

# A day in the life of....

## A Victim and Witness Care Officer

### 8am/10:30 (start of shift)

Its Monday...

At the start of the shift, I check my emails for any urgent communications that I need to add to my priorities list, I check my Teams/Groups for any communication from the Team Leaders reference any staff updates or requests, sometimes you may be asked to cover another team member's post-charge work due to sickness. Then I check my voicemails and make note of any call backs or tasks I need to complete and add them to my priorities list in priority order.

I then check my workload for the day, I will check my Pre charge work, I get allocated 4 Pre-Charge cases a day, this ranges from High Risk to Low Risk, I then check my Post-Charge work for any urgent comms that I may have been sent.

### 8:30/12:00

Today I have been allocated 2 High Risk cases, 1 Medium and 1 Low; A high risk domestic violence (DV) case, a Under 18 Sexual Offence, a Rape and Serious Sexual Assault and Criminal Damage. I prioritise the High Risk cases first and I start with the DV case, as this has children linked to the incident, and due to the risks of the victim I begin to perform background checks on both the victim and suspect and any children that are linked or involved. I will check the history between the victim and suspect, will make note of any warning markers/flags for each person, make note of any bail conditions, who the Officer in charge of the case is, make note of the BRAG and DASH rating and check if anyone is currently supporting the family. I use a variety of police systems to do this and I update the information I find on the pre-charge system so that officers and other LSU members can see this information when required.

While I am uploading the background checks onto the case, I take an incoming call on Teams; it is a paralegal officer (PO) from Bristol Crown Court to advise that they cannot locate the victim or 4 Police officers that were warned to attend trial today, I check the system and confirm that I spoke to the victim on Friday and they were adamant they were attending and that I also emailed the officer on Thursday to advise them of the order on how the evidence was due to run and they were all confirmed. I advised I will call the officers and victim and get back to them. I attempted officers, went to voicemail, I called the victim, went to voicemail. I then went back to the PO and advised I cannot get hold of any of them. In which, it was confirmed the officers had been located and the victim was also present.

Once I have uploaded the background checks on my case, I call the victim and complete a Common Needs Assessment (CNA). Here I have conversation to check their welfare while asking a set of essential questions in order to explore the type of support they may require. For Example, if talking to a domestic abuse victim we may discuss specialist domestic abuse support with an Independent Domestic Violence Adviser, getting their home secured by the police carpenters, arranging a 'Treat as urgent' marker on their address, and to check if Social Services need informing.

I then complete a Safeguarding Action plan and Support Action Plan to show what onward referrals I am making and to who, these are added to the case and I then complete any relevant referrals via email and then add this to the case to log my actions.

I make successful contact with my second high risk case, which is an under 18 so I contacted their parents and completed the above steps, CNA and onward referrals to the relevant support agency which was Young Victim Service. The medium case was a RASSO case which the victim declined any support, so I updated the cases, and my last case I could not get hold of so I make note to try again the following day to try and balance out the time of call so I will re-attempt in the PM of the following day.

**12:30/13:00** Lunch Time

**13:00/15:30**

When I return from lunch, I check my post-charge Witness Management System (WMS) which is the court system for the automatic generated tasks for the day which involve different actions and requirements. I have some communicate hearing outcome task that require me to check for results from the previous day's hearings and call any enhanced victims with outcomes within 24hrs of receiving the results to keep in line with the Victims Code of Practice Legislation. If appropriate, I will send letters to witnesses with court outcomes and what may be happening next. As well as updating victims and witnesses I email the officer in the case as well as any other important parties such as an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor or Family Liaison Officer.

I find that the Crown Prosecution Service has sent a communication to me through the court system alerting me to the fact that a defendant has entered a last-minute guilty plea so the trial will not be going ahead in two days' time. I then call the victim and any civilian witnesses who were due to attend and let them know they no longer need to attend. I contact any officers who were required and also their resource team, completing an official form notifying them they do not need to attend.

One case has been adjourned to a trial at Crown Court so I must warn witnesses required by Crown Prosecution Service. I call the victim and then follow up with court warning letters. An officer is also required so I complete a form and send this to them and their resources team so this can be updated on their work rota. I also update the calendar on the date the trial is set for so that I can enter the table of the list of witnesses to attend court so that if anyone has to cover my work they can see the progression, I also ensure it is colour coded to reflect.

One of the Victims for another trial of mine calls me to discuss their case that is listed for trial in 4 weeks' time, I ask for the reference number of the case, I check security with them that I am speaking to the correct person, Name, DOB, First Line of address and postcode. They express that they are worried about the defendant intimidating them by glaring at them. I talk to them about applying for special measures, for example a screen to block the defendant from view and they agree this will help and agree to attend. I complete a short needs assessment with them, basically checking if there is anything I can help them with to make their attendance as easy as possible. As the trial is just four weeks away I also go through all the information they may need for the day. I discuss expenses with them and also try and relieve any anxiety about the court process and giving evidence. We work closely with the Witness Service so I make referral this vulnerable victim so on the day they can be met by a volunteer and have someone to sit with before entering court. The victim would also like to make a Victim Personal Statement (VPS) about how the crime impacted on them in various ways, including emotionally and physically. I agree a day and time to call them back to complete this and ask them to write a few notes about the impact on them meanwhile. I write up

my call and then complete my Witness Service referral, complete a special measures form on niche requesting screens and diarise my VPS call.

**15:30/17:30**

I check my calendar for any enhanced cases in court today to see if I have any results, I note I have a Domestic Violence case in court today, so I check the Common Platform result/live system, I see that the result has come in and that Guilty pleas were entered, so I call and make the victim aware that guilty pleas have been entered and that it is adjourned for sentence at a later date, So I change the calendar entry to reflect the new date, log my call on WMS and send a follow up email as requested by the victim and then update the OIC via email and also log that on WMS.

I then check my non-enhanced case which is a Theft from shop, which has no victims linked but does have 2 witnesses, I check the Common Platform system and note the result for that one is also in, however the defendant failed to attend so a warrant was issued, I email the witnesses to advise that a warrant has been issued and I will update them once the defendant has been arrested and brought to court. I update the calendar entry to reflect the warrant. This then logged on WMS.

**15:30/18:30**

The day is almost ending, so I make sure I print out and send letters, respond to any emails and make a to do list ready for the next day.

**16:00/18:30**

Its finally home time and I can log off my systems knowing I have made a difference to victims of crime by providing support, practical guidance and making sure safeguarding is in place. Back in tomorrow to see what is in store!