



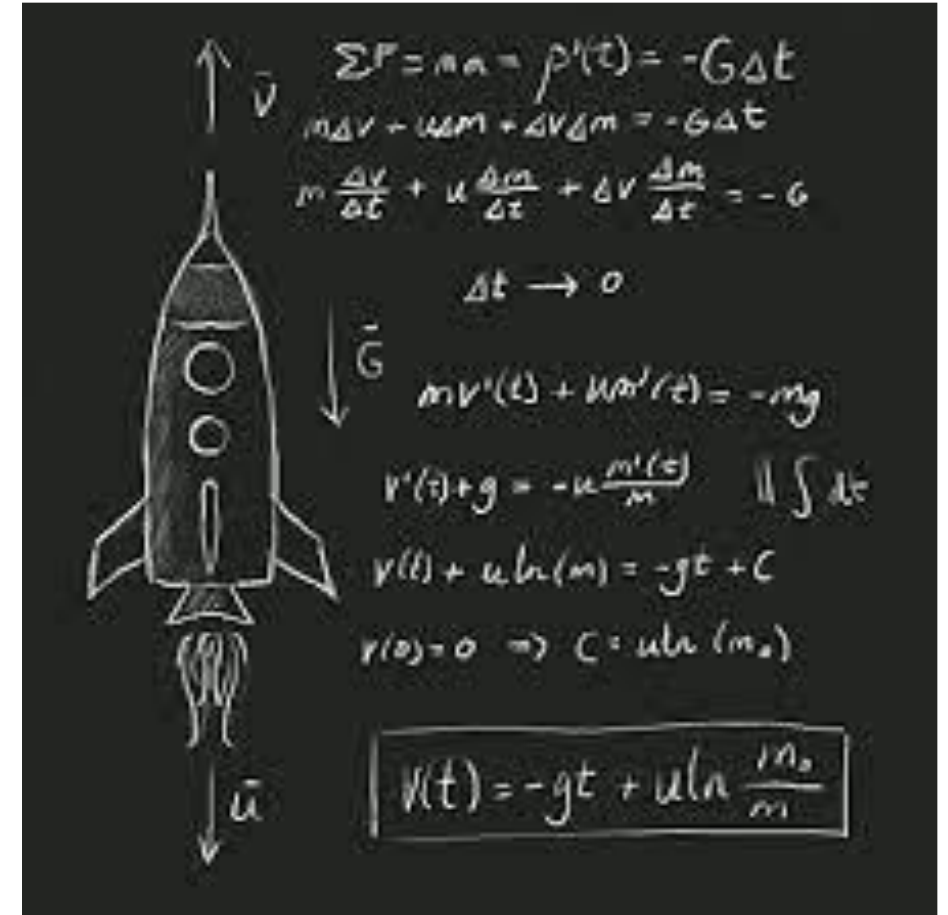
# Supporting Victims to Move Forward after Experiencing Crime

Matthew Chester, Head of Victim Services



# Topics

- A West Mercia Perspective – other models are available
- The role of policing and support
- The importance of integrated pathways to support
- Victims Code compliance – process or culture
- Does 'justice served' provide closure or is it a cliff-edge?



# Supporting Victims – why is it important?

- May impact on the victim's engagement with the investigation and criminal justice system
- For many, the experience of being a victim does not stop at the end of the investigation or trial
- Physical financial, emotional and psychological impacts – possibly leading to long-term trauma
- Anxiety about it happening again, especially if someone isn't caught
- Anxiety about the criminal justice system and having to give evidence
- Receiving the right support at the right time can break the cycles of victimisation and offending



# The Impact of Crime

A large majority of victims of different types of crime report having been emotionally affected by the crime

Over half of the victims express anger about the victimisation.

Emotional impact	Type of victimisation		
	Any burglary	Vehicle-related theft	Any violent crime
Respondent emotionally affected	81.4	78.7	82
Anger	60	79.7	60.3
Shock	35.2	20	41
Fear	28.4	5	26
Difficulty sleeping	26.8	6.3	26.3
Crying / tears	15	4.3	22.7
Depression	11.5	5	17.3
Anxiety or panic attack	12	2	15
Lack of confidence / feeling vulnerable	24	7	13
Annoyance	23	48	8
Other	2.6	5	4.3

One out of three victims report having felt shocked

About one third of victims of burglary and violent crime experience fear.

Type of crime	Emotionally affected	Very much emotionally affected
Violence with injury	83	24
Violence without injury	72	20
Robbery	91	27
Domestic burglary	81	21
Domestic violence (with / without injury)	93	43
Theft involving vehicles	79	8
Theft from the person	85	8
Other personal theft	83	9
Other household theft	73	9
Bicycle theft	80	10
Criminal damage	86	11

Among victims of violent offenses, robbery and burglary between 20% and 27% say that they were very much affected

This number is higher among victims of domestic violence



# VICTIM ADVICE LINE

WEST MERCIA | 0800 952 3000



- West Mercia Police's Support Service for victims of crime
- Enhanced needs assessment and referral centre
- Victim Care Coordinators as SPOCs and victim advocacy
- Domestic and sexual abuse specialists
- Initial emotional and practical support (coping)
- Access to specialist and/or ongoing support (recovery)
- Information, advice and guidance



### Emotional support

- Someone to talk to.
- Coping skills.
- You can ask to speak to someone of your preferred gender.



### Making sure your voice is heard

- Named point of contact.
- Access to appropriate support.



### Practical help

- Simple safety devices.
- Access food banks.



### Advice


- Home security/crime prevention.
- Restorative justice.
- Criminal justice process.

SCAN ME



# Identifying and Assessing Need

- Officer Initial Victim Needs Assessment
- Trauma informed response and approach
- Professional judgement assessment – not a 'tick-box' exercise
- Professional curiosity and looking beyond the obvious
- Dynamic nature of need (and risk)
- Enhanced Service - VIPS
- Identify support needs – e.g. Special Measures

College of Policing  NPCC  
National Police Chiefs' Council


Working together to keep people safe

## Victims' Code of Practice

### Right 4: Initial victim needs assessment (IVNA)

**The IVNA should:**

1. Determine if the victim needs support.
2. Establish the type of support needed.
3. Assess whether the victim is vulnerable or intimidated.
4. Consider whether the victim is entitled to enhanced rights.



**IVNA considerations:**

- ◆ Age/gender.
- ◆ Language/communication barriers.
- ◆ Religious/cultural influences.
- ◆ Intimidation.
- ◆ Were they persistently targeted? (Crimes do not have to have been recorded for this to apply).
- ◆ Trauma.
- ◆ Are they vulnerable - consider situational vulnerabilities and relationship to the offender (stranger or known etc).
- ◆ Medical issues - including cognitive impairment (consider intermediary).
- ◆ Safeguarding risks.
- ◆ Practical concerns - work, dependents, finance.

**Remember:**

- ◆ Record the IVNA.
- ◆ Revisit the IVNA.

Use the IVNA to capture the victim's:

- ◆ preferred method of contact
- ◆ frequency of contact
- ◆ safest means of contact
- ◆ associated risks of contact

Find out more at [college.police.uk/guidance/victims-code](https://college.police.uk/guidance/victims-code)

C4710321

# Victim Satisfaction and Procedural Justice

- ✓ Victim felt reassured
- ✓ Treated sympathetically
- ✓ Crime report taken seriously
- ✓ Officer listened carefully
- ✓ Victim updated as agreed
- ✓ Officer explained what they were going to do

## VOICE



People need to have **the chance to tell their side of the story** and to feel that authority figures will listen and sincerely consider this before making a decision.

## NEUTRALITY



People need to see authority figures as **neutral and principled decision-makers**, who apply rules consistently, transparently and do not base their decisions on personal opinion or bias.

## RESPECT



People need to feel **respected and treated courteously** by authority figures, believe their rights are considered equal to those of others and that their issues will be taken seriously.

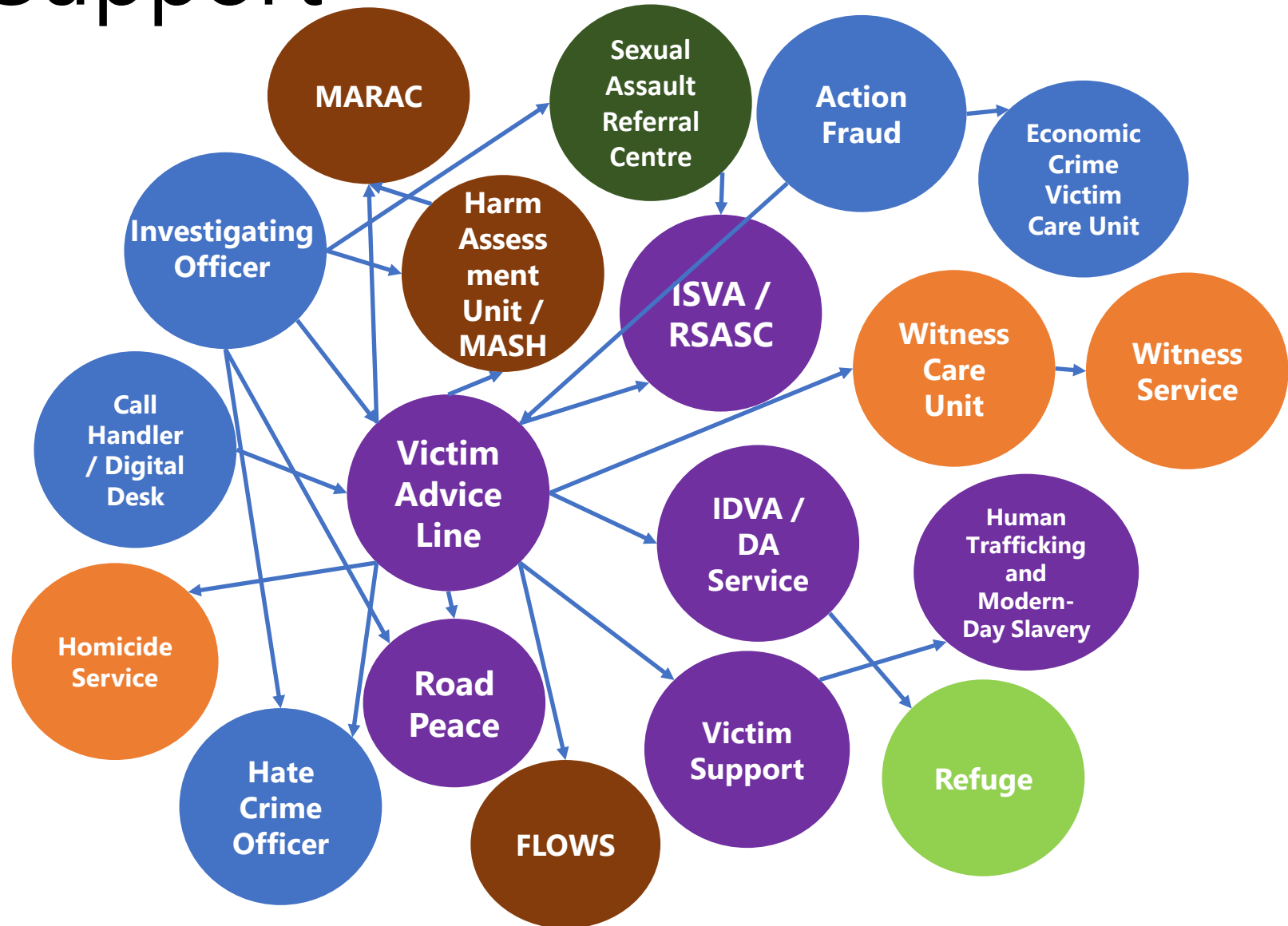
## TRUSTWORTHY MOTIVES



People need to see authority figures as people with **trustworthy motives**, who are sincere and authentic, who listen and care and who try to do what is right for everyone involved.

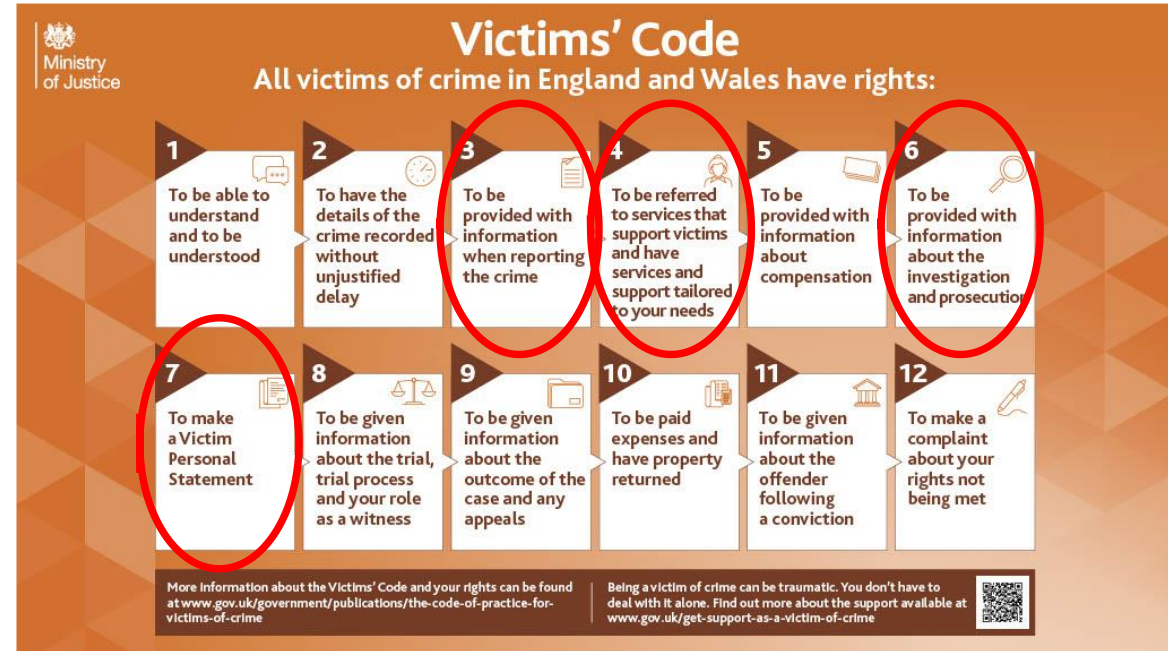
# Pathways for Support

- A complex landscape
- Locally and nationally commissioned
- Integrated and systems approach
- Effective information sharing is key



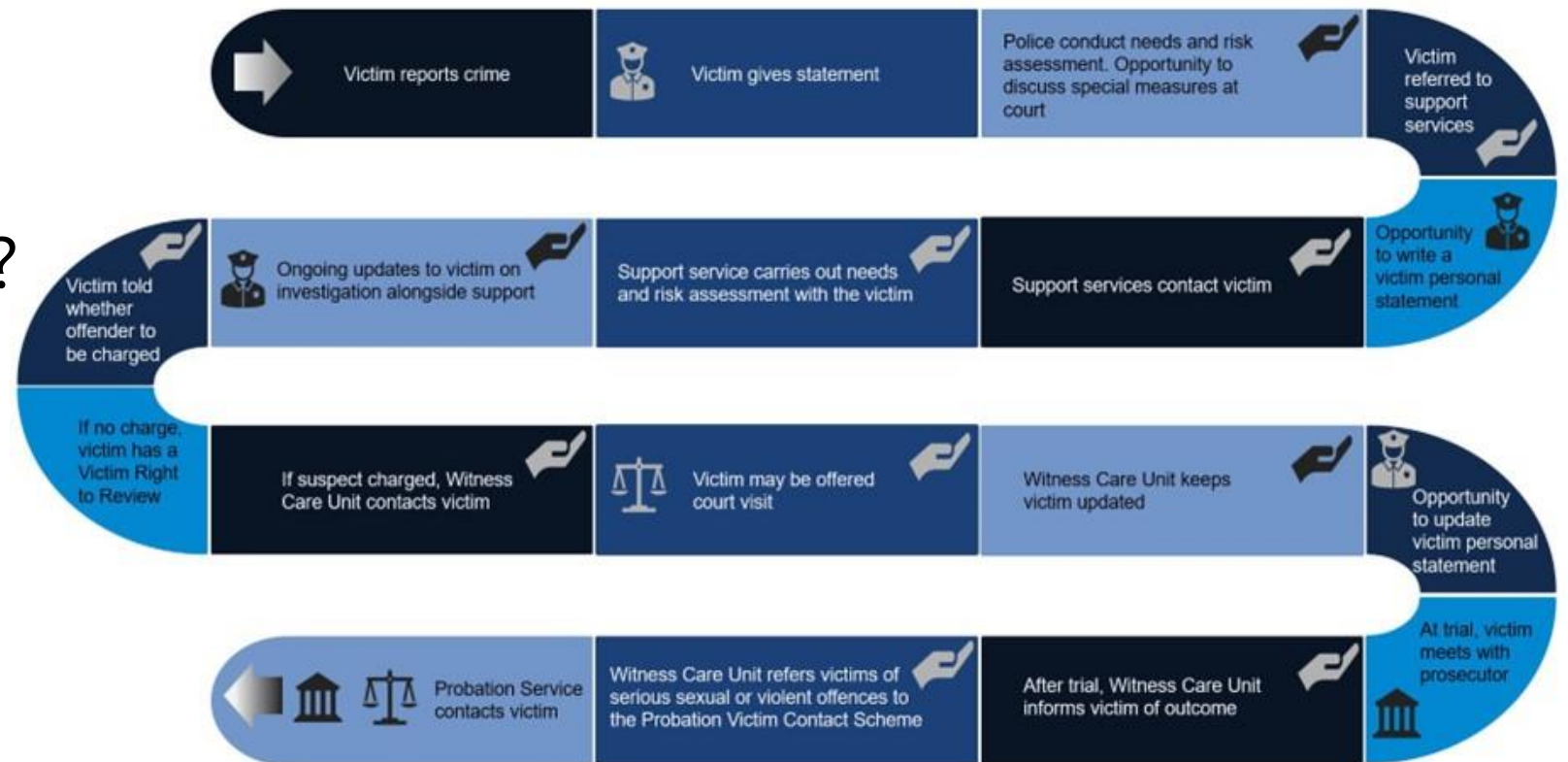
# Developing a pathway - Sexual Abuse Navigator

- ISVA trained Victim Care Coordinator
- Review of every Sexual offence or flagged crime
- Cross-reference to reduce duplication/number of contacts
- Awareness raising with Officers
- Access to the right service at the right time
- Providing 'watchful waiting' support and regular check-ins



# Navigating a complex (and sometimes disconnected) Criminal Justice System

- One direction and one-time offers
- Different pathways for different needs?
- The victim as a passenger
- The end of the journey? Or the start of recovery?



Source: HMICFRS

**Matthew Chester,  
Head of Victim Services, West Mercia Police**

**Email:** [matthew.chester@westmercia.police.uk](mailto:matthew.chester@westmercia.police.uk)

**Website:** [www.victimadviceline.org.uk](http://www.victimadviceline.org.uk)