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Ministry
of Justice

Factsheet on the victims' support package

This document contains information about the £18.9m victims' support package that has been designed to support victims affected by the progression model.

The factsheet is intended to help victim support organisations understand the range of support available, how they can best utilise these sources of support, and help victims to do so.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with the MoJ Victim and Witness Commissioning and Implementation Unit: victimservicescommissioning@Justice.gov.uk

Background

- The Government has committed a total of £18.9m to supporting victims affected by the progression model.
- This is an increase to the previously announced £10m support package and in addition to the £550m funding for victim support over the next three years.
- The funding will be delivered across three years and is allocated to three strands of support: £1.56m for a national helpline, £8.19m for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), and £9.15m for a VAWG programme.
- This package of support has been developed at pace, and this factsheet aims to provide an overview of each of the three strands of support that are being developed. We anticipate that services may further evolve and develop as demand and victims' needs become clearer once the progression model is enacted.

The package of support

- The victims' support package has three strands:
 - **National helpline:** A new, dedicated freephone helpline for anyone affected by the progression model.
 - **PCC surge fund:** Additional surge funding for each PCC area in England and Wales.
 - **VAWG programme:** New routes for VAWG support, delivered by either community-based organisations (CBOs) or new temporary regional VAWG hubs.

Progression model helpline

The MoJ has commissioned Victim Support to establish a dedicated national helpline for people affected by, or concerned they may be affected by, the early release of prisoners under the progression model.

The helpline will provide a single point of contact for individuals seeking non-case specific information, support and guidance about the progression model, what it may mean for them, and where they can access further help.

Who can use the helpline?

The helpline is intended to support:

- Victims affected by or concerned they may be affected by the release of an offender.
- Victims, whether or not they are registered with the Victim Contact Scheme.
- Children and young people affected by, or concerned they may be affected by, offender release.
- Victims' family members, carers and supporters, and witnesses.
- Individuals referred by criminal justice agencies or support services.
- Professionals seeking guidance on available support for someone affected by offender release.

How can people access the helpline?

The service will be available through:

- A dedicated telephone helpline
- Live webchat
- Online information and self-help resources

Contact details, opening hours and referral information will be shared ahead of launch.

What support will be available?

The helpline will provide:

- Non-case specific information about the progression model and what it may mean for individuals.
- Emotional support and reassurance.
- Practical guidance and information.
- Initial needs and safeguarding assessments.
- Signposting and referrals to relevant local, specialist and statutory services.
- Enhanced caseworker support where needs are more complex or require coordination across agencies.

What the helpline will not provide

The helpline will not be able to provide:

- Individual prisoner release dates.
- Offender-specific information including confirmation that a specific offender is being released.
- Case-specific licence conditions.
- Legal advice.
- Emergency response or crisis intervention services.

How will the helpline work with existing services?

The helpline is intended to complement, not replace, existing victim support arrangements.

Where appropriate, callers will be referred or signposted to:

- Victim Liaison Officers.

- Witness Care Units.
- HMPPS and probation services.
- Police services.
- PCC-funded victim support services.
- Specialist Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) services.
- Other local and national support organisations.

What support is available for children and young people?

Children and young people (CYP) affected by, or concerned they may be affected by, offender release under the progression model will be able to access support through the helpline.

There will be a dedicated CYP pathway. This pathway is intended to provide more tailored support from practitioners with specialist expertise in working with CYP.

The CYP pathway is expected to support children and young people directly, while also providing guidance and support for parents, carers and guardians. Further information will be shared with stakeholders as the model is developed and arrangements are finalised.

When will the helpline launch?

The Progression Model Helpline is expected to become operational by 1 October 2026. Further information about launch arrangements will be shared with stakeholders in advance.

Important information about case-specific enquiries

The helpline can provide non-case specific information about the progression model and support available to those affected by offender release. However, it cannot provide information about a specific offender, including:

- Whether an individual is being released.
- Release dates.
- Licence conditions.
- Offender management arrangements.

PCC Surge Fund

The PCC Surge Fund is a grant fund for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners, and Mayors with policing powers, to bolster local frontline support and ensure that those impacted by the Progression Model feel safe, informed and supported. PCCs will have flexibility to use the funding to meet local need, in line with existing service provision, to strengthen the support available to victims in their area. PCCs are expected to have some support in place by 1 October 2026.

This funding is intended to support a coordinated local response, helping ensure that victims are aware of, and able to access appropriate support when needed. PCCs will work in partnership with local services, criminal justice agencies, including probation, and neighbouring PCCs as appropriate to provide a joined-up response for victims.

Support for victims

Alongside their existing commissioned victim support services, PCCs can use the funding to provide additional services or support roles or bolster existing services to increase capacity to meet demand.

Examples of types of support could include:

- Advocacy, emotional or practical support, delivered locally to provide dedicated support to victims. This could be advocacy roles, such as IDVAs/ISVAs or other victim advocate roles.
- Enhanced local communications to improve victims' understanding of the progression model, support available to them and pathways into support. This could include the role of a SPOC or referral coordinator to ensure victims are receiving clear information across agencies and are accessing the appropriate support.
- Training for local service providers on appropriate and effective support for victims impacted by the progression model.

PCCs will be able to use this surge funding to commission services to support anyone who is impacted by the progression model, including victims of any crime type. PCCs will also be asked to create a dedicated page on their websites with information on how those impacted by the progression model can access information on the scheme, the dedicated Progression Model Helpline, and a directory of their commissioned services.

VAWG programme

The Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Support Fund will be delivered by Women's Aid Federation England (WAFE) in partnership with specialist VAWG organisations. The Fund is designed to ensure that victims and survivors affected by the progression model can access timely, specialist support through a flexible and responsive national network.

What support will be available and how can it be accessed?

All eligible victims and survivors will be able to access specialist support, via specialist regional hubs, and existing services which will be remunerated accordingly. Support will include:

- Needs assessments
- Safety planning
- Advocacy and support through decision-making processes
- Emotional support and practical guidance

Where longer-term or more complex support is required, individuals will be connected with the most appropriate specialist service to meet their needs.

Subject Matter Expertise via Regional Virtual Hubs

A national network of specialist expertise will also be available to support frontline practitioners, providing advice, consultation and guidance on complex cases.

This expertise will include specialist knowledge relating to areas such as:

- Domestic abuse
- Sexual violence
- Stalking
- Male victims
- Black and minoritised victims and survivors
- LGBT+ victims and survivors
- Other specialist areas of need

This support will be available via phone, and we will publish details soon.

Practitioners will also be available to support victims directly, delivering needs assessments, emotional support, safety planning and advocacy, helping victims and survivors access support quickly and ensuring that local systems can respond effectively to emerging need. Where longer-term casework needs are best met by specialist local organisations, the hub may transfer cases to them, along with funding (see next section).

Community-based support and flexible funding

Specialist VAWG sector organisations will continue to play a central role in supporting victims and survivors. Where organisations experience additional demand as a result of the changes to the progression model, they will be able to apply to WAFE for funding contributions to support the delivery of specialist casework and ongoing support. More details on eligible expenditure, parameters around costs and light-touch application process will be shared soon, but we envisage this will cover things like needs assessment, safety planning, advocacy and emotional support.

Working together to meet needs

The model has been developed in partnership with the specialist VAWG sector and is designed to balance national coordination, specialist expertise and local delivery. By combining these elements, the Fund will provide a flexible and responsive system that enables victims and survivors to access the right support at the right time, through whichever route they choose to seek help.

Victims and survivors will be able to access support through any route, including specialist helplines, community-based services, statutory agencies, or direct contact with regional support hubs. The Fund is based on a “no wrong door” approach, ensuring that people can access help through the service that best meets their needs.