



The Association of Youth Offending Team Managers (AYM) response to the Ministry of Justice request for information regarding working practices of YOT's/ YJS's work with victims and the Victim Code.

About the AYM

The AYM is a professional association representing the majority of youth offending teams (YOT) and their managers in England.

Section 39 (1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the co-operation of the named statutory partners to form a YOT. Section 38 (1, 2) identifies the statutory partners and places upon them a duty to co-operate in order to secure youth justice services appropriate to their area. These statutory partners are the local authority, police, the probation service, and health. To support the YOT, additional partners may also be recruited to the joint strategic effort to prevent offending by children and young people.

The Association is able to draw on the wealth of knowledge and the breadth of members' experience to promote public understanding of youth crime issues and to play its part in shaping the youth crime agenda.

Our members run services providing community-based supervision for children and young people who offend. We also work with children in custody and work closely with staff in secure units and young offender institutions to ensure that young people receiving custody experience as smooth a transition as possible into custody and back in to the community.

The AYM welcomes the opportunity to provide a response Jayne Young (Senior Policy Adviser, MoJ) and her request for information about the working practices of YOT's/ YJS's work with victims and the Victim Code.

The MoJ is currently in the process of creating new guidance relating to the Victim's Code in advance of the Victims Bill being formally introduced to Parliament (date to be confirmed). The request was for information about current working practices around how the Victims Code is being promoted/ shared with victims, what is reasonable in sharing the code, how is feedback collected from victims and how easy would it be to add additional questions to enable to MoJ to measure impact and service delivery.

An email was sent out to all the AYM regional representatives with a request to send out to all AYM members. Below is a summary of the main themes from the responses received.

There is a good understanding across YOT/ YJS's about the Victims Code and the Victims Bill. All areas were aware of the responsibility of the practitioner working with victims to share, promote and offer support around the code. This is done either via leaflets and/ or through the direct contact with victims of crime. Some YOT/ YJS's are mindful of the diversity in their areas and have leaflets printed in difference languages.

Take up rates varies across different areas for ongoing involvement with YOT/ YJS's. However, even when the victim of a crime doesn't want to be involved they are often happy they have been consulted.

There is a theme from a number of areas that not all of the points in the Victim's Code are directly relevant to the YOT/ YJS's but support is offered to help victims navigate their rights under the code. This has included their Right to Review and Criminal Injuries compensation.

One suggestion to improve the experience for victims would be to create a compensation fund and when compensation is awarded the full amount would be paid to the victim to allow them to get some form of closure. It would be then the responsibility of the court to recover any unpaid debt from the defendant.

It was raised that YOT/YJS's are only able to contact victims who have given consent. Therefore, there is a potential gap if the Police Officer dealing with the case does not inform the victim about the code or the other support services available.

Victim feedback is generally collected via feedback forms. Some areas use digital channels, other use paper feedback forms. Responses to these forms varies but in some areas the response rate is low. Feedback that is received is often positive. If the response rate is low, it would be difficult to use this to measure the impact of service delivery as the data may be skewed and not give an accurate picture.

Some areas use more qualitative ways of seeking feedback through direct discussions with those who have used their service. There is a potential for standard questions to be asked in these discussion but there may not be enough numbers to be able to use for analysis.

Some areas use external providers, such as Remedi, to complete the work with victims of crime. YOTs/ YJS's do not work with victims when the child's sentence is 12 months or over as these cases are dealt with by the Probation Service VLO's.