, um particularly for the people coming brand new into the organisation. I think that there were a lot of issues that they didn't think about before they recruited us (Lighthouse staff 1T).*

Others suggested that one of the key issues with the training is that it didn't provide much in the way of practical help; For example, about how the VWCO's would work and manage systems and workloads. They felt it was this practical help that would have been very beneficial when they first started to help them cope with the demands of the job;

*It wasn't fit for purpose. So much of it, for sure there is no point in looking backwards because going forwards is the better option, but again, it was done by people who don't know the job and it was all about touchy feely stuff. Had loads of people talking about their organisations, and all we wanted to do is to know what our job was. And they even got to do; right we are going live on 1<sup>st</sup> October. What do we do? What's our job? Because no one has shown us the practical, this is how it comes in, this is how you do. It was all you know, refer to that and everything not the hands on stuff (Lighthouse staff 4T).*

While staff was generally negative about the initial training received, there was recognition that lessons were being learnt and that progress was being made so that new members of staff would receive better training than those who first started with Lighthouse. For example a member of staff identified that;

*The initial training we had in September was very, very intensive. A lot of it was bulked together and it was a lot of the higher end stuff – so you're FGM and your child exploitation stuff, so not the day to day running's of the Lighthouse Unit. So right at the start you've got the high end, because we had to keep business as usual as well, training sort of took a back seat after that. I think that's had a bit of an effect on the team with regards to the actual training itself. We've picked up the pieces recently and we have put more effort in the everyday domestic abuse cases and the thefts and things like that. I think confidence is a big thing as well. As soon as they join the unit, it's a whole new role, nobody's ever done it before, it wasn't here before, so now we've got systems, we've got processes. We're constantly reviewing them so confidence is building up. So hand in hand confidence and training. I would say the first couple of months weren't perfect, but I definitely see us going in the right direction at the moment (Lighthouse staff I2).*

This notion of an improvement in training was also reflected in discussions with other staff members. The idea that shadowing operational VWCO's should and would form a useful and important part of any new member of staffs training was often noted. For example it was explained that;

*There was definitely a strange sort of all over the place training. But I think that's because they didn't really know what we were going to be doing. I think if someone started now, hopefully the training they would give them would be quite different. And I'd say it would be a benefit to shadow someone physically doing the role for a while. So yeah, definitely shadowing would be without a doubt essential for someone starting (Lighthouse staff I3).*

In terms of training there was some criticism of the training provided before Lighthouse went live in October 2015. Many felt that it was not well organised and didn't really prepare them for the roles they would be undertaking or provide the skills or knowledge they might need. The development of on the job training and input from other support services was viewed very positively as something that helped develop their own knowledge and skills but also the knowledge of the services available for victims. On the job learning (shadowing) was seen by all staff as vital for success and it was suggested that it should be fully incorporated into training and then new staff given time to discuss and reflect on this experience by coming back out of the hubs and addressing issues before training finishes and they start.

### ***Lighthouse operational issues: Computer systems***



Another issue identified by staff members was that of computer systems used by Lighthouse and whether they were fit for purpose. Staff members discussed how the referral process on the current system means that they often get cases allocated to them that were not relevant. This was because once identified on the system as enhanced by the inputting person this cannot be altered regardless of whether it was done by error or the inputting individual has changed their mind. As a VWCO explained;

*I think we're getting referred the right people, but I think the system, it's more a system problem than someone not reviewing it properly, it's because they system at the moment, there's a marker on the report recording system that says enhanced service, which is what the Lighthouse offers – it offers an enhanced service, and the option for the enhanced service is a yes box and there's no option for no. Once they've clicked into that box, they can only put yes. So as a system it's a little bit clunky. If an officer accidentally clicks that box, but they don't feel they need an enhanced service they can only use the option for yes and then it comes to us anyway. We're then reviewing it and potentially calling that person when they don't want us hassling them. We've got no alternative, that box has been ticked yes (Lighthouse staff I2).*

Interviewees all identified issues related to using pre and post charge systems that were largely incompatible, were time consuming to access and meant work often had to be duplicated.

*Neither system is particularly very good so it is difficult to, because basically you're going between two systems and obviously the police officers don't have access to the post charge system so we're always having to keep the pre-charge system updated so if the officer needs to look at that, they've got all the relevant information that they need. So it is very difficult (Lighthouse staff I1).*

Staff discussed that while there are two main systems, pre and post charge, they actually have to access and use a lot of other systems as well adding to the complexity and time taken to obtain information needed to work with victims. For example a staff member discussing the IT systems explained that;

*It's a bit annoying, it's a bit of duplication, but to be honest I've never worked anywhere with a good joined up system so I think it's just part and parcel of IT and what we're able to do. So you're saying there's 2 systems, but there's also many, many other systems off of those systems that you have to check and refer to. It is a bit hard when someone call's up and says 'Hi, it's Andy, I need to call you back, someone left a message'. You have to then go, right has*

*something just happened to you, or is someone going to court? And then get onto the right system there. IT can take a while to get used to (Lighthouse staff I3).*

Staff members in particular discussed how the Guardian system was difficult to navigate and time consuming;

*Post charge, the system is fine. Because everyone can access everyone's cases, the system we use is the Witness Management System, it's very simple. However on the pre charge on Guardian, it's quite old school and it's quite clunky. That's where it really lets us down. Covering work isn't easy (Lighthouse staff I3).*

Staff also discussed how they hoped that a new IT system Avon and Somerset Constabulary were going to use operationally might help to alleviate the issues they were experiencing and make the IT system more compatible and user friendly. As a VWCO explained;

*I think they are getting a new system called niche, which is supposed to be coming but I don't know when. But I think this new system is going to be our crime reporting system that will replace our pre-charge system that we're currently using. I think that the new system that we're getting is going to draw information from that post charge system so that when you're reviewing cases that are pre-charge you have got some information for the post charge side of things as well. So you're not looking at both systems. You're hopefully going to be looking at one and working on one (Lighthouse staff I1).*

However staff did suggest that working with the current systems was getting easier the more familiar they became with it. So while it has been identified as a key area of concern it does appear that staff are becoming more accustomed to the different systems and therefore its use is becoming less problematic. As one member of staff explained;

*It's not a problem now because people are getting to that stage where they are faster and they are using the systems more frequently and you know, the more you use something the more comfortable you become. However, previously it was quite difficult for them especially those external people to the organisation. So there is a lot of system heavy work so it has been difficult (Lighthouse staff 2T).*

The number of computer systems required to access information and their lack of compatibility was a cause for concern for staff. Issues about pre and post charge systems appeared to be of particular concern for staff in terms of duplication and time taken to work through. More training on these systems for new staff was seen as important.

### ***Lighthouse operational issues: Face to face contact***

Another issue that most of the VWCO's raised was about the way in which they worked with victims, primarily by telephone, and the lack of face to face contact which they suggested they expected and thought would be of benefit to some of the victims as well as to the staff themselves. For example staff discussed how originally when applying for the job of VWCO they thought it would involve some face to face work with victims and that once they realised that it did not they were disappointed;

*I mean a lot of people that came to this job, when they realised, they came to this job wanting to do that face to face support. Which is what we thought the job was advertised as, and then when we realised the sheer volume of all the other stuff coming in, we said 'we are never going to leave the office'. We are never going to have time to leave the office. And we don't (Lighthouse staff 1T).*

While another staff member explained how;

*you know for me I really enjoy the work we are doing, and it would be a bonus if I could get out occasionally, you know, there are certain...and certainly not every case, but there would certainly be a handful of cases that I think I have supported this victim through this whole process and I would like to be in court with them on the day. But the time isn't there, and I think...I think that's quite important. So that is disappointing for me, but having said that, I am quite happy and despite that little rant um I do really enjoy the work (Lighthouse staff 13).*

Another member of staff explained how overall staff would prefer to be slightly more visible to the victims in their work;

*I think we're quite phone-based. A lot of the staff would, I think, like to go out a little bit more and be a bit more public facing" (Lighthouse staff 12).*

Staff also identified that they felt that on occasion not being able to visit and speak to a victim face to face was problematic in terms of providing them with the initial help and support they needed to then feel able enough to go on and access other support agencies available through Lighthouse. For example a member of staff discussed how:

*I would say the only barrier we have is being able to go out and see people. I think victims like face-to-face contact; they like to be able to see who they're speaking to, especially if we're offering them support. I have a victim now, she is a disabled lady, she's really struggling in the housing that she's in at the moment and she needs to fill in a form and she's*

*going to need help with that. I know I can't assign a police officer to go and help her, but it would be nice if I could go out and help her, but I don't think we have enough people to allow us, we don't have the resources to be able to go out and see them occasionally. I'm not saying every day and not meet every single person, but if we've got somebody who is particularly vulnerable and just needs that face-to-face support or just wants somebody to talk to face-to-face, then it would be good if we could do that (Lighthouse staff I1).*

Staff also identified that this face to face contact wouldn't be necessary or possible for most victims but was something they felt would be beneficial to everyone involved and something that they hoped would become possible in some form in the future;

*For me, it would be that face to face contact. I really feel that, not on all of our cases, but on the ones that are really sensitive or the victim is particularly vulnerable, I feel that it would be much more beneficial that picking up the phone. I have had quite a few victims that are on the phone and they are crying. That's how distressed and upset they are, and there is only so much support and comfort I can offer them at the other end of the phone. But if you are there, it also looks like you have taken the effort to go around and see them, meet with them. Understand them a little bit better. Instead of just like, this is the fact of the case, this is what is going to happen and this is what I am going to do for you. There is a bit more humanness about it. Instead of being a bit technical and alien on the phone. That for me, is what I would like the Lighthouse to do. And I am certainly saying not for every victims, because that would not be feasible" (Lighthouse staff 3T).*

It was also suggested that plans were in place to train VWCO's to be able to take victim impact statements so that in certain cases staff would be able to leave the office and meet with the victim. This was something viewed positively by staff;

*There are plans in the pipeline to get that working, so victim personal statements, we're training 3 people up to take victim personal statements, so that would mean that those 3 guys would be able to go out, so that helps. Being able to absorb as much as the victim stuff as possible and making it as streamlined as possible , we'll be able to then release more staff to do it (Lighthouse staff I2).*

Staff all suggested that when they initially applied for the position they were under the impression that some of the work would be face to face with victims. Staff suggested that this is something that some victims really want and in some cases is something which they feel would help the victim cope and recover. Additionally, being able to provide some face to face contact was viewed as important

to the staff's sense of professional identity and morale. While they recognise that caseloads mean that it would be too time consuming to do this with all victims they would overwhelmingly like to be able to do this in certain cases, perhaps in terms of collecting victim impact statements.

### ***Lighthouse operational issues: Workload***

Workload was an issue that all of the staff interviewed discussed. The pressure this placed upon them, their ability to provide cover for colleagues and their ability to provide a comprehensive service to victims were all issues of concern for them. For example, some VWCO's discussed that it was the range of work and victims that they were having to deal with which was causing a problem. They described how;

*One of the weaknesses is actually the amount of work that Victim and Witness Care Officers have to do. The case load aren't necessarily heavy in terms of numbers but the fact that we are dealing with antisocial behaviour, we are dealing with crimes, we are dealing with crime-related incidents, we are also dealing with post-charge, pre-charge...is a lot really"(Lighthouse staff 2T).*

One of the issues staff identified as problematic both for them but also for Lighthouse in terms of its aims to deal only with those victims deemed to require an enhanced service according to VCOP (2015) was that this wasn't all they did in practice. This is because post charge they are required to deal with everything and everyone, including vulnerable and non-vulnerable victims as well as witnesses.

*It's the volume, it's the sheer of volume....when we came to this job. We were all under the impression that we were dealing with enhanced victims, and we are not. We are dealing with everything. Pre-charge, we are dealing with enhanced victims; post-charge we are dealing with everything, everything that goes to court. Because the Witness Liaison Unit that did all of that work prior to the Lighthouse has been disbanded that work had to go somewhere, but we weren't aware that it was coming to us. So that, I am very passionate about it, I am very angry about because we were misled massively with that and I don't think it's appropriate. I think there should be another unit, smaller unit that deals with petty theft, you know, but we have to deal with it and I don't think it's appropriate. My time is better on enhanced victims (Lighthouse staff 1T).*

Staff also identified that trying to find a balance between dealing with the demands of pre and post charge work was difficult and caused anxiety and frustration regardless of the overall amount of work they had. As a VWCO discussed;

*I can manage my caseload fine. I spend half of the day on pre-charge, the half of the day in post-charge. So, I split my casework fine. But when they are going oh its pre-charge, it's pre-charge, it's pre-charge...and something comes up in post-charge, what do you do? (Lighthouse staff 3T).*

The impact that workload generated by Lighthouse was having on staff welfare was also something most interviewees raised. For example;

*It is and it feels even after how many months we have been going, it has been a long time since I have come to work every day feeling a bit sick. With, you know the worry of it. And I know a lot of colleagues would say the same, a constant pressure. And I think we are all willing it to work, we want it to work but physically how you manage it, like I said (Lighthouse staff 4T).*

Others suggested that while current staffing was sufficient to deal with current high workloads it did mean that there was little flexibility in the system and this was problematic. For example a staff member discussed how;

*We've got a very high work load with staffing at the right level to cover the work, but there's no flexibility there's quite a lot of admin work which is a lot of paper filling, a lot of red tape, so if that could be changed or given to another team, then that could free up some of the time of our Victim Care Officers (Lighthouse staff 12).*

Staff discussed that while they felt pressured by their workloads their line managers were trying to be supportive and help staff manage which was appreciated. As a member of staff explained;

*the team leaders are quite good, if you say 'this is difficult, I'm not going to get this work done today, or tomorrow I'm going to have to be allocated less', they're quite good like that (Lighthouse staff 13).*

Work load was an important issue for staff. While some said they were coping they still suggested it was high and impacted upon them. Others suggested that they were struggling to cope and that this was having a detrimental impact on both their own wellbeing and the service they provide to victims. Staff also identified a key issue which they believe was unduly affecting their workload. They argued that this was also an issue for Lighthouses claim to be dealing only with enhanced victims. Staff said that while pre-charge they are only dealing with enhanced or vulnerable victims, this changes at post-charge stage, where they have to deal with everything. For example, everything that goes to court staff have to call about (whatever the case relates too) as well as send letters out to all

involved in the cases. Staff suggested that the Witness Liaison Unit used to do this before Lighthouse, but that the unit has been disbanded and the work have simply been put upon Lighthouse staff. Staff were angry about this and raised issues about how they were supposed to provide a service to enhanced victims if dealing with everything. They argued that this problem was having an undue impact on their workload and a detrimental impact on their ability to provide support to enhanced victims as per VCOP (2015).

***Lighthouse operational issues: Single point of contact issues and working with the Officer in charge (OIC)***

Staff discussed how they felt that there is a slight tension and contradiction between some of the different aims of Lighthouse and therefore confusion about what it actually does and how. For example staff discussed how there were issues associated with acting as a single point of contact and helping guide victims through the criminal justice system and signposting victims to support services relevant to their needs. VWCO's suggested that the former aim was often conflicting with the other two aims so that in practice they were not the only party in contact with the victim. They also identified how this often resulted in them either feeling like they were stepping on someone else's toes or that they didn't have the full picture about what was happening with the victim.

In terms of acting as a single point of contact and guiding victims through the CJS there is a tension between the role of the officer in charge (OIC) of the case and the key worker. Questions were raised about who takes primacy in terms of keeping the victim informed, when and why. Staff suggested that this was at times creating tension between the OIC and key worker;

*I feel it would be beneficial if they (OIC) came in here. If they sat with us for you know an hour or a day and actually saw what we do and vice versa. There are a lot of barriers as well with other departments as CID and detectives um they struggle with the concept of us. If that's right. I think they like to think that they have got good victim contact and face to face. So what's a two minute phone call to victims' support, you know. What does it really do that they can't do? But then on the other side, they are clearly lacking in some areas...thus the Lighthouse had to be developed. But it's trying to find that, I can't find the word...that leeway really, where we can all work together and give victims the best thing (Lighthouse staff 3T).*

In terms of acting as a single point of contact and signposting the victim to other services staff suggested the same is also true. Staff stated that receiving support from other services means that there will be other people in contact with the victim throughout their time with Lighthouse which can on occasion lead to issues about who takes the lead with the victim and when. They also

suggested that this created a problem in terms of feedback about victims care and cope and recover as it makes it difficult for the key worker to know what the victims are doing/going through and therefore be certain of the impact Lighthouse has had on their experience. As a staff member explained;

I love the idea of Lighthouse. I do love the concept of it...but I do not think that the concept of it works. I don't think it does what it says it should. I feel that, you know, we are there and we do phone the victims, once they have reported the crime, just to see how they are. And I do think that some of them do benefit from that. but being that single point of contact as to what we are, stating we are and advertised as...we are not, in my opinion, there are certainly way too many fingers in each pie, case wise anyway but...yeah, it's tricky (Lighthouse staff 3T).

### ***Overall staff perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of Lighthouse***

Throughout the previous analysis a number of strengths and weaknesses have been identified as they relate to staff perceptions of the overall impact of the Lighthouse and the effectiveness of its processes. The most commonly identified strengths and weaknesses will briefly be summarised with supporting data to help set out areas to improve and areas to build upon. In terms of strengths the victims focused approach and the way in which Lighthouse attempts to put the victim at the centre of what they do was identified as a big strength. As a VWCO explained;

*The strengths, hugely is our progress to meeting the PCC's priority, and we are putting the victims at the heart of everything we do. We are making those phone calls, we are checking in. We are doing clear need assessments, we are actually completing these special measures applications, MG2s and actually we are doing more than what we were set up to do...in my mind, which is a massive success (Lighthouse staff 2T).*

Similarly another member of staff explained that this victim focus was a big benefit of Lighthouse;

*The strengths are that obviously victims of crime get to speak to a single point of contact, potentially, throughout a very difficult process for them because it is, I couldn't even imagine how difficult it is for them. And again, if they are repeat victims of crime they can speak to the same person and not having to repeat themselves, or having to repeat their story because that person should be aware of it (Lighthouse staff 11).*



As well as being victim focused the passion and skills of the staff at Lighthouse was also identified as a big strength;

*I think that one of the main strengths is that we're not done by crime type; we're very much led by the vulnerability of the victim. This means that we're not pigeon holing people, we're not putting them in boxes, we're supporting them as a human being. I would say that's one of the main positives and also that the staff we've recruited are really, really good and really, really keen which has only helped it grow successfully (Lighthouse staff 12).*

These strengths of victims focus and staff skills were also discussed by others;

*Strengths, definitely speaking to people very quickly, providing timely updates on what's going on, being that person that if they're just not hearing from the officer in charge or they just don't know who else to talk to we're there – that's really, really good and also the general team we're working with are very, very good and if they don't know what to do with someone, one of us, between us will find a way of helping that person, so that's really, really good, just the type of people they've employed for this job are very, very good at it (Lighthouse staff 13).*

The importance and value of the staff of Lighthouse in delivering the service vulnerable victims of crime deserve and require under VCOP (2015) was further discussed by others. For example;

*I think our biggest strength is obviously the people, because obviously they are all brilliant, they are all really caring, they have recruited really well actually. It sounds like a blow away trumpet, but I think the people I am working with, I have listened to them on the phone and you think, if I was a victim I would love to have that person on the end of the phone. Because they are so good at communicating and then putting people at ease and I think, that is a real strength (Lighthouse staff 1T).*

In terms of most commonly discussed weaknesses of Lighthouse a number of interlinked issues were identified by staff. The first weakness commonly identified was the overall workload staff faced and the impact this had on them and the service they provided. As a team member explained;

*The only negative that I can really say, because I do, I really do enjoy the job, I am very passionate about doing it, but it's too much. There is just too much, and there is too much c##p we shouldn't be dealing with. And that is my main concern. The concept of it is brilliant. You know, I think it will go from strength to strength once people get more educated about*

*us and get used to us being here and once officers get used to us. I think it will really glow and flourish, but something has got to give in terms of the volume that we are dealing with (Lighthouse staff 1T).*

Other staff members agreed;

*One of the weaknesses is actually the amount of work that Victim and Witness Care Officers are having to do (Lighthouse staff 2T).*

While others similarly identified the impact this was workload was having;

*I enjoy the job and I like being busy but sometimes it's being busy...it's beyond busy. You know, in most jobs you get maybe half an hour within the day when you kind of think oh, I can just go through my emails and sort them out or I can go back with some old stuff and sort that out. We never get that, because it's just relentless. New work, new work, new work coming in all the time. So you never get any downtime (Lighthouse staff 13).*

Other weaknesses staff identified were around lack of adequate referral services and the tension around being a single point of contact and the issues that emerged with this when doing the job in practice. Summing up these issues a member of staff explained how;

*There are definitely holes in the referral pathways that we have, we get things coming in maybe time and time again that we need to set up a really good referral for like mental health is one of them drinking/alcohol, things like that. That needs to be worked on and also there's room for improvement in terms of single point of contact. That's one thing that definitely needs to be looked at in my opinion. I just feel like we need to focus on that more and there's sometimes a pressure to meet targets within a certain amount of time, rather than saying 'actually someone's coming in tomorrow or someone's coming in in 48 hours and actually they'd be the ones to make that phone call because they've built up that rapport with someone. So yeah, that's my opinion (Lighthouse staff 13).*

The tension around being a single point of contact was also explained by other staff members. They described how it was not just other agencies that made this single point of contact claim problematic but also the fact that shift patterns, holidays and rest days meant that this was simply not achievable in practice. For example a victim witness care officer described how;

*I would say the weaknesses are, and it's probably really, really trivial but staff. So like rest days, and which everyone needs rest days, I appreciate that – everyone's got to have days off, it's just that we're promoting a single point of contact where you don't have to tell your*

*story seven times and really, realistically they may have to. So that's quite a big weakness (Lighthouse staff I1).*

Overall however there was unanimous agreement that while there had been teething issues and there were some weaknesses that should still be addressed Lighthouse was a great improvement in terms of providing victim care. As a staff member summed up;

*Um well for sure it touches more victims than whatever pre-charge was in before. No question with that, it can only be a good thing because pre-charge previous was only with our most vulnerable and intimidated you know, you could only, it was only a few little people that we would add on to the spreadsheet. Only touching a few people, so undoubtedly it has improved that. People are getting contact where they wouldn't have before, so it's a good thing. And it will only get better (Lighthouse staff 4T).*

### **3. STAKEHOLDERS UNDERSTANDINGS AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF LIGHTHOUSE**

Interviews were conducted with 12 stakeholders involved with all three Lighthouse hubs. A number of interesting and interlinked themes emerged from interview data collected which help shed light on both process and impact issues associated with Lighthouse which have relevance for both victims and staff.

#### ***WHAT IS LIGHTHOUSE?***

All the participants recognised where the idea for Lighthouse came from (MoJ, 2012; VCOP, 2013), but saw it more as being driven by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner as well as Avon & Somerset Police (Steadman, 2014) rather than by central Government. The participants believed that the OPCC was putting victims first based on their understandings of the existing systems and the impact that they have on the victims experiences (PCC, 2014).

*They wanted to make victims experiences better. She talked to people [sue Mountstevens] to find out about what happened. She heard a lot about the amount of different people that clients had to talk to, the confusion... having to talk to more than one person. So she did consult with us and consult with victims as well. [Stakeholder, participant 8]*

However, in its own way the creation and establishment of Lighthouse created issues for the organisations that support victims in Avon and Somerset as they felt that it impacted on the way that victims were processed, dealt with and how the stakeholder organisations carried out their roles. *Initial fears were that Lighthouse would be taking our work away from us,*

*this is before we had a Lighthouse, before we knew what they were... there was a real sense of confusion about what their work was... [Stakeholder, participant 11]*

As the implementation of Lighthouse progressed all the stakeholder participants grew to know what Lighthouse was and how it was meant to function. The stakeholders developed a clear understanding that Lighthouse was victim focused and aimed to address victim needs throughout the criminal justice process (Steadman, 2014).

*From my perspective it's a one point of contact for victims of crime and they are telephoned after the event or the incident and offered support. And that could be victim support that could be SARI that could be; there are lots of different external agencies that could be. And they are kept updated throughout the whole process, the criminal justice process, of what's happening with their case. [Stakeholder, participant 1]*

Stakeholders recognized that Lighthouse was not there to help all victims of crime, but rather it was there to assist a more bespoke, vulnerable and specialised group (MoJ, 2012; VCOP, 2013; Steadman, 2014).

*Lighthouse, as far as I am aware, they are another point of contact for victims. My understanding is that the police service has an enhanced service for victims of crime, including sexual abuse, domestic violence, hate crime etc. The police can refer to the Lighthouse, who can then decide where that victim goes and what happens to that victim [Stakeholder, participant 7]*

Although, many of the stakeholders stated that Lighthouse was couched in the language of victim support and assistance it was really a signposting service designed to let victims know who they should talk to and why rather than a service to support victims to cope and recover with their victimisation. The signposting function of Lighthouse was seen in a positive and negative light by the stakeholders, with some feeling that Lighthouse was another bureaucratic procedure adding to the existing system which could lead to increased victim disengagement, whereas others saw this Lighthouse as a positive leading to increased victim engagement.

*I have two versions, what they would want it to be. This idea of Lighthouse being a single point of contact that cuts out all these other people and that there is only one person that the victim goes to... I kinda feel, I kinda feel... and this may seem harsh... I kinda feel that they might just be another person on the list... so instead of being one person that deals with everything that the list has just increased by one. So to start I thought that it was a single point of contact, but I have started to realise that its more of a signposting and updating; but*

*missing the key elements that make a victims journey worthwhile and positive [Stakeholder, participant 11]*

*My view of Lighthouse then would be... it's the enhanced crime... they are meant to be the first point of contact for these victims of crime, offer support and then signpost on to other services . They keep in contact with victim throughout the whole process from reporting to court, to sentence. To offer support and emotional help, but mainly to support [Stakeholder, participant 10]*

Interestingly, the participants felt that, at times, the victims who were processed through Lighthouse were not necessarily clear on what Lighthouse was and their knowledge of the system was inconsistent; reinforcing that Lighthouse was just another service in an already crowded marketplace.

*Sometimes people get confused.. Who are you? I have had the police on? The Lighthouse on? Who are Lighthouse, are they the police? I do not think that that is Lighthouses fault, people are confused – they have been a victim of crime and lots of people are all talking to them. But they are a listening service and all victims have that number and they can call up themselves and feel empowered. I think that, if I am honest, giving the clients that I work with.. I would say that the majority of my clients if said the Lighthouse they would say who? They might remember that Lighthouse was the police, but in terms of remembering the details... I think that more people would not know rather than know.. [Stakeholder, participant 9]*

Which lead a lot of the stakeholder participants to state that as Lighthouse develops and the roles of the different parties become more defined this confusion will dissipate, arguing that over time victims will feel more reassured by the service.

*They [the police] have come into to do a mapping of services, because there was a lot of duplication. Do I think that the Lighthouse will work eventually, of course I do. But there have been changes, cuts, reallocation which are all difficult. It's good having one person that you can go to get all the information that you need [Stakeholder, participant 7]*

In the main, the majority of stakeholders where positive about Lighthouse and the work that they were doing, recognising that it is early days for the team and that it needs to grow. The stakeholders felt that it time Lighthouse was making progress, that it was adding to the victims and stakeholders experiences within the criminal justice system.

## **VICTIM EXPERIENCES PRE – LIGHTHOUSE VS LIGHTHOUSE**

The stakeholders believed that, in the main, the change from the pre-Lighthouse system to Lighthouse was a beneficial one which victims benefitted greatly from (PCC, 2014).

*The strengths are the victim has that person, crime in general, that the victim has that one person to talk to, who as time goes on they will have a lot of knowledge about what could be useful, what isn't useful, what could help that victim. [Stakeholder, participant 1]*

The stakeholders were split in their perceptions of what the new Lighthouse system had replaced in terms of victim support with some thinking that Lighthouse was replacing a problematic system, whereas others believed the old system worked well and should not have been changed as much as it was. Some stakeholders did not necessarily believe that their own experiences of working within the criminal justice, courts and police systems had improved; instead feeling that they were now out of the loop and limited in what they could do to support victims. These stakeholders felt that the old systems worked better for them because they had more of a central role in the victim's experience of the Criminal Justice System.

*At first I struggled, not with crime in general, with DV and I still struggle a little bit, I'm not going to lie, I still believe that we should be the first point of contact for victims of high level DV. [Stakeholder, participant 1]*

*Victim support was a totally different organisation pre-PCC whereby we dealt with a full range of crime including burglary, assaults, what we would have considered once upon a time, core crime. We're not getting that any more unless those clients self-refer to another part of the organisation. [Stakeholder, participant 2]*

*Previous to Lighthouse we had a DATE team; it was smaller but more personal. It worked well; we shared tasks and responsibilities together. But it was a small team. Then... Sue Mountstevens said that it was going to change, it did and that's how we became involved. [8.1]*

*From our perspectives and the victims perspectives it was a really good model, you had support from domestic violence officers. If you want assistance you could call them up and they would visit the victim with you. In a way this has inserted an additional layer between us and the officer in charge. In some ways this helps and in other ways it's a problem. [Stakeholder, participant 10]*

Whereas others thought that the pre-Lighthouse system was really confused, problematic and difficult to use; arguing instead that Lighthouse had ushered in a new more effective and better fit for purpose system that really enhanced the victim experience, which reflected Police and OPCC thinking (PCC, 2014).

*Previously you had response teams and it was so inconsistent, you could phone up and get different responses within the same postcode. You could phone up and not get the correct person; it could be a couple of days before you could talk to the right person. [Stakeholder, participant 6]*

*I think the research was showing that prior to the Lighthouse, people had contact with numerous individuals and it can be a bit confusing trying to work your way through the criminal justice process and the idea is to just streamline that, have one dedicated person which will be the witness victim care officer and those appropriate referrals made. [Stakeholder, participant 3]*

However, some stakeholders felt that there was no real difference between what occurred before and during Lighthouse, that all the introduction of Lighthouse did was rearrange roles and replace responsibilities; therefore stakeholders talked to different individuals, groups or teams but their roles in supporting victims had not changed that much.

*In terms of being a single point of contact for professionals, that's what the skew was; we have just replaced the skew with Lighthouse. In my role it's useful to contact one person for all the information; if I had to do it to would take longer. It's useful but it's not life changing [Stakeholder, participant 12]*

*When we started this, it came from the police and it was quicker. But now we hear that by the time we get the referral they have been through the police, SARC, Lighthouse and then us. Just another person. [Stakeholder, participant 7]*

Some of the stakeholders did not think that it was the new Lighthouse system and procedure that made the difference to them, but rather it was the individuals who worked for Lighthouse that made the difference.

*We were really lucky, because we have properties across the three Lighthouse hubs... the person that did our victim call back in our main area [xxxx] for the police is now part of Lighthouse so we have that connection; in the other areas it was hit and miss, so it has improved. [Stakeholder, participant 5]*

The main concerns that participants voiced in respect to Lighthouse was how they were contracted to work for it, the impact of its current funding strategy and inconsistent amount of referrals they received from it.

*There is a tendency to forget that we are not statutory. That we are always looking for funding. That we are trying to support victims and fighting to stay alive..... I sometimes think that they may forget that we are not social workers [Stakeholder, participant 11]*

*But it's there and it's in the background and that's certainly the reason we've come to be part of the Lighthouse, but it wasn't necessarily a choice thing from Victim Support, it was a necessity because we wanted to still provide our services to victims so we needed the funding and the funding was Lighthouse. But with that said, there has been a huge amount of positives and I'm actually very pro-Lighthouse but it is just such a limited budget, is incredibly pushing our services so perhaps we're not delivering quite as well as we could be, or we can't get the support in place quite as quickly because it's only me trying to process all the referrals. [Stakeholder, participant 3]*

The stakeholders felt that victim experiences had improved with the introduction of Lighthouse, but that their own experiences and involvement with the victim had been negatively impacted. This resulted in some stakeholders feeling side-lined, disempowered and wanting to be able to do more for the victims themselves.

### **LOCATION OF STAKEHOLDERS**

Different stakeholders had different working relationships with Lighthouse, based on their role and contract, but the stakeholders who were co-located within Lighthouse teams stated that it was best change that had happened since the development of the programme.

*Yeah, so I've been involved with victim support for just over 2 years now, so I was formally working with victim support when it was funded by ministry of justice. With our funding changes we were obviously looking to be funded by the PCC and within that, which meant co-location within the Lighthouse team. So my job transferred over from being independent, if you will, to moving into the Lighthouse structure. There are other agencies that will be co-located in with us, so we'll be looking at children's advocacy service, adult's advocacy service, the SARI – looking at hate crime. So really it's ensuring the needs of that person are met, that they get appropriate support that they require. [Stakeholder, participant 3]*



The majority of stakeholders who were not co-located within Lighthouse hubs wanted to be placed there, they saw it as the only way to effectively work. Although, as one stakeholder pointed out, there still needed to be separation between stakeholders and the Lighthouse so that boundaries would not be blurred.

*We needed to work in partnership more, at the end of the day we need to make it work for victims, for the people out there. How do we make it work? We need to be in there? We are funded by the police, but we are not the police; we need to make it work. We need to be independent. We agreed that we would have as ISVA based at a police station one day a week [Stakeholder, participant 7]*

*We are planning to co-locate with Lighthouse one day a week, a member of our team will be placed with Lighthouse. [Stakeholder, participant 6]*

Co-location was seen as important because it allowed better working, the development of a cohesive team and an increase in understanding of what every part of the team did on a day to day basis; it improved multi-agency working and better streamlined the victim experience (PCC, 2014; Steadman, 2014)

*I'm totally in favour of the co-location. It's really helpful. It helps us to help the victim because we've got first response downstairs, so there's someone that can answer any question, usually within Lighthouse. And also we can support them. They come to us with cases, 'I've got this case XXX, it's a medium and I'm really worried because of this and that' and then I'll advise accordingly [Stakeholder, participant 1]*

*The co-location for me is very... its only positives for me, we are a big partner and our customers come into contact with other services. Being able to share information and to do that quicker is therefore important to us. We will have access to police, partners and systems we won't have to wait. That will be really helpful. Stakeholder, participant [5]*

*I think it's really positive, it's incredibly helpful that I can go and have a conversation with the person who's made the referral, and it's that easy, they've got the information sat in front of them and they're only round the corner from me. And it doesn't have a delay then in the same way as if you're communicating by secure email so personally I find it really positive and helpful and I think on the flipside they've found it really helpful that they can come and check things with me before offering it to somebody knowing that perhaps it's not the right thing then. [Stakeholder, participant 3]*

Another benefit of co-location was a more integrated approach to referrals, especially in making sure that the level of risk, type of case and appropriateness of the referral to stakeholder organisation was correct. Stakeholders who co-located believed that they had more of say in the referral process and that they could effectively input into it, therefore making sure that Lighthouse was functioning efficiently.

*I think it's quite good actually. We have more liaisons now with police and the actual referral process than we ever have done in the past 10 years I've worked for the organisation.  
[Stakeholder, participant 2]*

*The only way that we are going to get access to more information is through co-location  
[Stakeholder, participant 8]*

Only a small number of participants were not bothered about being co-located within the Lighthouse hubs, they did not see it as important or contributing to their roles. These participants felt, in general, that Lighthouse worked well and that they were getting the referrals and interaction at that they wanted; they were happy to be independent and the current system worked for them.

*From my point of view, I don't think that [being co-located] stifles our relationship ... they are at the end of a phone. They are beside the skew team; we can talk to both... I think that we speak to them. We can pop in and say hello, we have visited them as a team and they have visited us [Stakeholder, participant 10]*

In the main, Stakeholders stated that being in the room with Lighthouse staff made their jobs much easier in that they could ask questions of each other, discuss any case at the point of contact, discuss risk levels effectively, discuss the support that was available to victims more effectively, get feedback on decisions and support each other better.

### **WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH LIGHTHOUSE**

All the stakeholders interviewed had a positive Impression of Lighthouse staff, believing that they were doing a good job and they were able to work well with them.

*We're lucky enough that we work with these guys and it is a really good relationship we have. [Stakeholder, participant 1]*

*Yeah, definitely I certainly personally speaking feel very integrated into the team here and they go out of their way to involve me and keep me updated with things that are very specific to Lighthouse and I feel that, speaking to my colleagues, that that's the same in other hubs so I think in that sense Victim Support is included, yeah I would say so. [Stakeholder, participant 3]*

*It depends on the member of the team, but I have to say they are all getting there. We're all bedding in and it's getting there and they are. [Stakeholder, participant 1]*

Issues that stakeholders had when working with Lighthouse were about specific Lighthouse team members and not the Lighthouse system itself; with stakeholders believing that some individual team members could be difficult and others fantastic.

*"For me, I would say for the majority of the time positive. I have a list, I have my favourites... I have a list that I would call first; they are good, they are on it. There is shorter list that is more negative, the correspondence is shorter and sharper" [Stakeholder, participant 12]*

*After a couple of months we sent two members of staff over, one that deals with medium and one that deals with high risk victims. They did not believe that it was a 100% positive experience. Their feedback was that they were glad that they went that their faces were seen... but they... I suppose felt that they had wished more had come out of it. [Stakeholder, participant 11]*

The stakeholders gave positive feedback on the Lighthouse management group believing that they were committed, responsible and approachable.

*Yeah, definitely. Again personally speaking I've got a good relationship with the team leaders and people like xxxx; I wouldn't hesitate to contact them. [Stakeholder, participant 3]*

*I had really good meetings with managers that have now shifted around a bit, I thought that they were all really good PR people, very good speakers ....I was impressed, anyone would be, about their vision for light and victims. But the people on the ground, their actual team has had a lot of staff turnover and not all of them are adapt, they tend to overly risk, making them more high than they are [Stakeholder, participant 11]*

The stakeholders felt, in the main, that they were treated as part of Lighthouse team with their opinions being listened to, respected and acted upon; none felt that they were ignored or bypassed.

*Well, they will give us as much support as we need. We're quite self-sufficient, we get the referral, we get the work and work alongside Lighthouse to make sure that victims where they need to be. But they would do anything I think, if it's....we do a lot of it ourselves, but if it's something we couldn't do, that needs to come from a police angle, they're very supportive. [Stakeholder, participant 1]*

*I think that they are more confident in our service because they know what we are doing and they are not competing against us. It all helps..... They have wanted to know what we do, so that they can recommend us wider. [Stakeholder, participant 8]*

In addition, the participants appreciated the fact that they were often invited to attend Lighthouse training sessions, as it helped with team building and co-working.

*I think that they want to support us more, there right people and there and they are keen to bring us in. I think that at the moment they are trying to established, so we don't get involved. We are invited to their training and we are invited to train them; which is going to happen. [Stakeholder, participant 7]*

The majority of stakeholders where pleased that they had been asked to be involved in the training of Lighthouse staff at the start of the programme. They felt that this showed the senior Lighthouse leadership team recognised that approaches to supporting victims needed to change believed that effective training was need to provide realistic support. The stakeholders found that the Lighthouse staff knowledgeable, enthusiastic and eager to learn.

*As far as I have been aware, based on the meetings that I have been at, Lighthouse check what applicant's backgrounds are, what they know and then everyone gets training. They all get a day's training on domestic violence; on sexual violence ... don't worry about it. But that's good, a day is good, two hours is not, but a day is. [Stakeholder, participant 9]*

However, some stakeholders wanted to be involved in more staff training, change the staff training that had happened and have more of a say in ongoing staff training, but this had not happened. The stakeholders believed that Lighthouse staff needed more training on specialist areas and that staff should receive refresher training every couple of months.

*We got involved when everything was set up and in place, I visited xxxxx site and talked to them. Well I never talked to the team, only the managers and team leaders. I did offer to run a training session but they said that they were going to do it all, which is fine." [Stakeholder, participant 11]*

*They asked, it has not really happened, they asked if they could shadow us. They asked if they could come out and see a client with us, but it has not really happened. I don't think that they have time really. But I think its god for them to come out and see what we do [Stakeholder, participant 8]*

In addition to this, reflecting comments from Lighthouse staff above, the stakeholders felt that Lighthouse staff needed more training in respect to emotional support, resilience and self-care. The stakeholders were concerned about how the Lighthouse staff coped with the information that they were given on a day to day basis and the fact that they had to do informal supervision for them.

*I don't want to speak out of turn, certain not for the Lighthouse team, but when we have talked to them they stated that they feel that they have not been prepared, been trained, to handle that emotional onslaught that comes with the job. They ask us, when we meet up, how do we handle it. We have a relationship with people, day-to-day, we know that we are going to come back and see them next week; which is different to taking a distressed phone call where you have never meet the person. In a way it's easier for us because we have met the person. [Stakeholder, participant 10]*

*I think that there are a lot of them; I think that they are asked to be specialist or at least baseline specialists for a lot of issues. I think that there is a training need that needs to be built on, I did some of the original training. They don't need to be experts, but they do need to keep abreast of changes. [Stakeholder, participant 4]*

The stakeholders reported positive working relationships with Lighthouse stating that Lighthouse staff wanted to engage with outside agencies, praising the quality and regularity of communication between them and well as Lighthouse staff. In terms of training it's important to note that stakeholders feel that Lighthouse staff need more specialised training in certain areas as they believe them not to be experts in every specialised area that Lighthouse caters to. Which is paradoxical as stakeholders seem to be criticising Lighthouse staff for not being them while at the same time stating that Lighthouse does not do the same job as stakeholders; therefore being the question of how much training, what type of training and training for what purpose do stakeholders feel that Lighthouse staff need?

### **PASSING OVER OF INFORMATION**

The majority stakeholders got all of the required information that they needed from Lighthouse during the referral process to be able to help the victim in the most appropriate fashion.; therefore feeling that Lighthouse was meet its own and the governments key objectives for improving the

experience of victims in the Criminal Justice System (PCC, 2014; Steadman, 2014; MoJ, 2012; VCOP, 2013)

*The referral comes in with a risk assessment, full information, a full guardian report and full information on the victim. If we do not get all that we need we can go back and get more. [Stakeholder, participant 8]*

The stakeholders identified two problematic areas in the referral process, (1) Risk Identification and referrals, and (2) information sharing.

#### Risk Identification and referrals

Not all the participants understood how victim risk levels were established within the referral process, whether it's done by members of Lighthouse team or another part of the system, they did not feel that the guidance and procedures were clear.

*I think that it's really unclear; I have had conversations with the Lighthouse and the skew, about who makes the decision about risk and who has the final say. There is still a part of me who makes this decision. [Stakeholder, participant 9]*

The stakeholders concerns about Lighthouses ability to define risk were based upon the referrals they are getting, with some stakeholder agencies receiving different volumes and types of referrals than pre-Lighthouse. The stakeholders view Lighthouse staff as being poor at correctly defining risk and therefore make poor decisions that result in an inappropriate referral.

*We seem to have to have months were we spike [in terms or referrals] and then have months with less, it's more inconsistent. But I would say that we have more inappropriate referrals compared to when we work with the skew. We get some that are medium risk that we can't contact.. [Stakeholder, participant 12]*

*I think that the occasional danger... I want to say that there have been occasions when people have been borderline high risk and they have been allocated medium, and that is problematic [Stakeholder, participant 9]*

*There are gaps, I think cases do slip through and that's more likely to happen when the victim has been a high risk before and then it comes to us as a medium. The next one's a verbal, so a verbal argument, so that makes them sort of standard/medium, but they've been high risk previously so in our view they're still high risk, so still on our radar. So that's questionable and it sometimes isn't picked up. And I only see those because the medium come into my tray*

*as well, into my email box and I filter them out to (XXX 18.30) and other agencies and I say 'actually that's not medium, that's a high'. Another hiccup I think it is, and that is all it is, is sometimes they don't know we're working with them. And I say 'why don't you know?' 'Because you don't document it anywhere', 'yes we do, we put it on Guardian', 'well we don't check Guardian' 'well you should be' [Stakeholder, participant 1]*

This means that the type of victims being sent to the stakeholders has changed over the course of Lighthouse, which impacts the amount of work that the stakeholder organisations get and, ultimately, their capacity to do their jobs.

*I would say we're getting different referrals. We're still getting a fair amount, but we're not getting that core work anymore. I'm not going to say, we're not getting enough referrals, we are getting plenty but it's just that, the persistently targeted, the vulnerable, the intimidated, they're the only ones we're getting. So we're getting more of those, but we're not getting the people that perhaps would benefit from our support. It's difficult to describe really. [Stakeholder, participant 2]*

*We get a lot... we worked alongside the sexual assault referral team we got a lot of medium and high risk victims. We get a lot of low level offences come through, as its still comes through the sexual offences act. So we get a lot of people's bums being touch over a bikini or peoples bums being pinched in work... and while that is as sexual offence in its own right. We never received those offences and now we do, so we have had to change our ways of working. So our workload has increased. [Stakeholder, participant 7]*

Consequentially, stakeholders feel that they are not necessarily being used in the correct way, that they cannot effectively help victims and are, potentially, coming into conflict with Lighthouse staff.

*"I had a Lighthouse member of staff say to me, they will say it to us more than xxxx because they managers can hear everything, that they think someone is not getting a good enough service" [Stakeholder, participant 11]*

Although, it must be stated that some stakeholders thought that the Lighthouse staff's inability to clearly define risk and refer people inappropriately was actually good for some victims.

*Some of what the Lighthouse do is the same as what we do, so if there are no domestic violence advisors involved the Lighthouse are doing really good work. Those ones that don't meet ISVA threshold, the great thing about Lighthouse is that the deal with some of those medium risk clients that other organisations won't do. [Stakeholder, participant 4]*

The all the stakeholders found that the Lighthouse team was approachable if they wanted to discuss a case and its level of risk , regardless of co-location, but those stakeholders who shared an office space with Lighthouse found this more so.

*We go back to them and say are you sure this is high risk, we question it now, sometimes... But it takes time and it means that we cannot hit the ground running [Stakeholder, participant 11]*

*They have never consulted with me [about risk level] I feel that the Lighthouse consult with the skew and that all happens before the referral gets to us. Sometimes we get it and look at the log and see that it was high and has been downgraded to medium before being referred to us. In those circumstances we pick up the phone and say that this needs to be high risk. [Stakeholder, participant 10]*

#### Information sharing

The stakeholders believed, in many, ways that the Lighthouse system work as well for them as it did for victims of crime.

*When it works well it really helps us, I think that actually instead of being a single point of contact for victims it's actually a single point of contact for professionals...it's really helped us [Stakeholder, participant 11]*

*In my role it's useful to contact one person for all the information; if I had to do it to would take longer. It's useful but it's not life changing [Stakeholder, participant 12]*

The stakeholders, despite the positive working relationship between Lighthouse staff and stakeholders, had a mixed perception on the ability and willingness of Lighthouse to share information with stakeholders.

*I have found that they are good, lots of contact and they are good at sharing information with us, where the case is and what is needed to help them. Before Lighthouse it was difficult to get that information from the police, because of data sharing, and how it's much easier. I have had a positive experience. Whereas previously you had response teams and it was so inconsistent, you could phone up and get different responses within the same postcode. You could phone up and not get the correct person; it could be a couple of days before you could talk to the right person. [Stakeholder, participant 6]*



*[information sharing] was an issue at the beginning , it was more guarded which was difficult for us as we had a long history of information sharing with the police... especially when you understand that the teams where coming from a range of different places. So there was a lot of learning about what they could share, couldn't share. Which was frustrating for us when we needed information fast. [Stakeholder, participant 10]*

Information sharing was a major issue for the stakeholders who did not get all of their data, or referrals, via Lighthouse.

*Because the information comes via the SARC, who cut and paste it, not from the police, like it used to, it means that information can be missing. That someone has made a decision to exclude something, which can be frustrating for us. [Stakeholder, participant 7]*

Some stakeholders commented that having access to Guardian helped them fill in the gaps in information, where necessary, as well as making them feels part of the Lighthouse team; however, not all staff had access to Guardian.

*We feel very blessed because we have access to Guardian so we get a very basic referral and if I was working out of a police station, so away, remotely, then I would question in the information that we receive – I'm not going to lie, but we are lucky enough to be to have Guardian so we can check. [Stakeholder, participant 1]*

The stakeholders are, in the main, positive about the referral system, information sharing and collaborative provision provided by Lighthouse; but they do feel that it can be improved, that Lighthouse staff can get better at identifying risk and passing more information over. The participants are quite clear that the volume and type of referrals made to them impacts their capacity to do their job, and although this is improving, they are not clear that Lighthouse fully understands their roles or services.

### **VICTIM ENGAGEMENT**

The stakeholders felt that Lighthouse provided a clear victim focus and high standard of response to victim needs. Lighthouse staff were seen as responsive, passionate, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, skilled and victim focused. The stakeholders felt that Lighthouse was fulfilling the PCC, and Avon & Somerset's main aims for the service (i.e., improved and engaged victim support) (PCC, 2014; Steadman, 2014; VCOP, 2013).

*I'm just trying to think of a negative example; I have only had customers tell me of positive experiences. It's about having a point of contact, sometimes the victims know more about the case [because of Lighthouse] than related professionals. [Stakeholder, participant 6]*

*They really like it, they like the joined up thinking and feel supported. Customers here tell me three things they want the problem dealt with, they want it dealt with quicker and they want to be informed about it; Lighthouse does all of these things. [Stakeholder, participant 5]*

The stakeholders recognised that sometimes when they heard bad feedback about Lighthouse they did not always take it at face value as they understood that victims, and vulnerable groups, present certain challenges and that there were other factors at work outside of Lighthouse's sphere of control.

*Yes, I do, I do think they're very good. They're only as good as the information they receive so what worries me is that court updates are not coming in for 2 days so you have got a victim who, I'm, I can look at it from a DV aspect, so you've got [an offender] who's in custody and then he's knocking on your door because he's been let out on bail or whatever and no-one's told her. [Stakeholder, participant 1]*

*The problem is whether Lighthouse has access to information, when they do have it I think that they will be prompt in trying to get their clients updated ... if they cannot then they may call us and ask us if we have chatted to the client. It's making sure that Lighthouse gets all the information ASAP so that they can pass it on, but this is a national issue [Stakeholder, participant 10]*

Consequentially, the stakeholders felt that it was their job, sometimes, to support and assist Lighthouse staff with clients; especially when these victims were difficult or hard to reach. Stakeholders thought that it was good that they could call Lighthouse on behalf of their clients to ask additional questions, get more information or act as an intermediary.

*We know what it's like to get hold of our clients, it can be challenging. We say to them to tell us and we can try taking to the clients, then there is two of trying to get through [Stakeholder, participant 9]*

*Over time, it came out that they [Lighthouse] needed us more than we needed them and this came out most clearly with court reports, because they did not have any way of getting this... their role is keeping the client updated.. But they are not necessarily getting court results; it can be up to three days later. Because we sit in the specialist courts.. We were walking out and phoning them [Stakeholder, participant 8]*

*I know that sometimes with victims that sometimes there is the question that they wish they had asked but did not, we can phone [Lighthouse] and ask that question on their behalf. [Stakeholder, participant 5]*

However, some stakeholders warned against co-dependency, arguing that Lighthouse and third party organisations should be separate and work independently.

*I think that the people who are there want to do a good job that they care about victims. Do they keep them updated? Yes, but it's another person doing it. We do it too. We need to figure out who should do it, so that time and resources are not wasted. {Stakeholder, participant 7}*

Stakeholders feel that Lighthouse, within certain parameters, does a good job of informing clients about their cases and updating them on important information related to them. There is recognition that this is not always perfect and that there can be issues, but that the level of victim engagement from the police via Lighthouse was better than it was before.

### **COPE & RECOVER**

One of the main driving forces behind the development of Lighthouse was to help victims 'cope and recover' (MoJ, 2012; VCOP, 2015; Steadman, 2014; PCC, 2014); but this is also the most challenging aspect of Lighthouse specifically and victim support more generally. All the stakeholders had a clear idea of what 'cope and recover' was (MoJ, 2012; VCOP, 2015), stressing that it was a victim centred and self-driven task, not a one-size-fits-all model procedure. The stakeholders believed that the victim's outlook was central to 'cope and recover' and they were the only ones that could drive it forward; therefore it was personal not procedural.

*What does cope mean? It means staying in touch with professionals, staying engaged with the process. Then recover is not becoming another victim. So in terms of domestic violence it means sticking at something, hopefully getting a positive outcome from it, and then not becoming another victim. So being able to progress with your life without domestic violence [Stakeholder, participant 11]*

Whereas other stakeholders believed that 'cope and recover' had a much broader remit, believing it to be emotional as well as procedural.

*It's everything, isn't it? It's making sure that the victim has someone that they can contact in respect to their situation. Having an understanding of what the options are, what the risks are. It's so complicated and so individual [Stakeholder, participant 9]*

Some stakeholders were quite cynical about 'cope and recover' saying that it was really about targets, outcomes, funding and a broader government agenda.

*What does cope and recover mean to us, well it's a term that we have to use because of funding. [Stakeholder, participant 11]*

All the stakeholders felt, quite strongly, that cope and recover was part of their remit not Lighthouse's. They struggled to see how Lighthouse engaged in helping the victim to 'cope and recover'; instead feeling that Lighthouse's role was just supporting the victim through the criminal justice process.

*I think we do the recovery, I think we do the cope and recovery... it's great that they get more information but a lot of this was available before Lighthouse. I think it's expanded, there are more people involved than very before. I don't see how Lighthouse can do recovery; the only one that I can see is that victims have a positive outcome and that they can move on with their lives. But the emotional stuff, day in day out?? I am not sure [Stakeholder, participant 11]*

*Yes, I feel that they do, certainly if nothing else, by making the referral over to the appropriate agency. Yeah, I feel that they do. [Stakeholder, participant 3]*

The majority of stakeholders separated the coping and recovery processes from the police investigation, court case and sentencing; instead believing that this happened post Criminal Justice System when the state was no longer involved and the victim was on their own.

*I find that people cope well in a crisis when they are busy, through court, the trial, etc. It's when everything is done, the perpetrators gone and they are moving on that the coping and recovering starts; often when all the agencies have gone [Stakeholder, participant 10]*

*No Lighthouse don't, and quite often we are not there by that point; we try to be but often we are not. They are there to signpost, refer and help. I have not heard anyone say that Lighthouse is calling them up to see how they are, how's the dog and do you need help? I think its longer term work. [Stakeholder, participant 9]*

The majority of stakeholders believed that coping with as well as recovering from crime was long term, individualistic and depended on the crime in question; therefore making it challenging to conceptualise and evidence.

*Cope and recovery is more of an emotional thing for victims. I don't know how much time; I get the impression that Lighthouse has a lot of cases so I don't know who much time they have to help victims to emotionally recover. [Stakeholder, participant 12]*

*I mean, certainly from victim support's point of view, one of our key things is building resilience in people to get back on their feet and to move forward from what they've experience, so I suppose that's the recover element. Cope, I mean it's a difficult thing isn't it? If you're looking at an anti-social behaviour case for example, that's incredibly difficult thing for someone to cope with because they're living through it day in day out and it's not the problem going away, it's surviving through the problem which is incredibly frustrating from the victims point of view. I certainly agree with the 'recover', 'cope' I agree because I have to because you can't change things over night for somebody. [Stakeholder, participant 3]*

The stakeholders felt that although the concepts of 'cope and recover' were problematic but that Lighthouse was making a good attempt at supporting victims; however, they were not sure that this could be achieved by anyone but the victim and that Lighthouse was empowering the victim to make this change. It was interesting to see that all the stakeholders believed that 'cope and recover' was

their role and not Lighthouse's, especially when the PCC placed this role at the centre of Lighthouse's remit (PCC, 2014; Steadman, 2014). Therefore, raising the questions of whether there is a boundary issue happening between the stakeholders and Lighthouse over this issue or whether Lighthouse has not done a clear enough job of defining and delivering 'cope and recover' in its service?

### **AREAS FOR LIGHTHOUSE IMPROVEMENT**

The stakeholders struggled to think of anything negative about Lighthouse or areas for improvement, instead arguing that they saw Lighthouse as a significant and important development in support for victims.

*When I talk with our customers they tell me that they have talked with Lighthouse, Lighthouse contacts me sometimes as well. We work well. [Stakeholder, participant 6]*

Although, not seen as a problem, the stakeholders reinforced the need for speedy and appropriate referrals from Lighthouse to them; stressing that the more efficient the referral system the more they could help the victim.

*When the case comes into Lighthouse, it being assigned to a Victim Witness Care Officer, depending on their workload, it can be a couple of days before they've had contact and then they might be struggling to get hold of them and we're already talking 4 or 5 days potentially after the crime comes to me, whereas before perhaps it used to be a bit more immediate. So sometimes there can be that time delay and I think that can be an incredibly frustrating situation for a victim to find themselves in because the situation is happening then, so they need the help at that point not two weeks down the line. [Stakeholder, participant 3]*

The stakeholders felt that there were some aspects of co-working that reconsidered, including broader access to data, access to other services and access to all the information which Lighthouse had access to.

*We would like more access to the court system, LIBRA, and Guardian. [Stakeholder, participant 9]*

*I would say LIBRA and Guardian, it would be helpful for them to too, and it would save them time. We could look things up rather than them doing it all the time. [Stakeholder, participant 10]*

The funding of services through Lighthouse was an area that a small number of participants were concerned about and felt that Lighthouse, and the PCC, should review current funding strategies.

*In terms of weakness, I'm not sure it exactly answers your question, but I think funding has been the biggest weakness from our point of view. It's stretched our service to, it's incredible, the amount we're funded by is significantly reduced from what we were previously funded by. [Stakeholder, participant 3]*

The stakeholders reiterated that they thought that Lighthouse was a good system, but it was important to recognise that it was not the only system within the Criminal Justice System and, therefore, it had its limits.

*I can't separate Lighthouse from the criminal justice system, as they are the police; maybe rebranded but they are the police. We know they are the police. I think they do it [cope and recover] for victims who have rang the police. [ Stakeholder, participant 11]*

*It varies, some people when going through the police will want to use it and others will not; instead wanting direct support from other organisations and not wanting to use the Lighthouse. If they come to us separately, we will still work with the Lighthouse [Stakeholder, participant 10]*

The stakeholders have stated in many themes, including this one, that they have a positive working relationship with Lighthouse and that they think that it is developing well; however, they do state that it is early days for the programme and that they have sympathy and support for the staff involved.

#### 4. VICTIMS UNDERSTANDINGS AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF LIGHTHOUSE

In this chapter the experience of victims and witnesses is measured by reference to the objectives underpinning the creation of Lighthouse (Steadman, 2014, PCC, 2014) along with the Ministry of Justice's Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (VCOP, 2015). The victim data discussed in this chapter is drawn from a number of differing sources and involves 28 victims: 6 victim interviews conducted by the research team; feedback from 5 victims detailed in Lighthouse Good News items which feature positive client feedback; 6 victims from an internal report examining questionnaire responses from victims of serious sexual offences, feedback from 5 victims detailed in a spreadsheet (hereinafter Spreadsheet Data) which included feedback on Lighthouse performance, another spreadsheet entitled Lighthouse Survey Results (hereafter Survey Results) which covered November 2014 until September 2015 from which useful data involving 5 victims was gathered and finally, a secondary media source featuring 1 victim. Careful attention was given to ensure there was no replication of the same victim feedback from these various sources. A small number of cases were excluded from the analysis on this basis.

The Lighthouse Good News feedback should be read in context. It only features positive responses and is to some degree skewing the data presented here. This feedback comprises data from victims, witnesses and feedback communicated via a third party. In the latter case this should be treated with some degree of caution in terms of the tone and wording of the feedback as it is not the words of the victims themselves.

##### ***UNDERSTANDING OF THE SERVICE OFFERED BY LIGHTHOUSE***

In order for a victim and witness service to be successful it should be able to clearly communicate its role to service users so as to encourage confidence and engagement. The interviewees, with one exception, had a good understanding of the purpose of Lighthouse. For example,

*So you are in a place that if you didn't think you feel comfortable, you are safe and not alone. So very much there ... it's pretty much a bridge if I were to put it in to words. A bridge, if you like, between the police and the person going to court. (Lighthouse victim interviewee 2]*

*It's just to keep anyone who's been a victim of crime or had some sort of incident like a road traffic accident and gives information about going to court, having a chat about things, and asking how they're feeling about whatever. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 3]*



Interviewee 6 reported a very poor experience in what appeared to be the very early days of Lighthouse. When asked to explain the purpose of Lighthouse, the interviewee stated:

*No, they didn't tell me what Lighthouse was, at no point. So I asked, when you say when you ask would my daughter like support, in what way would you be able to provide support and why would you be providing support? And then I was told they provide an enhanced service because my daughter was a minor and they could help. And I said, well I don't know because I've not asked her yet, but I'm not clear about what you provide either. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 6]*

### **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

Pre-Lighthouse data suggested that the provision of information, empathy and being kept up-to-date about the progress of a case were factors that victims of crime viewed as very important (McCartan *et al*, 2015 para. 3.2; Steadman 2014). The findings of this evaluation suggest a high degree of victim satisfaction amongst most victims:

*That was working very well. I was informed by [the VWCO] very promptly actually, in the various stages. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 1]*

*'I had a call from a lady [VWCO] ... basically she has contacted me so that I can attend to court and to see if I needed any assistance. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 2]*

*Every single little sort of, even niggle or worry I have had, [My VWCO] has immediately been there with a solution. I left a message for her to ring me and she was back within an hour and a half, which is pretty good going ... she was the only one I have actually had contact with. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 2]*

*Contact was made after I reported the crime. I received a phone call and also a letter. I was also referred to a website. I thought that the phone call was very timely ... and very considerate. It was also positive and encouraging in terms of the information and tone of [the caller]. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 5]*

*I had a letter come through the post and a few emails, they rang me up, it's nice, they keep you – you know if they say they're going to ring you, then they ring you. They use phone, post and email. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 3]*

*[Lighthouse] kept me up-to-date and provided information about the investigation and about going to court, the impact statement and generally caring for victims. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 4]*

*'[W]hen I said, could you call back in 20 minutes and they called back in 20 minutes and that's when this process started.'* [Lighthouse victim interviewee 6]

*[The Lighthouse VWCO] kept me informed about the case on a regular basis by telephone which has helped me feel valued and positive that progress is being made in the case, especially as there were some issues regarding bail conditions being set and [the VWCO] has pursued this with the CPS. [She] has shown professionalism and acted with diligence and integrity in the performance of her duties while maintaining a high level of respect for my safety' [Lighthouse Good News victim 6]*

*Regular contact from Lighthouse was great [Survey Results victim 3]*

This and other feedback also suggested that having a VWCO who was a named point of contact worked well. For the purposes of this report we have anonymised data, but there were a significant number of named VWCOs and Lighthouse staff generally who were praised by interviewees, as well as in the other data. **This data will be discussed throughout the chapter. Prior to the introduction of Lighthouse, research suggested that 'Victims can have dozens of different contact points during their journey through the criminal justice system'. (Steadman, 2014, 11) There is little evidence from the victim data that there has been a problem of multiple victim contacts by differing Lighthouse staff. Indeed, the data in this chapter generally points to the VWCOs providing a good quality service with evidence of continuity, follow up and an impressive understanding of individual victims and their needs. Indeed, the victim data suggests that Lighthouse has gone some significant way to achieving its strategic goal of providing 'greater ownership of the whole journey of a victim, reducing handovers and providing a "single point of contact approach"'. (Steadman, 2014: 10)**

However, early feedback (November 2014) from one victim suggested that some problems did exist. Specifically, the problem of multiple contacts was raised by one victim:

*Whether it was victim support who contacted me, or the dozens of other organizations I personally sought help from, ALL without exception only existed to pass leaflets to the victim which then directed the victim towards yet another organisation who did exactly the same. This is the level of help available. [Survey Results victim 2]*

This case was an exception to the general trend. Another interviewee (who was the mother of a child victim of crime) had a very poor experience of a VWCO at the first point of contact:

*I didn't feel very confident that the person on the telephone was taking the crime down because she didn't ask for my contact details, or anything I would have expected her to ask for including a name and a number. So I felt dissatisfied with that, not least because I was concerned the perpetrators might still be loitering in that area because the place where my daughter was mugged was close to our house ... She was apologetic, she did say you'll just have to bear with us because we're new, she kept saying they were new which didn't instil confidence in me. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 6]*

In this case there were significant delays in getting the crime logged. The interviewee went onto explain that she was told that there had been equipment failure, the call handler had not made notes and another staff member was attempting to record the crime. There appeared to have been confusion amongst staff. She continued:

*But it turned out after about 8 times of being put on hold for the call handler to get advice from her manager, that it was a new system. And she said that she apologised, she was very professional, but I was getting quite irked because 45 minutes was a long time to report ... [Lighthouse victim interviewee 6]*

While some of these occurrences can be partly explained by the bedding in of a new system, there were clear failures to explain, to take basic contact details and to offer to ring the interviewee back rather than leave her in the phone for an extended period of time.

### **QUALITY OF COMMUNICATION**

*Every time the perpetrator went to court, they contacted me and let me know what was going on and what the court decided. I thought they did very well. They kept me informed. They let me know what was going on, when he was up for trial. Every time the trial was put back etc. It all went very well. As I said, they kept me informed every steps of the way. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 1]*

*[Things were] confirm[ed] in writing, I had a letter with all the dates on there. So, it wasn't just a verbal conversation but I have had a letter confirming date, time and this is what happens here and that is what happens then. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 2]*

*I would say it was very good. The staff were very good at staying in touch and keeping me informed. They got in touch very quickly after the crime. They were incredibly on it, and they were accurate and thorough. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 4]*

*There were numerous updates, but never anything that was clear. But if anybody it was the local officers who did eventually come round, and they were apologetic, but it was sometime later and I said I wouldn't have expected them to because it wasn't a very serious crime, but the officers were concerned because a small child had been targeted in that way. And I think I got more from the police officers, genuinely, than I did from Lighthouse ... And then the time they spent with my daughter as well, it was the time that they spent with her that she said, actually I don't feel very confident and they were really good with her, they showed her their equipment like Tasers and genuinely once she had seen them and once they had said this was wrong and don't think there's lots of crime around it was really unfortunate, it could have been worse but it wasn't, but they were so good with her that it was that that picked her up. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 6]*

The support on offer also included providing practical help in a timely manner:

*Lighthouse made contact and my insurance company's paid out on the bike. Lighthouse kept me in the loop. To be honest at first, I didn't give it much attention. It wasn't until months after the incident that I started to think about the court process, particularly if he denies it I would have to give evidence. I know the amount of people who don't turn up to court, as much as I don't want to go, I can't risk not doing that, so the next lot of correspondence came through [from Lighthouse] and there was no pressure. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 3]*

*Because of the nature of the incident it was not a matter of feeling safer but supported and I felt 100% supported by [the VWCO] as I knew I could ask questions and he would come back immediately e.g. with the issue of my employer not feeling they had to give me time off [Survey Results victim 5]*

*Thank you so much for all the advice and help you have given me so far. You really are amazing. You have given me confidence, you have given me sound, practical advice and every time I speak to you, you cheer me up and make me feel better, thank you'. [Lighthouse Good News victim 12]*

In a domestic violence case with significant levels of harassment, the victim had a very good experience of Lighthouse:

*'This has been a very traumatic experience for me and as I live on my own I have felt at times very vulnerable [The VWCO] has been empathetic to my situation, reassuring me that I could contact the police anytime I felt threatened and as I was concerned about my safety, she organised a Home Safe visit from a police officer and I had alarms fitted and a personal alarm provided to me. [Lighthouse Good News victim 6]*

Keeping victims informed was seen very positively:

*They informed me about the dates, obviously I checked with holidays and things. I have been pretty much appraised, in fact [the VWCO] came back [with news that the suspect had been remanded in custody] ... she phoned on the Monday night at seven o'clock. She phoned my mobile, with the police permission to notify me of this, she said he has been remanded ... So, she said 'I knew you are worried' ... She was going on leave, bless her, 'but I must let you know just to put your mind at rest'. So that was absolutely fantastic. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 2]*

*She has phoned me four times, just to see how I am and make sure things were alright ... I didn't know there was such a thing and you know, to make sure I get to court, to make sure I was willing to go to court. Did I want to go, first of all to make sure I was alright, I supposed as said I was disabled perhaps she felt, you know, it might be beneficial. [Lighthouse victim Interviewee 3]*

*My [Lighthouse contact] has pretty much kept in touch she said 'I'll write that up and I'll email it to you' and that was there that evening. Because I try to put it off you, I don't want to think about it, but they keep your spirits up. It's nice because its neutral ground, they're not trying to do any other thing than try to keep you on the matter at hand. .... It [court] could potentially be one of the biggest days of my life, there were no witnesses ... they said they'll be there as long as it takes to see it through and that's the difference with the solicitors, you're just a number on a production line, [but Lighthouse] are chasing me in a good way, and they answer calls, get back to me at weekends, in the evening and it what you want. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 3]*

These victim experiences are a good example of Lighthouse fulfilling one of its key objectives which is to provide support 'when the public need[s] them, not just during standard working hours'. (Steadman, 2014: 6)

One issue that did arise from the data was the extent to which Lighthouse staff had direct contact with victims. As with Lighthouse victim interviewee 6 discussed earlier, who had a poor experience of Lighthouse; parents or guardians are often going to want to speak to support services on behalf of their children, particularly when the child has only recently experienced criminal victimisation. This is entirely understandable. However, feedback suggests that some victims<sup>2</sup> were getting little direct contact with Lighthouse staff:

*They only ever spoke to my mum, never me ... I was the victim so why was a never spoken to?  
[Lighthouse spreadsheet data victim 1]*

*Lighthouse only spoke to my dad, not me which I found weird as he wasn't the one who was  
raped [Lighthouse spreadsheet data victim 2]*

*I had no direct contact with them. They spoke to my parents instead of me ... Lighthouse  
should have communicated with me as I'm the victim [Lighthouse spreadsheet data victim  
3]*

*Only spoke to my mum ... Not useful, [I] didn't understand why they never spoke to me ...  
Lighthouse only speaking to my mum made me feel out of control [Lighthouse spreadsheet  
data victim 4]*

*They told my mum about the Bridge and ISVAs [Lighthouse spreadsheet data victim 5]*

Four of the five victims here expressed a clear view that they wanted direct contact with Lighthouse staff. Whether this is a failing by Lighthouse staff, a product of overprotective parenting or a combination of the two cannot be established using this data. When the victims were asked what could be improved, the suggestions are revealing: 'talk to victims' (1), 'ask my dad' (2), 'dealing directly with victim' (3) and 'talk to victim' (4). This is a matter that needs further examination to see how direct, high quality contact can be achieved.

While VCOP (2015) envisages parents and guardians being recipients of services in cases involving victims who are children or vulnerable adults, this can potentially impact on the ability of vulnerable individuals to speak with victim services such as Lighthouse. Further, in such cases this may also inhibit the ability of Lighthouse to achieve its aims. In particular, victims to 'be treated as an individual, in a friendly and professional manner', 'Be able to contact us when they need us, and in a number of different ways' and 'Be provided with updates on their case, when and how they want them' (Steadman, 2014: 8). It is worth noting that the victims were able to complete the Lighthouse

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<sup>2</sup> The age or vulnerability status of these victims is not known.

questionnaire, but complained of lack of direct VWCO access. The means by which questionnaires are disseminated and direct support offered might be an avenue to explore.

**SUPPORTING VICTIMS, HELPING THEM COPE, IMPROVING CONFIDENCE AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

A strong theme in terms of victim feedback has been the role of Lighthouse in supporting victims in a wide variety of ways:

*I don't think they have helped me cope and recover in the recovery, because as I said to you it was only broken glass, plastic and we were just thankful that there was no personal injury. So, I don't feel um upset, only the fact that it was annoying that someone could be so idiotic to do that ... but yeah, they, they did...because they kept us informed about what was going on, that was the main thing. We were there, wondering what was going on and they kept us informed, which I thought was of great help. They did very well. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 1]*

*She literally smooth the path all the way, and I would have been extremely apprehensive even. I would have gone because I think that it is my duty to support the children, but I think I would have been worried about things. And the police because ... they are extremely busy people, so they may have not been able to keep us as closely advised as [the VWCO] did. So, to me [it has] has been absolutely great. And I feel definitely confident, not that I wasn't unconfident, but I worried about silly things like can I do this. And she has smoothed it...by explaining the court room, you know, can I go around with my crutches. She made me feel quite positive, so the only thing I literally had to do is sort of...get the strength, as I have got a problem. It was about the tone, truth, politely, respectfully; answering any questions'. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 2]*

*She spoke to my granddaughter. She was in one hell of a state ... and the fact that [the VWCO] took the time, I know she'd be on leave so she gave me an alternative colleague. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 2]*

*[The VWCO] was the only one I spoke to ... she has empathy, she seeks to understand. She has the ability to listen, which is extremely important and she seems to know exactly what to do, it may be silly but she wasn't condescending ... she genuinely comes across as she cares. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 2]*

*I've got court on Friday so in the run up to it they have guided me through the system. And general queries about how I was feeling. Last Monday I had a sort of tour round the court and it relaxed me. ... It's been nice having someone to answer questions and guide me through the statements I've had to make and just general queries about the case. Lighthouse knows who I am which has been nice and it means I can speak to someone who knows me and a more personal service. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 3]*

*[The witness] said that you were very helpful. She is partially deaf and said the service she received was really good. She also said that you sent her a lovely letter and she really appreciated it. [Lighthouse Good News victim 3]*

*Last week in court it was explained what they do, and basically with a lot of people, if there's an issue of driving or whatever, she asked see how far away I live from the court. It's been nice to know that regardless of the outcome you can talk to people who you never meet and it's easier talking than you can with your family because they're protective ... I think that's where this helps. I'd imagine if you don't have anyone to talk to, it's a God send. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 3]*

*Everything is good as I explained ... It is the support that really stands out. They really care about you as a victim. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 4]*

*I think it probably did [help me cope], a lot was being done by Lighthouse and that helped. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 4]*

*The assault on me was very frightening and for a few days I could not get it out of my mind ... I am [now] feeling much better. Therefore I don't think I require the assistance you provide at the moment. However, I would like to thank you for your concern and to say how comforting it is to know that such an empathetic follow up service such as yours in existence [Lighthouse Good News victim 15]*

*Both [the VWCO and Police Constable] were extremely helpful and cannot praise them both highly enough. I have sent thank you letters via the Police Chief Commissioner to both of them, if it had not been for their help support and guidance I'm not sure how strong I would have been to stand as the only witness for CPS in the case. But I did and the outcome was in my favour and I have a restraining order as well against my ex-partner for 5 years! [Survey Results victim 4]*



When interviewed by the *Bristol Post* newspaper, a female victim of domestic violence who was supported by Lighthouse commented on the importance of this support for her engagement with the criminal justice system:

*I remember walking into the court and just being terrified. The trial was adjourned at one point and I just thought I wouldn't be able to go back – I wanted to just give up with it. But because of the support I got I preserved with it and I wouldn't have got justice without that help. I never thought I was going to be someone in a violent relationship. I had always thought when I read stories about it 'why don't they just leave?' But it isn't that easy. I was an emotional wreck in the witness room and just so vulnerable at the time that I needed help to get through the process. I had always thought I was a strong person, but after that relationship I fell apart. There is a thin line between people beating you up and killing you and just don't know how things would have ended without that support from the police and the Lighthouse. (Churchill, 2015)*

Even where criminal cases did not progress the approach of Lighthouse still encouraged future engagement with the service:

*I have been a victim of racial abuse numerous times and because nothing became of the crime I reported I felt the service was not needed for my personal circumstances. However, if there had been progress in my case then I may have accessed the service. I think it's a valuable service from what I have read on the website. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 5]*

Contact with a VWCO also helped one participant deal with feelings of guilt following his experience of a road traffic incident that later led another driver to be criminally prosecuted:

*Over time you start thinking should I have done that? Should I have overtaken that vehicle? Could I have avoided what happened? You start examining your own actions particularly when you are on a motorbike ... Lighthouse really helps, so many people blame themselves, but it helps to have people supporting and listening. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 3]*

By contrast to these experiences, Lighthouse victim interviewee 6 lost confidence in the ability of Lighthouse to provide an enhanced service as the first point of contact was very poor:

*[If] it had been a horrific crime, you would have felt too removed, too sterile, too procedural, whereas when I saw the [police] officers, and again they seemed to take it far more seriously and they responded to my daughter better than I actually had, because I thought it was*

*water off a ducks back, but [the police] managed to just talk with her and reassure her and in the process, tease out any concerns she had. So, there's a disparity isn't there because a service for victims to provide an enhanced service, [my daughter] was entitled to that, I know I didn't phone them up, but I didn't have trust and confidence in them anyway, I couldn't see what they could offer and they didn't tell me what they could offer ...*

*I was given the option of contacting Lighthouse back, but they hadn't told me what they could offer and I didn't feel very clear about that. I had a couple of voicemail messages left on my mobile phone and to be honest because it had been such an excruciating experience trying to deal with them the first time and they weren't clear what they could offer, and it was going to be a different person that I spoke to I didn't call them back. And then I got a really poorly photocopied form through the post, it was really grey and black and almost marbled – you couldn't really read it. And it just said if Francesca would like support then please contact and if we don't hear from you within a certain date then we will assume you don't want it.*

This experience clearly indicates how the first point of contact with Lighthouse is crucially important in order to ensure engagement. Confidence in Lighthouse was lost and never regained. Interviewee 6 made the point in this way when she stated: 'Well first impressions count, don't they? And that's certainly played out in this case'.

As part of Lighthouse's role in assisting victims in their recovery, referral or offers of referral to other specialist agencies were made in numerous cases in the data under review. For example,

*She did offer it ... there are people there that can help, who do counselling and various other things. She had a phone number for people; she didn't know whether I liked support groups or counselling. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 2]*

The witness decided not to engage with counselling, but there was still follow up:

*She did mention it a second time. Sometimes, you know, a few days after, people are sort of thinking you know, I could do with someone to talk to ... she was very thoughtful. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 2]*

By contrast to this positive experience, Lighthouse victim interviewee 6:

*I didn't even know if they were going to provide it themselves, if they were councillors, it was never clear to me, it's a referral service, and we are linked up to, what? I don't know where*

*she would have been referred to, but to have that context and explanation at the beginning to orientate me to the purpose of the call. I don't understand why they were recording the crime either ... but they recorded the crime and they seemed to be operating in parallel with the police, but the police seemed to just carry on and did a fantastic job almost irrespective of Lighthouse. There seemed to be no point of connect, it certainly didn't feel like there was an integrated approach.*

These two experiences are in stark contrast and point to the importance of clear, timely communication. While further information could have been provided or sought in the case of Lighthouse victim interviewee 6, confidence in the service had already been lost. Two of the victim interviews provide further positive themes.

Understanding the victim experience:

*One hundred percent. Absolutely no doubts. She was very articulate, she very understood my feelings, my little grumpy quivers <laugh> and as I said she brought a solution which was you can make a witness statement. Having made it, even if it doesn't make anything, it made me feel a lot better for having actually heard it. She understood exactly what my needs were ... Very, very supportive ... she made sure that, you know, just sort of before jury 'cause the whole getting to court has actually been, if I can use the word comfortable. Very professional, but very friendly. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 2]*

Providing information and empowering victims to make a decision:

*[Lighthouse is] for people, if not for peace of mind, at least to give you a feeling that they are empowered. As supposed to be there like, a victim ... I definitely would give them a hundred percent. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 2]*

*Yes, my Lighthouse contact rang me.....and she said to me, would you like a court visit, that I could have a day and see what was going on that day in a nice roundabout kind of way, she didn't push it be she kind of sold it to me because I was a little bit apprehensive. It did definitely benefit me. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 3]*

*They didn't pressure you, but they kept you informed. She said if you want to do an impact statement you can, but there's no pressure, and I left it 4 weeks. But when the court date is due she said you can do it, but it's fine if you don't want to do one, you don't have to. She was checking on me, making it easier to go to court. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 3]*

The continuation of support was also emphasised:

*With regards to the result, even if it goes the right way it's easy to go to Lighthouse and it doesn't finish on the Friday I can contact them out of court, whatever the outcome. I know it's good, Lighthouse will be around and not only that, but it gives people, I know myself it gives people that bit of reassurance. I think the way it's run in conjunction with other services, too. It really helps. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 3]*

Promoting understanding by the victim:

*Like I said to you the other day, there have been lots of issues... being able to talk helped me understand even though I had a bit of an idea of what was going to happen, I've got court on Friday so in the run up to it they have guided me through the system. And general queries about how I was feeling. Last Monday I had a sort of tour round the court and it relaxed me. ... It's been nice having someone to answer questions and guide me through the statements I've had to make and just general queries about the case. Lighthouse know who I am which has been nice and it means I can speak to someone who knows me and a more personal service. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 3]*

*Like I said to you the other day, there have been lots of issues... being able to talk helped me understand even though I had a bit of an idea of what was going to happen ... [Lighthouse victim interviewee 3]*

*The knowledge [Lighthouse] have, I did have some of that. But I only knew a limited amount. I wouldn't have been able to know who to speak to. Lighthouse is giving me clear, impartial information. I don't know how you could get that. There are so many things to deal with, like the police or lawyers, personal things, family. At the time I didn't know what Lighthouse was, but it was very useful to talk you through the process, it makes you less anxious. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 3]*

This data suggests that Lighthouse is achieving key objectives in terms of providing a high quality service which support victims through the criminal justice system. In addition, the data strongly suggests that the VWCOs show empathy and are prepared to go to great lengths to provide support, advice and reassurance for individual victims. This suggests that Lighthouse in this victim sample is providing a service for adults that meets key requirements as set down in the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (VCOP, 2015: 19). There are some victims who had much less positive experiences, including one interviewee (a parent of a child crime victim) who said that her initial treatment had negatively impacted her confidence in the service. In addition, some victims were unhappy that they did not have direct contact with VWCOs because parents were the contact point. While this might

be consistent with the wording of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (2015), it arguably does not correspond with the spirit of the Code or some of the key objectives of Lighthouse. This is a matter that does require further consideration by Lighthouse in terms of how high quality, direct contact can be achieved.

### ***SERIOUS SEXUAL OFFENCE VICTIMS***

The research team sought to gain interviews with victims of sexual offences via two routes: Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) based in Bristol and through Somerset & Avon Rape & Sexual Abuse Support (SARSAS). Unfortunately, we were unable to recruit interviewees by these means. Consequently, this report relies on a victim survey analysis featuring victims of serious sexual offences produced by Avon & Somerset Constabulary's Improvement Delivery Manager. We do not include quantitative data here as it is noted in the report: 'This is the first quarterly set of ISVA survey data relating to Lighthouse. The sample sizes are relatively small at this stage and therefore the results should be viewed carefully'. (Davis, 2015: 12) Victims were asked 'what did Lighthouse do well'? Three respondents answered:

*They referred me to the ISVA and sent letters after Court.*

*They listened.*

*They called regularly*

And 'what could be improved'? Three respondents answered:

*Provide support more quickly*

*There was a delay in contact after the trial result*

*There were too many people calling*

The first question produced answers that were consistent with the positive victim experiences in other parts of this report: listening to the voice of victims, regular communication and referrals. In terms of the negative experiences, the need for quicker support and quicker contact after the end of legal proceedings are serious given the support needs of victims of sexual violence. This is particularly the case where for example, a defendant is acquitted and is a point where support is crucial given the potential fear, anxiety and negative thoughts that a victim may experience at the end of the court process. This may be an issue of particular importance where the victim and offender know each other or where there is a history of domestic violence. In terms of the last

comment, Lighthouse aims to reduce the number of different people making contact with a victim, although crucially in this instance, we do not know how many people made contact or for what reason.

### **AREAS OF STRENGTH, WEAKNESSES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

We asked for any specific areas of strength, weakness or areas for improvement the interviewees could suggest, along with any other comments. We also took data from other sources.

*I was very impressed with them. So impressed that I wrote them a letter to thank them. I expressed them my gratitude. They didn't have any weaknesses as far as I was concerned. Their strengths are that they did everything I could have asked them to do. I didn't need to ask them anything; they told me all that I needed to know. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 1]*

*Obviously, I am judging it solely on how she has reacted and how she is. Now, I haven't found any [weakness] issues yet [Lighthouse victim interviewee 2]*

*I can surely say that. So, unless all goes terribly horribly on the day [laugh] you know, but all jokes aside I have actually not been able to find a fault. I don't know how much the organisation has trained her, and the training they have put in place. I don't know how much training she had prior to that or what, you know, other life skills she had, but if the Lighthouse had trained her then they had done a damn good job [Lighthouse victim interviewee 2]*

*Complete waste of time. [Survey Results, victim 6]*

However, in addition to the points already raised in this chapter there were some other specific areas for improvement that were raised:

*[I]t was not clear about whether I needed to attend court - that needed to be clearer. When I called the person I spoke to he had no idea, I had to chase it up. Things were clear initially, but they became less clear over time about the court date and when would I give my impact statement. Clarity of communication is very important. [Lighthouse victim interviewee 4]*

*I should have been warned about the potential of my address being reported in the local newspaper, I wasn't expecting that [Lighthouse victim interviewee 4]*

*The overriding message that I got from them, even the process of them trying to record the crime, was that they were so new that they weren't really geared up to providing a service*

*and in a sense the police officers had done the work that was required and the footage had been seized and my daughter had spoken to the [police officers] officers [Lighthouse interviewee 6]*

In one instance a victim was left with an important question for which they needed an answer:

*I would like to know whether the defendant has been forbidden to call on me after his release [Survey Results victim 4]*

Sometimes feedback expressed some disappointment with the service but this was for reasons that had nothing to do with the performance of Lighthouse. This is a reminder that feedback tools should always, as far as possible, allow respondents to give the reasons for their answers:

*The only thing I was a bit disappointed in, they weren't able to get the sentence for the [defendant] .... they had no control over that whatsoever. But one can only hope [Lighthouse Interviewee 1]*

# DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The research indicates that Lighthouse was meeting its main targets and delivered a single point of contact for victims, as well as stakeholders, in the Criminal Justice System across Avon & Somerset. While there were teething problems with the Lighthouse service, this was to be expected given the scope and scale of change that it brought to victim services, everyone involved was sympathetic and committed to making it a success. The research shows, that in the main, the introduction of Lighthouse has improved victim care, but that more work needed to be done to fully embed it and make it completely fit-for-purpose across Avon & Somerset's existing systems was needed.

## **Overall findings relating to staff understandings and perceptions of the impact of Lighthouse**

In relation to providing a better service for the public, staff agreed that victims now receive a more holistic and cohesive service based on individual need resulting in victims being kept updated, informed and engaged. Analysis of staff perceptions also suggests that victims now have access to better quality information and advice and that Lighthouse staff were able to provide direct and clear referral routes to more intensive support if the victims want and require it.

In relation to making it simpler for staff to work with victims it was clear that the Lighthouse led needs assessment of victims was enabling staff to get a much better understanding of their situation and that this was helping to develop a culture of ownership and accountability within the programme. However, there were still some teething problems in fully embedding Lighthouse within the wider culture of the police organisation particularly as this related to VWCO and OIC relationships. More work promoting Lighthouse and enabling officers to see the important and successful work staff were involved in as well as integrated training may assist going forward but such issues are generally to be expected when implementing such a large change within an organisation.

Finally, in relation to the strategic imperative to provide value for the organisation, evaluation suggests results were slightly more mixed. Co-location of agencies within Lighthouse hubs was identified as being effective and adding value for the organisations and victims. Issues about single point or central point of contact were still occasionally causing issues in terms of providing clarity around roles and responsibilities and reducing overlap. Lighthouse was operating as a safety net which, while making sure victims were not missed, added to the workload of staff, creating some



duplication and uncertainty, but these issues were being addressed. Additionally acting as a central point of contact meant that victims were able to access help and support when they needed it not simply during standard working hours. While this flexibility brought into question the idea of a single point of contact (one person could not be available at all times) Lighthouse as a central point of contact where colleagues could pick up cases and understand victims needs was ensuring victims had support to guide them through their CJS journey as well as provide tailored information about what support was available to meet their needs.

### **Overall findings relating to stakeholders understandings and perceptions of the impact of Lighthouse**

The stakeholders had a positive view of Lighthouse and its implementation, but wanted more clarity, in places, about how it differed from the services that they provided to the victims. The two things that were unanimous from the stakeholders was that Lighthouse's main roles were to provide procedural support and signpost victims, not to provide emotional support [i.e., to help victims cope and recover]. On one level this could be viewed as a justification, boundary setting and self-protective reaction from the stakeholders, whereas on another it can be viewed as a realistic interpretation of the limits and reach of Lighthouse.

In relation to providing a better service for the public, the stakeholders believed that Lighthouse had achieved this; however, they believed that in making things more straightforward they had increased the level of bureaucracy by one more person. The stakeholders believed that Lighthouse did add value to the service that victims got; but that it was slotted into the existing system, duplicating and replacing existing services. The stakeholders thought that there could be more clarity, for themselves and victims, about where Lighthouse sat, who was responsible for what and who, as well as when; Lighthouse should talk to the public. Although, in saying this stakeholder's recognised that Lighthouse was developing and believed that over time these issues would be resolved.

In relation to making it simpler for staff to work with victims the stakeholders thought that Lighthouse had improved the information that they got and the ability that they had to talk to victims from an informed perspective. The two strongest pieces of evidence from the stakeholders to verify this was co-location within the Lighthouse hubs which really helped multi agency working and great information sharing between themselves and Lighthouse; although some stakeholders felt being integrated in the field with the police as they were pre-Lighthouse was better but this was not everyone's experience. The only issue that was made to say that Lighthouse made it difficult to work

with victims was Lighthouse staff ability to judge risk when making referrals as this meant that sometimes the appropriate referrals were not going through in terms of risk level, offence and volume. Which meant that sometimes stakeholders could not help victims appropriately, timely or effectively; however, training, collaborative working and co-location were seen as ways of overcoming these issues and being able to build an effective service.

Finally, in relation to the strategic imperative to provide value for the organisation this was a sticking point for some stakeholders as they saw Lighthouse as being imposed, although there was consultation with some, being driven by policy, being about funding and having a lot of duplication as well as poor streamlining of services in places. The stakeholders thought that having everything being based around funding, in a time of austerity, made them feel pressured and constantly having to justify their work which was detracting from their duty to the victim. The stakeholders felt that a lot of victims saw Lighthouse as the police and that their attitudes to the police could overshadow the work that Lighthouse was doing, therefore the victims imparted more information to stakeholders than to Lighthouse staff on occasions. The stakeholders understood what the police were trying to do with Lighthouse and understood its aims as well as objectives; however, they felt that it could be developed more with them in mind. All the stakeholders agree that Lighthouse is, in the main, working well and progressing appropriately; they are pro Lighthouse.

### **Overall findings relating to victims understandings and perceptions of the impact of Lighthouse**

These findings would tend to suggest that for most of the victims featured in this evaluation Lighthouse was fit for purpose and delivering the service for the victims that it said it would. The limitations of the data are such that we cannot be sure that all these objectives were achieved in all cases, to a similar standard, but there can be little doubt that Lighthouse has positively informed, engaged and helped most of the victims. The support and range of advice offered to victims was seen very positively and for some victims the practical help was just as important as the information, updating and emotional support. It is clear that support should be seen in an expansive sense, not simply in the form of information sharing, updating and referrals.

There are areas for improvement. Perhaps the most striking relates to victims who had a parent who was the main point of contact. Most of these victims were unhappy with the lack of direct contact with VWCOs. This raises doubts that Lighthouse is achieving some of its aims in terms of providing a broad range of support. There was other negative feedback involving a small number of victims suggesting slowness in making contact at the start and end of the criminal justice process and some problems in the early days of Lighthouse.

Broadly speaking, victim feedback was very positive in terms of the regularity and quality of communication with VWCOs. There were a number of victims who felt strongly that the service had worked for them and helped them cope with the aftermath of crime and subsequent court proceedings. However, even where there was positive feedback there were some issues that did arise. While she was positive about much of her experience with the service, Lighthouse victim interviewee 4 did have to chase up information from a VWCO several times in order to clarify some issues around a trial. She was also not aware that her address could be reported in the local press and was a particular cause for concern given the nature of her victimisation. While the specifics of this case were unusual in the sample, and in many respects she reported a very positive experience this was not consistent across all measures and Lighthouse measures.

Overall, however, Lighthouse appeared to be offering a strong and positive service to most victims. Victims indicated that the contact with VWCOs had many benefits, some of which were nuanced, while others were crucial to victim engagement and satisfaction. As one victim put it, the service is offering a 'bridge' between the victim and the police. In line with its founding objectives the service is providing a wide range of discernible benefits to victims of crime.

### **Overall conclusion**

The current evaluation has highlighted that Lighthouse seems to be working effectively, staff seem to be proactive and engaging with victims, that victims are getting referred [the majority of the time to the stakeholders that they need to be talking to] and that Lighthouse, as well as stakeholders, seem to be working in unison. Based on the research presented here Lighthouse seems to be meeting its targets, achieving its aims and working in the way that it is designed to offer:

*a more holistic and cohesive service based on individual needs rather than crime type. Victims will be kept updated, informed and engaged during their journey through the criminal justice system; with access to better quality information and advice, and clear and direct referral routes to more intensive support should they require it ... (Steadman, 2014: 6)*

The only area that Lighthouse seems to be meeting some resistance in is that of cope and recover with mixed findings across the victims, staff and stakeholders as to whether Lighthouse is actually doing that; but more to the point whether that is the role of Lighthouse and if it is what needs to change to be able to accommodate that. This means that Lighthouse needs to reconsider and

redefine the roles of its staff as well as of those of the stakeholders. All the participants felt that Lighthouse was a positive step forward in victim care, but there was a series of calls for it to be more streamlined, reduce duplication, be fit for purpose and to continue being collaborative; Lighthouse had started well, there were teething problems, and everyone had a desire for this to continue.

It is important to reiterate, because of the limitations of the data collected, that this research only provides us with insight to and a snapshot of the implementation of the Lighthouse Victims pathway operated by Avon & Somerset Police; therefore the findings suggest that Lighthouse is working and providing the service that it was designed to, but a longer and more in-depth follow up is needed to confirm this.

## **Recommendations**

### *Victim communication*

- Lighthouse should take steps to ensure that victims who have parents or others acting as the first point of contact are still able to speak directly to VWCOs.
- VWCOs need to warn adult victims and witnesses that a trial may be reported in the media and this may (in non-sexual offence cases or those involving minors) lead to the naming of the victim and/or the area where they live.
- Victim feedback tools need to ensure the reasons underpinning positive or negative experiences are captured in greater detail. Lighthouse should explore how it can better capture qualitative feedback from all victims of crime, including victims of sexual violence.
- Contact with victims should continue to be made in a consistent, timely manner with information and support being provided throughout the victim's journey in the criminal justice process. However, we would recommend that steps be taken to ensure that this good practice is adopted in every case.

### *Partnership working*

- Lighthouse should involve stakeholders more in the decision making process regarding suitability of referrals and co-ordination of where non-high risk referrals should go. By doing this, Lighthouse would be able to involve stakeholders more in its day-to-day working, further promote positive working relationships with stakeholders and streamline its service to victims.
- Co-location of police and stakeholder services positively impacted the working relationships and victim outcomes for Lighthouse.

- In conjunction, and through better data sharing, Lighthouse and other agencies in the criminal justice system should work in tandem to provide information regarding trial outcomes at the end of the trial process to victims in a timely fashion.

#### *Staff workload and training*

- A clarification of work load with regards to pre and post charge victim and witness care and a focus on making sure that Lighthouse staff are not unduly overburdened as a safety net for victim referrals from call handlers. Only those requiring an enhanced service should be referred to Lighthouse staff.
- Better adapted and fit-for-purpose staff training, especially in certain specialist areas (i.e., Sexual Violence or Abuse; Domestic Violence; Mental Health; Drugs and Alcohol).

#### *Cope and recover*

- A reconsideration of the role of Lighthouse in “cope and recover” as there is a disparity between the different stakeholder populations about what this means.
- A better capture of the victim experience of Lighthouse, as well as “cope and recover” information from stakeholders is needed for continued evaluation and review.

#### *Branding*

- Re-consider the idea of a ‘single point of contact’ and replace it with ‘central point of contact’ to avoid any confusion and concern for all parties involved.

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## **APPENDENCES**

### **APPENDIX 1 – consent form**

To whom it may concern,

My name is Dr Kieran McCartan from the University of the West of England, Bristol (<http://people.uwe.ac.uk/Pages/person.aspx?accountname=campus\kf-mccartan>). You have been approached in regard to your potential involvement in a current research project involving myself

and colleagues from UWE (Dr James Hoggett, Dr Corinne Funnell, Professor Phil Rumney), funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, which focuses on the impact of the provision of support and care to victims of crime. This research is supported by Avon & Somerset Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner as well as the College of Policing.

The aim of the current research is to determine whether the provision of support and care to victims of crime within Avon & Somerset Police is meeting victim, stakeholder and policing needs. The research project uses a qualitative, interview based research design with a range of individuals involved in victim services (i.e., semi-structured interviews with Stakeholders, police and victims of crime).

This portion of the research examines the attitudes and understandings of the work done by Avon & Somerset Police, as well as their partners, to provide support and care to victims of crime. You have been selected from a list compiled through names provided by Avon & Somerset Police. This interview will examine your attitudes, based upon your experiences, towards previous and current victim support procedures within Avon & Somerset Police. The research will adhere to regulatory ethical guidelines (UWE; ESRC; British Psychological Society; British Society of Criminology); and the research will be participant focused (i.e., participant(s) having the opportunity to take breaks, ask questions and have access to their transcribed data as well as the resulting publications). As the research is asking for the participants' personal perspectives and opinions there is absolutely no deception involved in this study. Hence, the researcher is only gauging your perspectives and not trying to catch you out, confuse you or trying to gain your support unawares. It is only your true perspective that matters, so please be as honest as possible. The research will be conducted by the research team and all the interviews will be analysed by us, Avon & Somerset Police will have no access to primary data. Therefore please feel free to be as candid as you wish.

All the personal participant information gathered throughout the research (including but not limited to your name, contact details or your transcript/recorded data) will remain strictly confidential. No-one will know who completed the research or which opinions/attitudes are linked to specific participants. The only person that will have access to the material will be the researcher with all the participant records (audio recordings, transcriptions, participant list) being securely stored. In the final written documentation no-one will be mentioned by name and all information will be described in qualitative terms.

All participants have the right to withdraw from the research at any stage; they do not have to give any reason for doing so. The researchers will be available before, during and after the study to answer any questions relating to the material covered within. However, in saying this it does not mean that they will be expert enough to answer all potential questions that are raised. In response to this they will be able to provide reading material and/or agency contacts to help the participants deal with any relevant queries.

All the material collected in the research will be destroyed in due course, with the data being kept for the period of the research, data analysis and write up in line with British Psychological Society and British Society of Criminology publication recommendations. Unless the participant withdraws from the research, then it will be destroyed. If you consent to taking part in this research, please sign and date below.....

Name

Date

## **APPENDIX 2 – VICTIM QUESTIONS**

### **General Perceptions of 'integrated' approach in Avon & Somerset**

1. Can you tell me about how you came to be involved with Lighthouse? Could you explain and describe the aims of Lighthouse and how it seeks to achieve those aims? [Reflection of the transmitted/understood aims of the programme]
2. Do you feel that that as a Lighthouse worker you are able to understand the situations of

the victims that come to you? Are there any barriers which you think can affect this?  
[Cultural/language; disenfranchisement; action; secondary victimization]

3. Can you describe the type of support that you offer? Do you have experience of providing such support? Can you think of any support/information that you would like to offer but cannot provide?
4. Do you feel confident about the support you are providing? Do you think it helps victims? How?
5. How do you keep victims informed about their case? How do you feel this is working?
6. Do you think Lighthouse helps victims to cope and recover? What do these terms mean to you?
7. What do you think about the levels of support you receive in your role? Do you feel you would benefit from more support or training? If so what kind of support or training?

#### **Different stage – Multiagency**

8. How do you feel Lighthouse is viewed by other victim care agencies? Can you give me any examples of any particularly good or bad experience you have had with other agencies while working at Lighthouse?

#### **Awareness of programme**

9. Reflecting upon your experiences, what would you say are the strengths and weaknesses of the 'Lighthouse Victim & Witness Care Programme'?

#### **Section x Open ended**

10. Can you think of any changes you would like to see to improve the experiences of victims?  
[In your position]

### **APPENDIX 3 – STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONS**

#### **General Perceptions of 'integrated' approach in Avon & Somerset**

1. Can you tell me about how you came to be involved with Lighthouse? Could you explain and describe the aims of Lighthouse and how it seeks to achieve those aims? [Reflection of the transmitted/understood aims of the programme]

2. Do you feel that that as a stakeholder you are able to understand the situations of the victims that come to you through Lighthouse? Are there any barriers which you think can affect this? [Cultural/language; disenfranchisement; action; secondary victimization]
3. Can you describe the type of support that you offer? Do you have experience of providing such support? Can you think of any support/information that you would like to offer but cannot provide?
4. Do you feel confident about the support you are providing? Do you think it helps victims? How?
5. Do you think that Lighthouse keeps victims informed about their case?
6. Do you think Lighthouse helps victims to cope and recover? What do these terms mean to you?
7. What do you think about the levels of support you receive in your role from Lighthouse? Do you feel you would benefit from more support or training? If so what kind of support or training?

#### **Different stage – Multiagency**

8. How do you feel Lighthouse is viewed by other victim care agencies? Do you think that Lighthouse works well with other agencies? Can you give me any examples of any particularly good or bad experience you have had with other agencies while working at Lighthouse?

#### **Awareness of programme**

9. Reflecting upon your experiences, what would you say are the strengths and weaknesses of the 'Lighthouse Victim & Witness Care Programme'?

#### **Section x Open ended**

10. Can you think of any changes you would like to see to improve the experiences of victims?  
[In your position]

### **APPENDIX 4 – POLICE QUESTIONS**

#### **General Perceptions of 'integrated' approach in Avon & Somerset**

1. Can you tell me about how you came to be involved with Lighthouse? Could you explain and describe the aims of Lighthouse and how it seeks to achieve those aims? [Reflection of the transmitted/understood aims of the programme]

2. Do you feel that that as a Lighthouse worker you are able to understand the situations of the victims that come to you? Are there any barriers which you think can affect this?  
[Cultural/language; disenfranchisement; action; secondary victimization]
3. Can you describe the type of support that you offer? Do you have experience of providing such support? Can you think of any support/information that you would like to offer but cannot provide?
4. Do you feel confident about the support you are providing? Do you think it helps victims?  
How?
5. How do you keep victims informed about their case? How do you feel this is working?
6. Do you think Lighthouse helps victims to cope and recover? What do these terms mean to you?
7. What do you think about the levels of support you receive in your role? Do you feel you would benefit from more support or training? If so what kind of support or training?

#### **Different stage - Multiagency**

8. How do you feel Lighthouse is viewed by other victim care agencies? Can you give me any examples of any particularly good or bad experience you have had with other agencies while working at Lighthouse?

#### **Awareness of programme**

9. Reflecting upon your experiences, what would you say are the strengths and weaknesses of the 'Lighthouse Victim & Witness Care Programme'?

#### **Section x Open ended**

10. Can you think of any changes you would like to see to improve the experiences of victims?  
[In your position]