

September 2026

VTP End of Year 2 Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) commissioned Crest Advisory to evaluate the Victim Transformation Programme (VTP). The VTP is a CPS initiative that aims to improve victims' experiences of the CPS and contribute to a better overall experience of the criminal justice system (CJS). The VTP has three core services which are differentiated by victim need: the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot; the Enhanced Service for victims of rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO) hereafter, the Enhanced Service [RASSO]); and the Victim Centre of Excellence (VCE).

Between April 2024 and February 2026, Crest evaluated the implementation, impact, and value for money of the VTP. This summary report sets out the findings and recommendations from the evaluation in relation to the VTP's key outcomes: improving victims' experiences; reducing victim attrition; and improving efficiency within the CPS.

Detailed methods are available in the Technical Report, and full analysis of the programme's costs and benefits can be found in Annex A. The Technical Report and Annex A can be accessed on Crest Advisory's website. A [glossary](#) of the abbreviations and acronyms used in this report is available on the last page.

The Victim Transformation Programme is showing early signs of positive impact

The evaluation found that the VTP impacts positively on most victims' experiences of the CPS, could impact victim attrition, and delivers a monetisable benefit through improved victim wellbeing. The evaluation has also found that innovative adaptations to service delivery as part of the programme have supported efficient delivery.

Where the CPS delivers the VTP service well, it positively impacts victims. However, this does not yet happen consistently meaning not all victims are benefitting.

Most victims who have received a service under the VTP have experienced a high-quality service from the CPS, which is a key outcome of the VTP. This has been enabled through improved letter templates, effective training for CPS staff, and the expansion of the CPS Victim Liaison Officer (VLO) role to provide clear and timely updates to victims. Under the VTP, victims value early and proactive CPS communication about case decisions, updates, and delays. The evaluation found that, by demonstrating care and empathy in communications, the CPS has been able to retain victims' trust and confidence - even when updates have related to unwelcome developments in a case such as a 'no further action' decision. For instance, in a survey of victims who received VTP services, 92% agreed CPS communication was clear and concise, and 84% agreed it was empathetic. Overall, most victims felt that the CPS treated them fairly and with respect, which reduced anxiety and improved wellbeing. For some victims, this experience helped them to continue with the case.

Most victims had experienced empathetic communication from CPS staff, but some felt that wider aspects of VTP service delivery, including arranging meetings, had not been delivered with empathy and could be more trauma-informed. Pre-trial meetings, which are offered to adult victims of rape and

serious sexual offences, improved trust and confidence in the CPS for most victims who attended them. However, some victims were disappointed when their expectations around the purpose of the meeting were not met, or they felt CPS staff communicated poorly. There is further work for the CPS to ensure that all victims receive a consistent and high-quality service that is clear, empathetic, and helps them to make informed decisions.

We expect that as the VTP becomes more established and delivery of it becomes more consistent, its ability to reduce victim attrition will become more evident.

The Theory of Change (please see page 8) that we developed to support the VTP outlines how improving victim experience could result in more victims remaining engaged with the criminal justice process. Early indications through a statistical modelling approach suggest the Universal Service Pilot, which supports adult victims of crime, is having a positive impact on victim attrition, though the size of this impact is minor. However, there is currently insufficient data to be confident in this finding because the available data covers less than 12 months and cases can only be included once they have been finalised.

A robust assessment of the impact of the Enhanced Service Pilot, which supports adult victims of domestic abuse, and the Enhanced Service (RASSO), is not yet possible as these cases often take many months or even years to finalise, meaning there is a lack of available data. Nonetheless, VTP delivery teams and some external stakeholders think the VTP has the potential to support victims to stay engaged with the criminal justice process.

Until more victims receive the full service, measures of impact are largely qualitative. Based on our findings across the evaluation, we expect more evidence of the VTP's ability to reduce victim attrition to emerge.

We can say with some confidence that the benefit of the VTP in our assessment is larger than the cost of the VTP, even when accounting for uncertainties in our data.

The VTP is generating benefits by improving victim wellbeing, reducing victim attrition in the Universal Service Pilot, and generating some organisational efficiencies. After adjusting for optimism bias (an analytical approach that accounts for the risk of being over-optimistic when measuring benefits), the overall estimated benefit of the VTP in 2025/26 is £128.7 million, with improved victim wellbeing bringing the largest benefit, though the vast majority of these benefits are social benefits, not cashable savings for the CPS.

In comparison, the VTP cost the CPS £13.2 million to operate over the same period. This means the benefits being delivered by the VTP are greater than the costs. After testing confidence in our results, we found that for every £1 spent, the VTP is estimated to generate between £7.1 and £12.7 of benefits, though this is mostly social benefit and not a cashable saving for the CPS. Even when accounting for uncertainties, the value of the benefits in this analysis exceeds the cost of the VTP, demonstrating positive value for money.

To have greater impact, the VTP should clarify its purpose, aims, and delivery model to internal CPS teams and external partners

Our evaluation suggests that the success of the VTP is currently limited by two factors. Firstly, the VTP has created new roles, responsibilities, and ways of working for the CPS. Piloting this new service has resulted in a 'test and learn' culture and enabled positive adaptations to the delivery model but has also led to inconsistencies in how the service is implemented across CPS teams and areas. While some regional variation in service delivery is encouraged to reflect local needs and demand, it is critical that this variation does not result in a 'postcode lottery' for victims in the quality of the communication and support that they receive from the CPS.

Secondly, the VTP's successful delivery is dependent on all CPS staff, including legal practitioners, and wider partners across policing and victims' services understanding and championing the purpose and aims of the programme. Currently, there are mixed levels of confidence and clarity about the programme's aims and delivery among CPS staff and partners, which can result in victims experiencing an inconsistent service, or lacking coordinated support from the professionals around them.

As the programme expands and consolidates its delivery model, the CPS must prioritise clear and consistent communication to its staff and partners on the purpose and benefits of the programme, to ensure that all victims receive a consistent, high-quality service and overall experience of the CJS.

Recommendations

Based on the evaluation findings, we have made the following recommendations for the VTP to support greater efficiencies and improved outcomes.

Ref.	Recommendations
REC 1	The VTP should review guidance materials and quality assurance processes for preparing and drafting victim communications, focusing on known areas where clarity can be improved (e.g. clear explanations of legal jargon).
REC 2	VLOs should clearly explain the purpose of pre-trial meetings to victims before they attend to help manage expectations about what topics can be discussed, and to help victims prepare for and get the most out of meetings.
REC 3	The VTP should encourage delivery teams to generate area-specific reference documents cataloguing local support services to better equip staff to provide victims with area-specific support.
REC 4	The VTP should continue to iteratively review and update staff training to deliver a high-quality service that meets victims' needs.
REC 5	The VTP should draw on victims' feedback in this report to update guidance and training for victim-facing staff (including lawyers) on what good practice looks like in clear and empathetic communication. This will support ongoing work to centre victims' voices in staff learning materials.

REC 6	The VTP should update guidance for staff drafting victim communications, so staff review letters to ensure that sentences are clear, understandable, grammatically correct, and contain accurate information about the victim and the case.
REC 7	The VTP leadership should continue to embed and champion the ‘test and learn’ culture across programme delivery to drive improved efficiencies and data quality.
REC 8	The VTP should review processes to accommodate a broad range of victims’ accessibility requirements and communicate these clearly to VTP delivery teams.
REC 9	The VTP should clearly communicate the purpose and value of the VTP to partners in policing and victims’ services to secure their buy-in, facilitating strong communication and coordination.
REC 10	The VTP should review messaging to partners about the purpose of pre-trial meetings and partners’ expected role within meetings. This should be communicated to local forces and services at a strategic level, as well as directly between frontline practitioners when meetings are arranged.
REC 11	The VTP should work closely with police leads to ensure that the CPS’ information needs are clearly defined, and to clarify and agree how data is recorded and shared.
REC 12	The VTP should seek to understand the reasons why multiple pre-trial meetings are requested, and whether this is related to victims having different questions at different stages, a result of changes in the case or trial waiting times, or because information was not clearly explained in earlier meetings.
REC 13	The VTP should coordinate with Witness Care to review what information and updates victims receive on the case following the charge decision and ahead of trial to inform guidance on when CPS updates are most beneficial for victims.
REC 14	The VTP should ensure that CPS Areas follow guidance on offering pre-trial meetings by adopting an approach that prioritises victims’ needs and preferences around the timing and location of meetings. The VTP should consider whether additional capacity is required for Areas to deliver these meetings in line with victims’ needs.
REC 15	CPS senior management should strengthen how they communicate the importance of VLOs’ role in providing high-quality communication and support to victims in achieving organisational priorities as some staff do not feel valued or recognised.
REC 16	The VTP should clarify the respective roles and expectations of VLOs and prosecutors in drafting and quality assuring VCL letters, focused on where each role can add most value.

Introduction

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) launched the Victim Transformation Programme (VTP) in July 2022 in response to research commissioned by the CPS (2021-2022)¹ to understand victims' support and communication needs. This research followed an HMCPSI inspection in 2018 which identified a need for the CPS to improve the timeliness and quality of its communication to victims. The VTP was designed to respond to evidence, including direct victim feedback, on how the CPS could better meet victims' needs within its service design and delivery.

The VTP was designed in collaboration with other parts of the CJS, such as the police and their Witness Care Units (WCUs).² It aims to improve victims' experiences of the CPS and contribute to a better overall victim experience of the CJS.

Figure 1: The evolution of the Victim Transformation Programme



Between April 2024 and February 2026, Crest Advisory evaluated the implementation, impact, and value for money of the VTP. This summary report sets out the findings and recommendations from the evaluation in relation to key outcomes for the programme: improving victims' experiences; reducing victim attrition; and improving efficiency within the CPS.

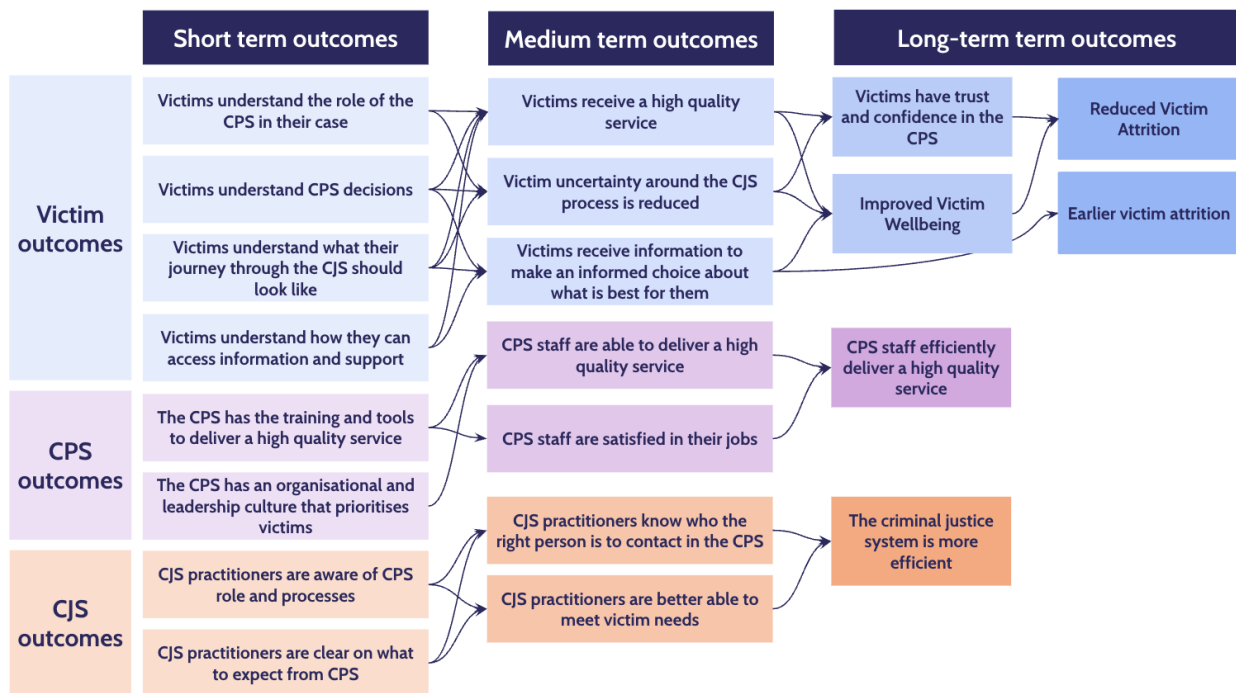
Measuring success

To test how the success of the VTP will be achieved, Crest worked closely with the CPS to develop a Theory of Change for the programme that clearly articulates how achieving short-term outcomes is expected to lead to long-term impact.

¹ [A victims' strategic needs assessment for the Crown Prosecution Service](#) (2022), Crest Advisory.

² Workshops were held with all police forces and Witness Care Units alongside national collaboration with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC).

Figure 2: VTP programme-level Theory of Change



At a programme level, all VTP services are aiming to achieve the same long-term outcomes which fall into three categories:

- Improving victims' experiences:** The CPS has committed to improve the quality of communication that victims receive and support staff in this process. In this evaluation, a high-quality experience is defined as a professional service, with clear and empathetic communication that is trauma-informed and reflective of diverse needs and circumstances.
- Reducing victim attrition:** By improving victim experience, the VTP aims to reduce victim attrition and support victims to stay engaged in the legal process through the delivery of a high-quality, trauma-informed service that provides proactive updates, tailored support, and consistent communication. The VTP also aims to ensure that victims have the support and information they need to make the best decision for themselves. For some victims this means identifying early on that withdrawing from the process is the best option. In these cases, there is a secondary benefit to the CPS that resources which would be used to progress the case can be used more effectively elsewhere.
- Improving efficiency within the CPS:** By streamlining processes, reducing delays, and enhancing coordination across agencies, the VTP aims to help reduce non-productive time and increase capacity. This allows staff to focus resources on progressing active cases, improving outcomes, and ensuring that victims receive timely and effective support. Greater efficiency across the CPS and its partner agencies also minimises delays in the criminal justice process, enhancing public trust and confidence. Overall, these improvements enable the CPS to respond to emerging demands while maintaining a high-quality, victim-focused service, aligning closely with its broader strategic objectives.

Overview of the Victim Transformation Programme

The VTP has three core services which are differentiated by victim need: the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot; the Enhanced Service for victims of rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO); and the Victim Centre of Excellence (VCE).

The Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot

The Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot introduces a new contact point between the CPS and victims: the charging decision. This involves CPS victim liaison officers (VLOs) contacting victims directly via the victim's preferred method of contact (phone, email, or letter) to inform them about the charging decision. This includes when the CPS has charged the case, as well as when 'no further action' (NFA) will be taken to progress the case. VLOs also respond to victims' queries with more information or signpost them to other services. Alongside this, the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot sends victim communication liaison (VCL) letters to victims, which inform victims about any changes to CPS charging decisions. The Enhanced Service Pilot offers additional support and communication to victims after the first hearing and ahead of the trial.

Table 1: Overview of Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot

Universal Service Pilot	Enhanced Service Pilot
• Launched in April 2023 and fully operational by December 2024 • Delivered by a central team, covering Mersey-Cheshire and Yorkshire and Humberside • Offered to all adult victims of crime.	• Launched in January 2025 and fully operational by April 2025 • Delivered by regional CPS teams, covering Mersey-Cheshire, Yorkshire and Humberside, Wessex, and London • Offered to adult victims of domestic abuse.

The Enhanced Service (RASSO)

The national rollout of the Enhanced Service (RASSO) began in August 2024 and was live across all CPS areas from November 2024. The service is offered to adult victims of rape and serious sexual offences and is delivered by regional CPS teams across England and Wales.

The Enhanced Service (RASSO) provides victims with a dedicated VLO who acts as a single point of contact for them within the CPS. The CPS VLO contacts victims at the point of charge and responds to victims' queries with information and signposting them to other services where relevant. If the defendant in a case pleads 'not guilty', victims are offered a pre-trial meeting with the prosecution team if the case proceeds to trial. The purpose of this meeting is to give victims the opportunity to discuss what to expect in court, express any concerns, discuss special measures, and resolve any questions they may have about the process. Alongside this, the Enhanced Service (RASSO) sends VCL letters to victims.

The Victim Centre of Excellence

The Victim Centre of Excellence (VCE) is a central team which supports and drives high-quality victim engagement across the programme and the wider organisation. It is fundamental to continual improvement and quality assuring the information and communication that victims receive. The VCE also has a wider remit of influencing the CPS to deliver a high-quality service to victims by improving processes, systems, and staff capabilities. It has developed a wide range of templates, guidance, and training to support victim-facing staff to complete their work effectively and efficiently.

Evaluation methods

We used a mixed methods approach, incorporating seven key data sources. Through our analysis, we have triangulated data and insights to inform our findings and recommendations. Full methods, including limitations, are available in the Technical Report.

- **Victim interviews:** Between February and December 2025, we conducted 12 interviews with adult victims who received the Enhanced Service (RASSO).
- **Victim feedback forms:** Two victims who received the Enhanced Service (RASSO) shared written feedback via an online form between June and December 2025.
- **Victim surveys:** As of 4th February 2026, we received a total of 107 responses to surveys from victims who received the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot, and the Enhanced Service (RASSO). Each survey relates to a specific contact point with the CPS, for example 'decision to charge' or 'pre-trial meeting invite'. In this report, survey responses have been aggregated across all services and contact points, due to a low number of survey responses³. Please note that 83% (n=89) of the total survey responses are from the Universal Service Pilot Decision to Charge survey, meaning that findings are not generalisable to all services and contact points.
- **Wider engagement with victims:** We held a focus group with victims who had not received a VTP service to understand broader perspectives on victims' needs and experiences.
- **Focus groups with professional stakeholders:** Between August 2024 and November 2025, we conducted 35 focus groups and interviews with internal and external stakeholders across England and Wales. They include:
 - CPS VLOs and Victim Liaison Managers (VLMs) in the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot and Enhanced Service (RASSO)
 - CPS paralegal officers and assistants
 - CPS prosecuting lawyers
 - Witness care officers (WCOs)
 - Police officers in charge (OICs); and
 - Victim advocates, including Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs).
- **CPS staff surveys:** We received a total of 775 responses in January 2025 and 631 responses in January 2026 to a survey sent to all CPS staff. The survey explored the impact of the VTP on staff attitudes and perceptions of CPS strategic priorities and their own role in achieving these strategic priorities.
- **Dip sample of CPS communications:** We analysed VCL and NFA letters according to the broader themes taken from the CPS' Template Letter Guidance (2024) documents which were used as success criteria.
- **Administrative and management information provided by the CPS:** The VTP shared data from the CPS Contact App relating to all complaints and VRRs that have been submitted to the CPS between April 2021 and October 2025; case-level data relating to all cases which were registered on CPS systems and resulted in a pre-charge decision between April 2023

³ Aggregated survey responses are drawn from seven surveys: the Universal Service Pilot 'Decision to Charge', 'No Further Action', and 'Victim Communication Liaison' surveys; the Enhanced Service Pilot 'No Further Action' and 'Decision to Charge' surveys; and the Enhanced Service (RASSO) 'Pre-trial meeting invite' and 'No Further Action' surveys.

and October 2025; service monitoring data from the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot, and Enhanced Service (RASSO); and VTP cost data on staff and non-staff costs, and programme financial spending records / accounts.

Evaluation findings

Chapter 1: Victims' experiences

In 2022, the Victims' Strategic Needs Assessment⁴ found that the CPS could do more to improve victims' experiences and identified an unacceptable inconsistency in the quality, timeliness and empathy of CPS communications. Since then, the VTP has aimed to provide victims with tailored communication and support, delivered in a timely way, and to a consistently high quality. This aligns with the CPS' strategic priority⁵ to increase trust in the CPS by placing victims at the heart of the CJS and ensuring that victims and witnesses receive a supportive service.

This section discusses how the VTP has impacted victims' experiences, including the quality of the service victims receive, their trust and confidence in the CPS, and the impact that this has on their wellbeing. This section presents findings from our analysis of surveys and interviews with victims. Due to a low response rate to victims' surveys and limited number of victim interviews, we have taken a mixed methods approach in our analysis and triangulated insight to understand the impact of the VTP on victims' experiences.

Key findings: Victims' experiences

- The CPS's method of communication can have a substantial impact on how a victim engages with the legal process. The VTP is meeting most victims' contact preferences
- Most victims thought CPS communications were clear and concise, but some found letters lengthy and unclear
- Clear and accessible information from the CPS helps victims to understand decisions and next steps
- Most victims experienced empathetic communication from CPS staff, but some felt that wider aspects of VTP service delivery, including arranging meetings, were not trauma-informed
- Most victims who received early and proactive VTP communications about CPS decisions, updates, and delays believed that the CPS is taking the case seriously
- Pre-trial meetings have improved trust and confidence in the CPS for most victims who attended them, but some victims had a negative experience when their expectations around the purpose of meetings were not met
- Visible coordination with partners improves victims' trust and confidence in the CPS
- Most victims felt that the CPS treated them fairly and with respect which reduces anxiety and improves wellbeing
- Improving victim wellbeing has an annual benefit of £151.2 million to the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot and Enhanced Service (RASSO)
- For some - but not all - victims, receiving a high-quality service from the CPS helped them to continue with the case

⁴ [A victims' strategic needs assessment for the Crown Prosecution Service](#) (2022), Crest Advisory.

⁵ [Crown Prosecution Service 2030 Strategy](#), CPS

Delivering a high-quality experience

Victims receiving a high-quality experience throughout the CPS process is the first long term outcome related to victims' experience set out in the Theory of Change. A high-quality experience is when victims feel well informed about CPS decisions, treated like individuals, and feel that the CPS has met their needs.

Key Finding: The CPS' method of communication can have a substantial impact on how a victim engages with the legal process

CPS VLOs can contact victims by phone, email, letter, or a combination of these methods. Our interviews with victims show that there is variation in how each victim prefers to be contacted. Most victims felt that the method of contact (i.e. phone, email or letter) impacted the quality of information the CPS provided and how well they could process it. For example, one victim preferred phone calls over emails because they found hearing the VLO's voice comforting. However, some victims preferred written communication over phone calls and experienced anxiety around unscheduled calls from the CPS in case they missed important information.

"I just think having more in writing rather than just random calls [...] I just felt a bit sort of keeping my fingers crossed and hoping I didn't miss a call." (Victim)

Several victims preferred to receive both phone calls and written communication from the CPS, as this would enable them to ask questions and clarify information on the call, as well as retain a record of the information.

"I think it would be much better received or absorbed by [...] sending it in a letter, then [...] follow up with a call." (Victim)

In the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot, most victims' preferred method of contact was phone calls (62%, n=2,907) followed by emails (15%, n=696) and letters (9%, n=418).⁶ The Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot are able to meet most victims' contact preferences, with 71% (n=891) of victims in the Universal Service Pilot⁷ and 83% (n=423) of victims in the Enhanced Service Pilot⁸ who preferred a phone call, receiving a call.

It is important that the CPS continues to focus on understanding and adhering to individual victims' preferred communication methods to ensure that their needs are met. However, where information on victims' preferred method of contact is not available (for instance, where this information is not known or shared by police), the CPS should continue to prioritise communicating with victims safely and in a

⁶ This data covers cases in the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot between August 2025 and January 2026. Data is not available for the Enhanced Service (RASSO).

⁷ This data covers cases in the Universal Service between August 2025 and January 2026 receiving direct communication from the CPS via a phone call and receiving the information pack via email or post.

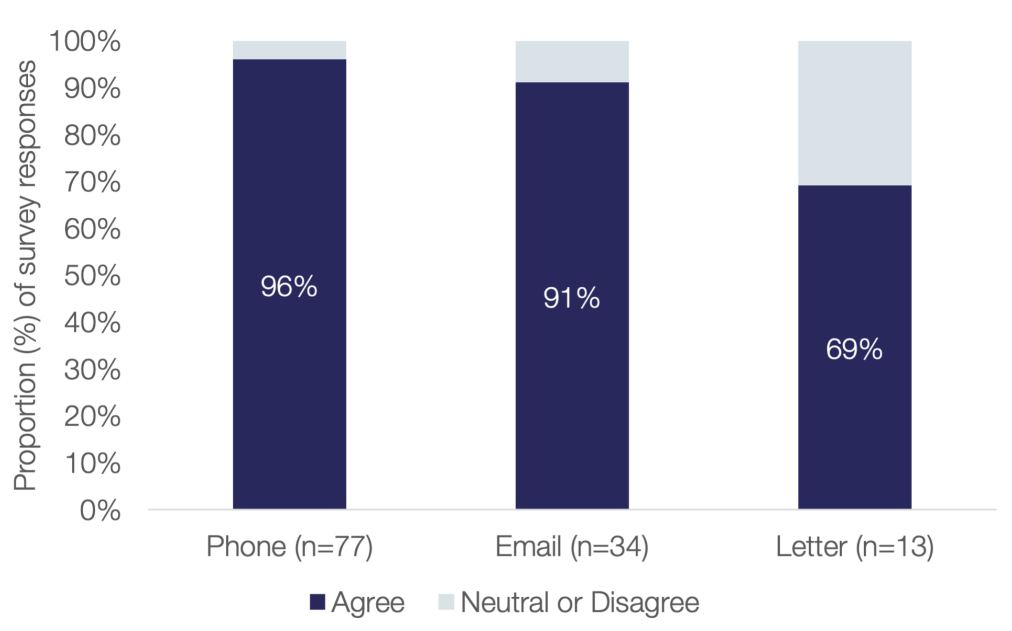
⁸ This data covers cases in the Enhanced Service Pilot between November 2024 and July 2025. The data excludes 476 records where the preferred method of contact is recorded but the actual method of communication wasn't.

timely way. The development of the Safer Communications checklist, which supports staff to more quickly contact victims whose preferred method of contact is not known, was received positively by Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot staff.

Key Finding: Most victims thought CPS communications were clear and concise, but some found letters lengthy and unclear

Survey results show that most victims felt CPS communications via phone, email, and letter were clear and concise. However, this proportion was slightly lower for CPS letters relative to the other contact methods. In line with these findings, some victims explained that phone calls with Enhanced Service (RASSO) VLOs were clear and beneficial as they were able to directly ask questions and clarify information. One victim reflected that the letter they received from the Enhanced Service (RASSO) was very long and contained a lot of information, which made it difficult to absorb - particularly while they were managing long-term stress and trauma.

Chart 1: Proportion of victim survey responses by whether the communication they received from the CPS was clear and concise and method of communication⁹



Dip sample analysis of 'no further action' (NFA) and 'victim communication liaison' (VCL) letters sent by the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot shows there is inconsistency in the clarity of communications sent to victims across the sample. Instances of legal jargon were low across sampled NFA letters for all services and VCL letters sent by the Universal Service Pilot, with most instances of legal jargon being explained within the letters. However, a higher proportion of VCL letters sent by the Enhanced Service Pilot contained legal jargon. The inclusion of unexplained legal jargon can make information in letters difficult for victims to understand and process, limiting their ability to both engage and make informed decisions about the case. Insight from victims emphasises the importance of communicating information in plain language to facilitate understanding.

⁹ Response categories were grouped due to small volumes of responses (see methods).

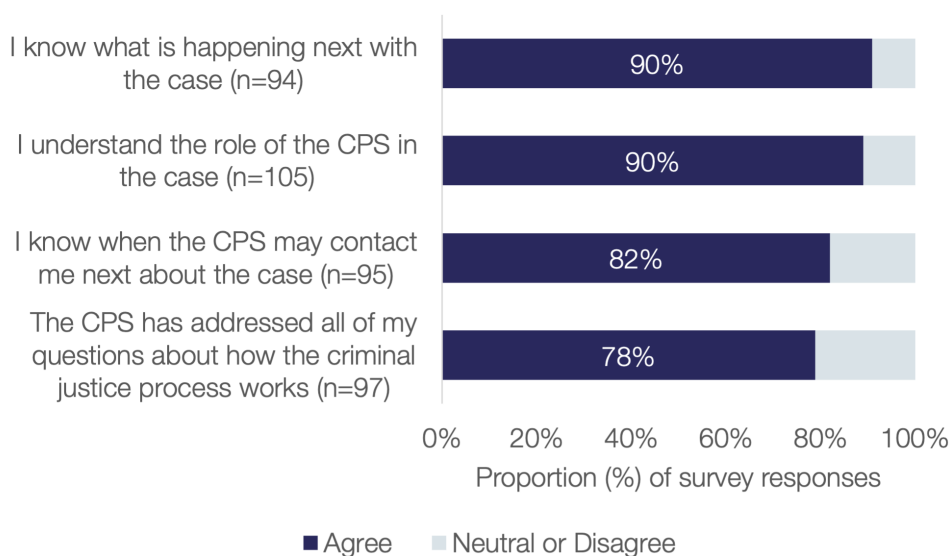
*"To have been given more explanation of the charges they were bringing would have been really useful because **I didn't understand the legal terminology [...] and there's no reason why I should.** So, some more information on that would have been helpful."* (Victim)

To ensure that all victims receive a high-quality service that enables them to understand decisions and next steps, the VTP should review guidance materials and quality assurance processes for preparing and drafting communications to victims, focusing on known areas where clarity can be improved. For example, reducing legal jargon in letter templates or providing clear explanations when specific terminology cannot be avoided, and ensuring that - where known - victims' preferred method of contact is correctly recorded and adhered to. **[REC 1]**

Key Finding: Clear and accessible information from the CPS helps victims to understand decisions and next steps

Clear, relevant and timely communication from the CPS supports victims to understand how decisions have been made and to feel well informed about next steps, and - as such - denotes a high-quality service. Survey results show that most victims understood the role of the CPS in the case and knew what would happen next in the case. Similarly, most victims knew when to next expect contact from the CPS and felt that the CPS had addressed all their questions about how the criminal justice process works. However, more than one in ten (13%) victims did *not* feel clear about when to next expect contact from the CPS and disagreed that the CPS had answered all their questions about the criminal justice process.

Chart 2: Proportion of victim survey responses that agreed with statements about the information provided to them by the CPS about their case



For some eligible VCL communications, victims have the right to review the CPS decision. This is known as the 'victims right to review' (VRR). The VTP is aiming to improve the quality of VRR information shared with victims so that requests are streamlined for eligible victims. The volume of

eligible VRR requests is an important indicator of service quality and can provide insight on how well the CPS has clearly and accurately informed victims about the options available to them. Previous reviews¹⁰ have found that victims were not always informed of their VRR, but also that ineligible VRR requests put a high demand on CPS resources.

Among cases eligible for the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot, the total volume of VRRs being submitted is increasing, which may reflect that the programme is having a positive impact on ensuring victims are informed of their right to a VRR. Between November 2024 and October 2025, 1,466 eligible VRRs were received – an increase of 21% from the previous 12-month period (November 2023 - October 2024). However, volumes of ineligible VRRs are also increasing at a similar rate which could suggest that increased awareness has not been matched with clear understanding of the VRR eligibility criteria. 206 ineligible VRRs were submitted between November 2024 and October 2025, a rise of 28% compared to the previous 12-month period. Victim survey response levels are currently too low to allow for robust analysis of victims' awareness of VRRs. The increase in eligible and ineligible VRRs should be considered in the context of an increased volume of prosecutions, and therefore an increase in the number of CPS decisions which could have been eligible for a VRR.

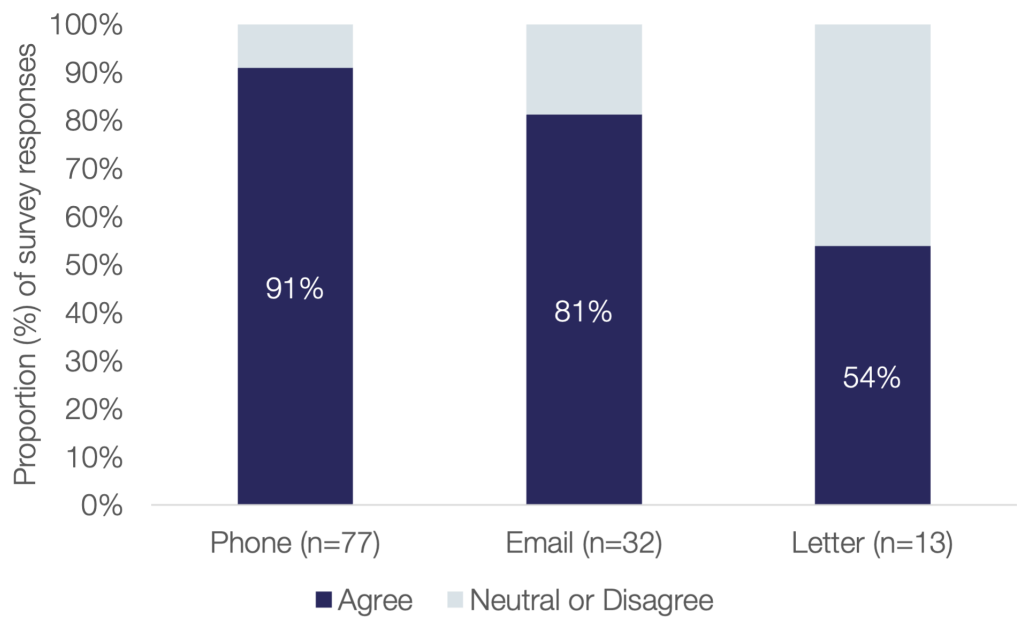
As the service evolves, monitoring the impact of the VTP on VRRs will be important to understand if victims are aware of their right to review. So far, however, our analysis shows that providing victims with clear information has caused a slight, manageable increase in demand for the CPS.

Key Finding: Most victims experienced empathetic communication from CPS staff, but some felt that wider aspects of VTP service delivery, including arranging meetings, were not trauma-informed

Survey results show that most victims thought the contact they received from the CPS was empathetic. However, this proportion was much lower for victims who received letters from the CPS, with 54% of victims who received letters agreeing that the letter was empathetic, while 31% (n=4) indicated that the letter was not empathetic. In line with this finding, one victim reflected during an interview that the tone of the letter they received was 'formal' despite the subject matter being deeply personal, and that a phone call allows for a more authentic interaction.

Chart 3: Proportion of victim survey responses by whether the communication they received from the CPS was empathetic and method of communication

¹⁰ [A victims' strategic needs assessment for the Crown Prosecution Service](#) (2022), Crest Advisory.



Dip sample analysis of NFA letters sent by the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot shows consistent and unscripted use of empathetic language¹¹, as well as the inclusion of details that were specific to the victim or the case which ensures that letters feel more bespoke and personalised to the victim. However, our analysis of VCL letters sent by the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot showed greater variability in the use of empathetic language. For example, while the majority of VCL letters sent by the Universal Service Pilot contained unscripted empathetic language, only some letters sent by the Enhanced Service Pilot contained unscripted empathetic language. All the VCL letters sent by the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot were tailored and personalised, including details that were specific to the victim or the case. However, the inclusion of an appropriate and bespoke thank you was less consistent.

In interviews, most victims described their contact with at least one member of CPS staff as empathetic and valued that both lawyers and VLOs connected with them on a human level. Victims described this as a 'warmth' or authenticity in the way that staff communicated.

*"I felt a lot better after that [pre-trial] meeting. The lawyer was really good. **I didn't feel rushed at all. She was so polite - warm and very comforting. She showed a human element**" (Victim)*

*"I actually found the representative from the CPS incredibly eloquent, **incredibly empathetic, as I have every time I've met with him.**" (Victim)*

Victims appreciated when CPS staff acknowledged the impact of the offence, as well as any stress and anxiety caused by the criminal case and legal process, and recognised how the victim might be feeling. One victim explained that, for them, empathy did not mean taking a pitying or 'bless you' attitude but was about recognising the strength it took for the victim to move forward.

¹¹ Please refer to the Technical Report (2026) for more detail on the empathetic language coding framework.

*"Obviously I was nervous to go to court soon and it was just really easy for [the VLO] to put any sort of niggling feeling or anything that was really eating away at me to rest and **he was properly reassuring and really empathetic towards me.** And going, 'I know this is probably a conversation that you never thought you'd ever have to have, **but the fact that you're having it and you're able to talk about it with us just shows a lot**'" (Victim)*

Additionally, some victims highlighted that CPS staff had created a comfortable and equal dynamic during pre-trial meetings, which had enabled victims to open up and ask questions without feeling judged. One victim described how the VLO had recognised that they were nervous during a pre-trial meeting and put them at ease by demonstrating empathy and creating space for them to ask questions.

*"We are here to help you. **No question is too big or too small, and we will try and answer it the best way that we can,** and I just felt really comfortable to then ask those questions and to get that reassurance. [...] **[The VLO] really took the time to listen to what I was saying,** and I was really grateful for that." (Victim)*

However, some victims felt that some language used by CPS staff was insensitive. One victim described repeatedly being referred to as a witness by the CPS, which they felt minimised the significant impact that the crime had on them. Other victims said that the communication they received from the CPS was impersonal and did not recognise the significant impact and trauma that victims are experiencing.

*"I understand that people do it every day. **I understand you have to be one step removed. But I just thought [an understanding of trauma and how people may be impacted by trauma] was lacking across all parts of it.**" (Victim)*

*"And I think that because they deal with that all the time, **they lose sight of how [expletive] traumatic it is for individuals doing it.**" (Victim)*

To one victim, the way that the lawyer responded to questions during a pre-trial meeting made them feel like they were an inconvenience. For another victim, being told by the lawyer 'not to worry' about various elements of the court process felt dismissive rather than reassuring (as the lawyer may have intended).

*"I felt they weren't used to people asking questions, which I thought were like basic questions. I felt like I was asking pretty standard questions given the nature of what was going on. And **I definitely felt like an inconvenience.**" (Victim)*

For some victims, while interactions with individual CPS staff demonstrated empathy and care, they felt that wider elements of service delivery had not taken account of what they were feeling and

experiencing. In particular, some victims reflected that a more empathetic and trauma-informed approach from the CPS when planning meetings would have improved their experience. For example, one victim's pre-trial meeting was arranged at a rape crisis centre which was uncomfortable and triggering for the victim. They would have valued a conversation about location options for the meeting so that this could have been considered when planning. It is important that empathy is practiced at all levels of service delivery, with CPS staff taking an empathetic and trauma-informed approach to both the content of their interactions with victims, as well as the timing and planning of this contact.

Building trust and confidence in the CPS

Building victims' trust and confidence in the CPS is an important long-term outcome for the VTP, and is achieved when victims experience a high-quality, coherent, and joined-up service across the CJS.

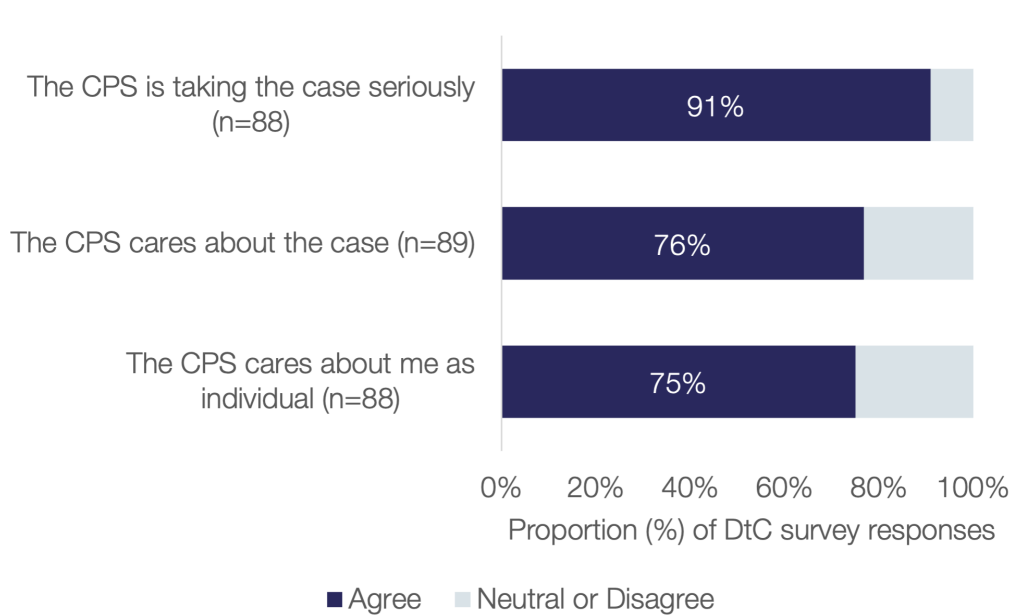
Key Finding: Most victims who have received early and proactive communication from the VTP about CPS decisions, updates, and delays believe that the CPS is taking the case seriously

We engaged with a wider group of victims who had not directly received a VTP service to build our understanding of victims' needs regarding communication and support from the CPS. They reflected that early communication from the CPS was important to provide victims with reassurance that the case is progressing, and to keep them involved with and informed about decisions and next steps. They explained that the charging decision is a critical point for the CPS to explain the decision and support victims to engage with the legal process. This feedback aligns with the VTP delivery model, where the 'Decision to Charge' (DtC) and NFA communications are the first contact points when victims can expect to hear directly from the CPS.

*"The victim should be informed regarding decisions to charge. This is very important as **it's the first point of feeling safe again**, and as though you can live a normal life."* (Victim, VS survey)

Survey results show that three in four victims who received a DtC communication from the CPS felt that the CPS cared about the case and about them as an individual. Over 90% of victims who received a DtC communication also felt that the CPS was taking the case seriously. This is a positive finding and demonstrates that this early communication from the CPS provides most victims with reassurance about the care and diligence the CPS is taking in relation to the case. As reflected in the Theory of Change, this can impact positively on victims' trust and confidence in the CPS.

Chart 4: Proportion of DtC victim survey responses to statements about how the CPS is treating them and the case



However, 63% of victims who had received an NFA letter from the CPS did not feel that the CPS cared about the case, 50% did not feel that the CPS cared about them as an individual, and 75% did not think that the CPS took the case seriously.¹² It is likely that victims' perceptions are impacted in part by receiving information that the case will not be progressing. Open text feedback from some victims who had received an NFA decision from the CPS shows that, even where the CPS is delivering bad news about the outcome of the case, if they communicate in a way that demonstrates care and empathy, this can increase victims' trust and confidence in the CPS.

*"[The CPS] has gone above and beyond. If they didn't care, they wouldn't be ringing me. I was emotionally damaged and embarrassed about the incident. **But the CPS rang me about the incident, and this made me happy and feel that they care about me.** The person I spoke to on the phone was caring and professional"* (Victim, Universal Service Pilot NFA Decision)

Insights from interviews with victims who received the Enhanced Service (RASSO) reiterate the importance of early, proactive communication from the CPS in building trust and confidence. Most victims interviewed had not received a charge decision communication from the CPS because the charges in the case pre-dated the VTP. Several victims reflected that, before they were invited to a pre-trial meeting, they had received limited information about the progress of the case. This had negatively impacted their trust and confidence in the CPS.

"It was like having a heavy heart. I hate being in the dark at any stage - it's the worst feeling being in the dark, it's such a serious thing that victims go through." (Victim)

¹² Please note that the sample size of victims who had received an NFA communication is small (n=8) and therefore these results should be interpreted with caution.

Limited CPS contact also damaged victims' trust and confidence in the CPS where the case was delayed without explanation. One victim described how repeated delays without an update or explanation from the CPS exacerbated their trauma, which they did not feel the CPS acknowledged.

*"It just got delayed and delayed and delayed with no explanation as to why. **I felt that [the CPS] didn't understand the trauma that I was experiencing by doing this whole process.**" (Victim)*

Most victims who had not received a charging decision communication from the CPS reflected that proactive communication and updates at the point of charge would have helped them to feel more involved and included in the case. This feedback suggests that the VTP delivery model, which involves CPS communication at the point of charge and updates when the case is delayed, would have increased their confidence and trust in the CPS.

*"I think if I got some information when charges were brought [...] if I had some sort of communication from them, then I don't think when I got all the information out of the plea, **it wouldn't have felt so heavy to me.**" (Victim)*

Key Finding: Pre-trial meetings have improved trust and confidence in the CPS for most victims who attended them, but some victims had a negative experience when their expectations around the purpose of meetings were not met

Pre-trial meetings are optional and allow victims to ask questions about the criminal justice process and hear directly from the CPS before the trial.

For several victims, the pre-trial meeting was the first time they felt listened to and supported by the CPS. Victims explained that having their questions answered at the pre-trial meeting calmed their nerves and increased their confidence in the legal process. They also valued when lawyers clearly understood the case, as this gave them confidence that the lawyer had reviewed all the evidence and believed the case could be charged. This reassured victims that they were believed and supported by the legal team when going into trial.

*"I felt a lot better with contact from the CPS. My ISVA noticed that **I was more calm and relaxed once my queries were answered. I had people who cared about me.** Of course you're still anxious, but you think 'finally - I have a contact', I'm not in the dark anymore. It's very comforting" (Victim)*

*"It was actually reassuring when [lawyers said], 'I have read everything. I already know all about that and I'm still bringing [the case]'. **I thought it was like a weight lifted that they said that [...]** so even if I do get everything and the kitchen sink thrown at me [...] they still think it's strong enough. [...] They'll try their best, but I should hold*

*within me that it's a very high standard to get [a case to court]. **So they believe me. And whatever the outcome, I can hold on to that, and that was very powerful.***" (Victim)

During pre-trial meetings, victims valued clear and realistic information about court processes, including difficult and challenging aspects of trial proceedings. This helped them to feel more confident, prepared, and aware of possible outcomes ahead of the trial.

*"Obviously, they tell you the bits that you don't want to hear. And obviously, you know it's not going to be nice in that courtroom. **But they were sort of blunt with it, but nice with it. [...] they tell you how it is.***" (Victim)

Whilst transparency is important to victims, this should be balanced with recognising victims' concerns, including any safety concerns related to the defendant, and providing reassurance where possible. In one victim's experience, the pre-trial meeting negatively impacted their trust and confidence in the CPS because they did not feel that the CPS provided sufficient reassurance in relation to safety concerns that they had about the trial.

*"The biggest thing I came away from that meeting with was 'expect the unexpected'. [...] **Almost a message of: expect no safety with this because we can't guarantee you anything.***" (Victim)

For another victim, being told that they could not ask questions related to evidence in the case was retraumatising as it reflected the pattern of silencing they experienced as part of their abuse. This victim would have appreciated a better explanation from the CPS in advance of the meeting on the legal restrictions which mean the evidence in a case cannot be discussed.

To minimise the risk that victims are disappointed, confused, or retraumatised during pre-trial meetings, VLOs should make sure that they clearly explain the purpose of pre-trial meetings to victims before they attend to help manage expectations about what can and cannot be discussed. Sharing this information in advance can enable victims to better prepare for meetings and perhaps make a note of questions they would like to ask, to ensure that meetings have maximum benefit for them. [\[REC 2\]](#)

Key Finding: Visible coordination with partners improves victims' trust and confidence in the CPS

Survey results show that, of the 71 victims who received information from both the CPS and the Police about a charge decision or update, 87% (n=62) said the information they received was consistent between both agencies. This is a positive finding and indicates that the CPS and police are aligned in the way that they communicate and explain information to victims, minimising the risk that victims receive conflicting information which could impact their trust and confidence in both the CPS and wider partners.

However, this is not the experience of all victims. Open text feedback from surveys demonstrates how an uncoordinated response from the CPS and police can have a negative impact on victims' experiences, including the perception that neither agency is taking the case seriously.

*"I would be told one thing by the police and another by CPS. [...] Also name spelling, **it feels like I'm not being taken seriously** when I tell the police or CPS my name for information and they can't find me on the system and I explain every time my name is spelt wrong and no one does anything to change it."* (Victim, DtC survey US)

One victim who received the RASSO Enhanced Service felt that receiving updates and support from both the CPS and ISVAs demonstrated a coordinated approach to progressing the case. This helped to boost the victim's confidence in the wider CJS and helped them to feel supported by different agencies. Another victim felt that it would have been beneficial for the police OIC to attend their pre-trial meeting as well as CPS staff to help them understand how these agencies were working together on the case.

*"When you feel like you're being left in the dark you feel uncared for, and then you become anxious and nervous. **[Being contacted] calms your nerves. Having the ISVA and the CPS makes you feel like you have people around you that can support you and care for you.** [...] Once you have that support you don't need to go back into damaging behaviours"* (Victim)

Improving victims' wellbeing

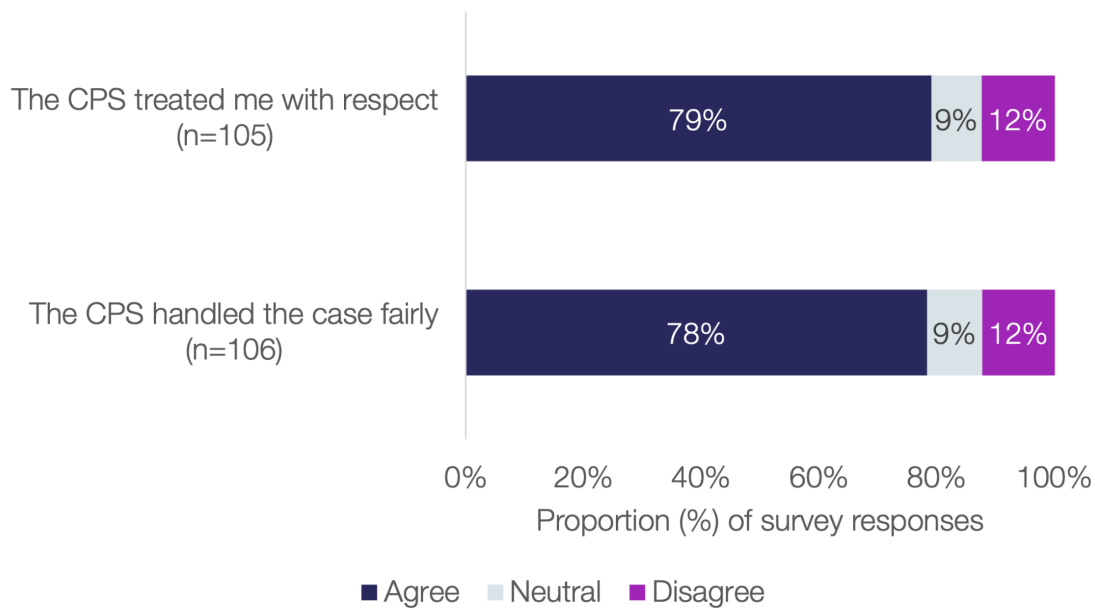
Improved victim wellbeing is a critical outcome that the VTP is aiming to achieve. Improved victim wellbeing is associated with remaining engaged with the process and can thus help to reduce victim attrition.

Key Finding: Most victims felt that the CPS treated them fairly and with respect, which reduces anxiety and improves wellbeing

Research by the Office for National Statistics¹³ has shown a clear link between wellbeing and measures of anxiety and being treated fairly and with respect. Our survey data shows that most victims feel that the CPS handled their case fairly and treated them with respect, which reduces anxiety and improves wellbeing.

¹³ Crest and Fortia Insight have conducted a separate analysis of CSEW data held by the ONS to establish this relationship.

Chart 5: Proportion of victim survey responses by whether the CPS treated them with respect and handled the case fairly



We used an analytical approach to estimate how this improvement in wellbeing brings a monetised economic benefit. We estimated that, on an annualised basis, improving victim wellbeing has an benefit of £151.2 million per year to the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot and Enhanced Service (RASSO). Please see Chapter 4 for more detail on this analysis.

Some victims who have received the Enhanced Service (RASSO) described the positive impact that contact from the CPS had for them, in terms of feeling supported and empowered.

*"The CPS made me feel **so engaged and supported**, because you know they review everything. They have more knowledge on the legal process and justice side than police. To have an organisation that's so vital to the justice system in the UK speaking to the victim makes you feel **empowered and encouraged**."* (Victim)

However, for others, the way that contact was approached - including insensitive comments or non-trauma-informed engagement - had negatively impacted their wellbeing by exacerbating an already difficult experience.

*"I found the pre-trial meeting very disappointing, and I don't see what value it [has] to add to the court proceedings. **The frustration I felt from this meeting has had a significant impact on my mental health.**"* (Victim)

Survey results show that 76% (n=97) of victims know where they can find further information about support services, which can provide critical advice and care to help victims manage their wellbeing. However, 15% (n=16) of victims did not know where they could find further information about support services, which suggests that the CPS could do more to signpost support to victims. Current CPS

letter templates encourage letter drafters to signpost victims to tailored support services based on their individual circumstances. However, our dip sample analysis of Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot letters found that only one NFA letter - and no VCL letters - included tailored signposting, although all letters signposted victims to generic support services.

The VTP should encourage the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot and Enhanced Service (RASSO) teams to generate area-specific reference documents cataloguing local support services to better equip staff to provide victims with Area specific support. Further dip sample analysis of VTP communications should be conducted to determine whether this has had a positive impact on the inclusion of tailored signposting to support services. **[REC 3]**

Reducing victim attrition

Reducing victim attrition and keeping victims engaged throughout the criminal justice process is a key outcome for the VTP. In line with the Theory of Change, reduced attrition flows from improving victims' experience, which is achieved by delivering a high-quality, trauma-informed service that emphasises and strives to provide proactive updates, personalised support, and consistent communication.

The remainder of this chapter sets out qualitative victim feedback on how the VTP has impacted victim engagement with the criminal justice process. Chapter 3 explores how the programme is currently impacting victim attrition, based on quantitative data.

Key Finding: For some - but not all - victims, receiving a high-quality service from the CPS helped them to continue with the case

Our interviews with victims give some indication of the service's potential impact on victim attrition. Some victims who had received the Enhanced Service (RASSO) felt that the pre-trial meeting had helped them to stay engaged with the case by reassuring them ahead of the trial.

*"I was getting to the point where I felt like I couldn't do it [...] I'm really worried. I'm getting a bit scared. I'm getting really nervous. But when I had the meeting, **I just suddenly felt this sense of calm because a lot of my fears and worries were really answered.**" (Victim)*

*"In the beginning, when I had no support, I wasn't that engaged in the case, and I fell into the trap of talking to the perpetrator's friend and wanted to withdraw support. I was a puppet. I didn't have support and the police SOIT [Sexual Offences Investigative Techniques Officer] wasn't responsive. Already you're scared of the perpetrator, **but if you feel like professionals aren't helping you, you don't want to pursue it further.**" (Victim)*

Some victims who received a positive charge decision from the CPS and contact from the Universal Service Pilot similarly felt that being kept updated and informed about progress has helped them to understand next steps and stay engaged with the case.

“Contacting me as a victim has helped me to continue with the case that will be heard in court. The CPS have kept me informed and I appreciate that there’s someone out there listening.” (Victim)

*“I personally feel that receiving the information on email was really helpful. **This kept me informed and also informs me of what potentially can happen next**, for example, [being] called as a witness. This is the first time I have received information in this way. Normally I have only been informed [of] the officer in the case or when the defendant had been to court and [the] final decision had been made”.* (Victim)

However, a few victims described how they remained engaged with the case due to the strength of their character, despite a perceived lack of support from the CPS. One victim, who had not received a charge decision communication from the CPS and therefore only a partial service under the VTP, explained that they did not feel supported or valued by the CPS because the CPS did not use clear language or give a good explanation of the charges, provide proactive updates, or recognise the impact of the victim’s trauma.

*“If I’d have had less support or been less determined, **I would have given up**. And I’m glad I didn’t, because I’m very proud of the fact that I did it, and there was a good enough outcome. But **I didn’t feel supported by the CPS. I felt a very small part of their machine. I didn’t feel valued or important, and I didn’t feel included.**”* (Victim)

A different victim, who had not received a charge decision communication from the CPS, reflected that they might not have proceeded with the case if they had known earlier that the case would take so long. In this case, earlier communication from the CPS, in line with the VTP delivery model, setting out realistic timelines and updates on case progression may have supported this victim to drop out at an early stage, rather than risk attrition at a later point.

Chapter 2: Implementing the VTP

This section discusses how the implementation of the VTP has contributed to victims' experiences. The VTP has introduced process changes to improve victims' experiences which are set out as 'activities' in the Theory of Change. We have explored how effectively these have been delivered across all services.

Key findings: Implementing the VTP

- Most VTP staff have found training modules useful for delivering a high-quality service
- There are some areas of service delivery where additional or updated training and guidance would be beneficial, including on trauma-informed communications and understanding legal language and processes
- Updated guidance and letter templates have improved the quality of service delivery
- The role of VLOs in drafting and quality assuring VCL letters drafted by lawyers has improved the quality of CPS communications
- The culture of 'test and learn' has led to efficiency improvements which have impacted positively on service delivery
- VTP staff are clear on how to support victims' language and translation needs, but processes to accommodate wider accessibility needs are limited
- Police partners and victims' services recognise the potential benefit of the VTP, but have a limited awareness of the purpose and aims of the VTP or their role in delivery
- There are challenges in how the police share victim contact information with the CPS which can impact the timeliness and accuracy of communication with victims
- The VTP is generally managing service demand, but some elements of the service may present resourcing challenges in the future

Updates to guidance and training

Key Finding: Most VTP staff have found training modules useful for delivering a high-quality service

Most CPS staff involved in the delivery of the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot and the Enhanced Service (RASSO) agreed that they had received the training they needed to effectively engage with victims. The 2026 staff survey shows that 92% (n=12) of Universal Service Pilot staff agreed that they had received the training they need to effectively engage with victims, while 72% (n=8) of Enhanced Service Pilot staff and 83% (n=23) of Enhanced Service (RASSO) staff also agreed with this statement. These findings are similar to those from 2025 and suggest that staff perceptions of the value of training have remained consistent over this period. During focus groups, VTP staff highlighted the benefits of in-person and interactive training sessions, including opportunities to shadow more experienced colleagues, which they described as relevant, informative, and engaging.

In line with findings on the benefit of training, CPS staff across the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot and the Enhanced Service (RASSO) felt confident in their ability to deliver a high-quality service to victims.

In the 2025 and 2026 staff surveys, all respondents from the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot and Enhanced Service (RASSO) agreed that they had the right knowledge and skills to deliver the service.¹⁴

Key Finding: There are some areas of service delivery where additional or updated training and guidance would be beneficial, including on trauma-informed communications and understanding legal language and processes

While most VTP staff found training to be beneficial, some disagreed that they had received the training needed to effectively engage with victims. In the 2026 staff survey, one member of the Universal Service Pilot team and two members of the Enhanced Service Pilot team disagreed that they had received the training they needed to effectively engage with victims, while two members of the Enhanced Service (RASSO) team disagreed with this statement.

During focus groups, victim-facing staff from the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot reflected that they would benefit from additional training. This was related to handling emotionally challenging calls tailored to the needs of specific victim cohorts, and trauma-informed communications. Some Enhanced Service VLOs noted that some of the training was generic and focused on standard customer service rather than specific training to support them to engage with victims in a trauma-informed way. Additionally, Universal and Enhanced Service VLOs described a need for more training on legal language and processes. Some VLOs identified a lack of legal understanding as a challenge to their ability to communicate with victims. Training on legal language may support victim-facing staff to better respond to victim queries. Legal and non-legal staff in the Enhanced Service (RASSO) suggested that training could be improved by covering the practicalities of pre-trial meetings, including what can be discussed, and guidance on notetaking.

The VTP should continue to iteratively review and update staff training to enable staff to deliver a high-quality service that meets victims' needs. VTP staff across services feel generally confident communicating with victims and feel they have been given the training necessary to do their job well. As services become embedded, the teams are identifying additional training needs that would make them more effective, such as more detailed knowledge of legal processes which victims often ask about. **[REC 4]. The VTP should draw on the victims' feedback in this report to update guidance and training for victim-facing staff (including lawyers) on what good practice looks like in clear and empathetic communication.** This will support ongoing work to centre victims' voices in staff learning materials. **[REC 5]**

Key Finding: Updated guidance and letter templates have improved the quality of service delivery

In April 2024, the VCE issued updated letter templates and guidance for CPS staff drafting victim communication and liaison (VCL) letters which inform victims about CPS decisions. Our dip sample analysis of letters sent before and after the template and guidance update shows some improvement in the quality of letters. Following the refresh, the proportion of VCL letters using unscripted empathetic text increased. This is a positive change and indicates that the updated templates and guidance were successful in encouraging staff to include tailored empathetic text. There has also been a positive

¹⁴ Please note that a breakdown of Enhanced Service (RASSO) responses to the 2025 staff survey is not available.

increase in the proportion of letters that include victim-specific details, which help to ensure CPS engagement with victims reflects their specific circumstances in line with the aims of the VTP.

However, we found no substantial change in the proportion of VCL letters with textual inaccuracies in the dip-sampled letters sent before and after the update to templates. In the baseline sample, 22% of letters contained inaccuracies including spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors or left-over template text compared to 24% in the later sample. This suggests that the refreshed templates did not help to improve textual accuracy, which is important to ensuring that victims receive clear and accurate communication as a key outcome for the VTP. Feedback from VLU staff highlighted that some VCL templates contain stylistic errors that require manual correction to the CPS house style, which may increase the potential for manual errors across letters.

The VTP should update guidance for staff drafting victim communications so staff review letters to ensure that sentences are clear, understandable, and grammatically correct. Additionally, it would be beneficial to reformat the templates to minimise the potential for manual textual errors. **[REC 6]**

Adaptations to service implementation

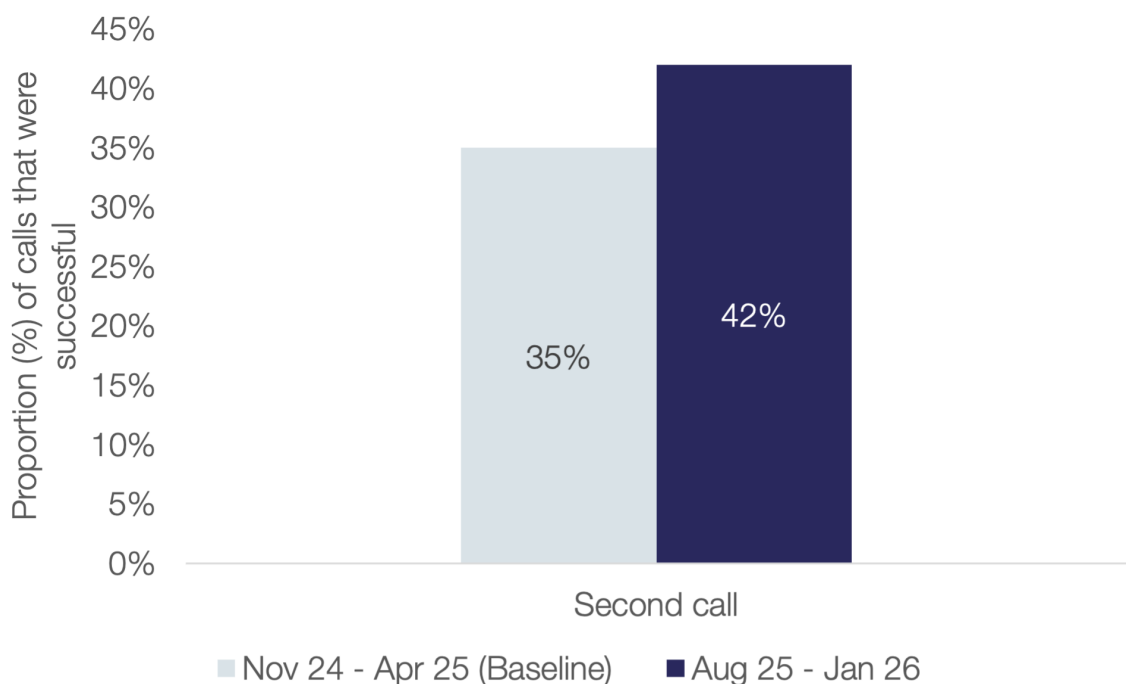
Key Finding: The culture of ‘test and learn’ has led to efficiency improvements which have impacted positively on service delivery

The ‘test and learn’ culture is embedded in service delivery and has allowed for positive innovation and service improvements, particularly in the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot. An example of this approach is the successful introduction of the text messaging service to the Universal Service Pilot in May 2025 and the Enhanced Service Pilot in June (Yorkshire and Humberside) and July 2025 (Mersey-Cheshire). VTP staff and stakeholders saw the text messaging service as an improvement to the CPS process. Text messaging appears to increase victim engagement with VTP services by giving victims advance notice of CPS calls.

The Universal Service Pilot delivery team felt that texting victims appeared to improve victims’ responsiveness and was particularly valuable given some victims’ reluctance to answer incoming calls from a withheld phone number. One IDVA also reflected positively on the use of the text messaging service to prepare victims for contact from the CPS.

This is corroborated by analysis of the Universal Service Pilot tracker data which shows that the success rate of second call attempts increased after the introduction of the text messaging service in May 2025 (see Chart 6).

Chart 6: Success rate of second call attempts in the Universal Service Pilot, pre and post the introduction of the text messaging service in May 2025



Going forward, the VTP leadership team should continue to embed and champion the ‘test and learn’ culture across programme delivery to drive improved efficiencies and data quality. In the longer term, this will enable a more robust understanding of the impact and benefits of the VTP [REC 7]. Victim feedback is a critical part of the ‘test and learn’ approach, facilitating service design and delivery that is aligned with, and responsive to, victims’ needs and therefore able to achieve its primary aim to provide an excellent victim experience.

Meeting victims’ accessibility needs

Key Finding: VTP staff are clear on how to support victims’ language and translation needs, but processes to accommodate wider accessibility needs are limited

Survey results suggest that most staff across the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot and Enhanced Service (RASSO) understand how to communicate and support victims with diverse needs, including language and translation needs, and physical and learning disabilities. While all VTP staff responding to the survey agreed that they understood how to support victims with language and translation needs, a lower proportion of CPS staff working in similar roles within a VLU (and outside of VTP services) (76% n=19) indicated that they did so. This may suggest that the VTP has introduced clearer processes for staff to support victims with language and translation needs, perhaps as part of training and induction to a new team. In line with this, our dip sample analysis of NFA and VCL letters sent by the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot found a high degree of consistency in their inclusion of an accessibility statement offering victims information in an alternative format.

However, during focus groups, some staff identified barriers to accommodating victims’ accessibility requirements. In particular, Universal Service Pilot staff had uncertainties around their ability to

accommodate a broad range of potential access needs. Big Word was cited as one tool to accommodate victims' translation requirements; otherwise, existing processes to support accessible communication were limited. This threatened the teams' ability to ensure victims with different requirements receive a consistent, high-quality service.

In the Enhanced Service (RASSO), beyond accommodating victims' preference on the format of pre-trial meetings, VLOs had limited experience accommodating wider needs and accessibility requirements. However, insight from victims emphasises the importance of practical considerations around meeting location, including information about travel and accessible parking.

Processes to accommodate a broad range of victims' accessibility requirements should be reviewed and communicated clearly to VTP delivery teams. During engagement, we found a lack of clear and well understood processes to ensure VLOs can effectively accommodate victims' diverse accessibility needs throughout the case, threatening the VTP's ability to ensure victims with different requirements receive the same consistent, high-quality service. **[REC 8]**

Coordination with partners

Key Finding: Police partners and victims' services recognise the potential benefit of the VTP, but have a limited awareness of the purpose and aims of the VTP or their role in delivery

Coordination with partners is critical to delivering an efficient and high-quality service. In focus groups, police partners, including frontline officers and witness care officers (WCOs), and victim advocates (ISVAs and IDVAs) recognised the potential benefit of the VTP on both victim experience and partnership working. Additionally, police and victim advocates reflected that the VLO role has positively impacted their relationship with the CPS by providing a responsive point of contact, with one police officer suggesting that the pre-trial meeting has "demystified" the CPS for the police more generally.

Police officers, WCOs and victim advocates all play an important role in supporting victims through CPS processes, including preparing for trial. However, focus groups have shown that partners have limited awareness of the purpose and aims of VTP or how the programme is delivered. WCOs were largely unaware of the work of the VTP and how the programme intends to meet its aims, feeling it duplicates much of their contact with victims. This frustration arose from their view that they had not received clear rationale for this perceived duplication or an explanation of the VTP.

WCOs stated that victims, particularly those with vulnerabilities who receive contact from multiple different agencies, are at risk of being overwhelmed by the volume of information they receive and feel confused about each agency's role and remit. However, while WCOs expressed some reservations about the VTP and were hesitant to take on additional work to coordinate with the CPS, they ultimately felt that the service could potentially benefit victims. **WCOs' mixed feedback demonstrates the need to clearly communicate the purpose and value of the VTP to stakeholders to secure their buy-in, facilitating strong communication and coordination.** **[REC 9]**

In pre-trial meetings, police, ISVAs, and IDVAs play a valuable role as a familiar presence to support victims to ask questions and make sure that they get the most out of the meeting. However, several

police OICs said that they felt unprepared to attend pre-trial meetings when the meetings were first rolled out and were not clear on what to expect and how to best support the victim to attend. Specifically, they had not received information on the purpose or structure of pre-trial meetings in advance. Similarly, one ISVA explained that they are often told about the pre-trial meetings by victims rather than VLOs. This means that ISVAs are not always included in planning and preparation for the meeting, and places responsibility on the victim to inform the ISVA about the meeting.

Limited awareness of the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot may be expected, with the eventual national rollout of the service presenting a better opportunity for clear and wide-reaching communications to partners. However, limited awareness of the Enhanced Service (RASSO), which is delivered nationally and often requires partners' attendance at pre-trial meetings, presents a challenge to delivering a high-quality service for victims. To ensure that partners' time is used effectively in preparing and supporting victims to attend meetings, **the VTP should review messaging to partners about the purpose of pre-trial meetings and partners' expected role within them.** This should be communicated to local forces and services at a strategic level, as well as directly between frontline practitioners when meetings are arranged. **[REC 10]**

Key Finding: There are challenges in how the police share victim contact information with the CPS which can impact the timeliness and accuracy of communication with victims

Information sharing between the police and CPS is critical to ensuring timely, accurate and safe communication with victims. Police hold victims' contact information, including their preferred method of contact, and share this with the CPS when the case file is transferred. This information is then used by VLOs to contact victims directly about CPS decisions and to arrange meetings. However, in focus groups, VLOs have highlighted that victim contact information is often incomplete or missing in files shared by police. This delays communication to victims and could pose some risk where victims' preferred method of contact is unknown.

Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot staff reported differences in the ways that police record information about the case, which varied both by individual police officers and by area. This made it time consuming for VLOs to find information about the case. Mismatched data management systems may exacerbate these challenges. One WCO told us that they thought the Witness Management System (WMS) used by police held more data than the Case Management System (CMS) used by the CPS, meaning the CPS may not be privy to all relevant information about a case. They felt that this resulted in inefficiencies, whereby the CPS frequently contacted WCOs to gather information which was missing from CMS. Since their case volumes are high, this communication was a notable addition to their workload.

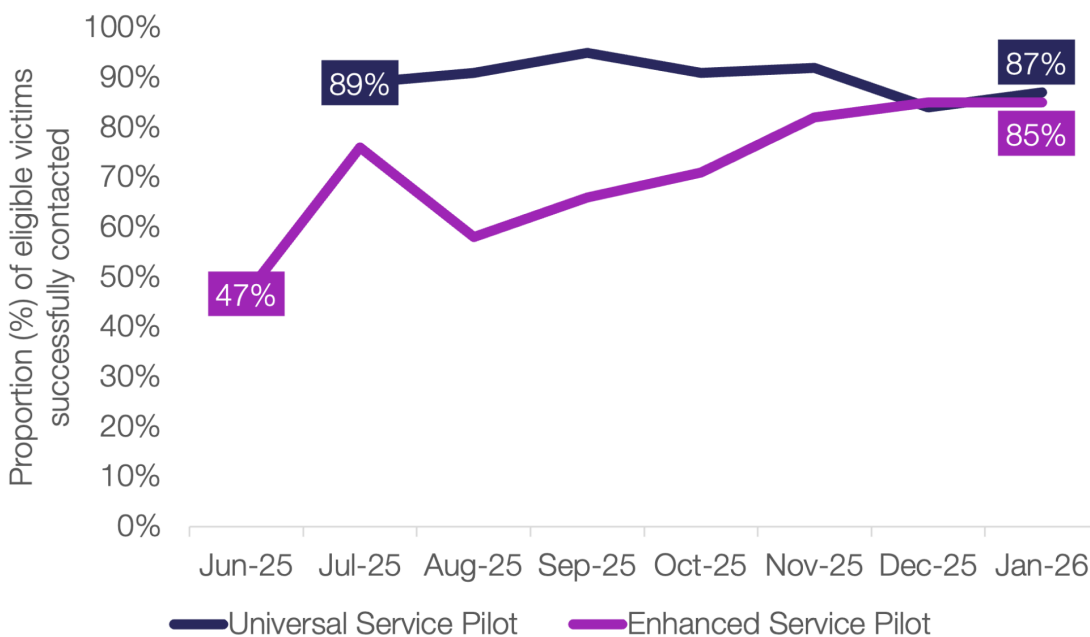
To improve the accuracy and efficient transfer of information, the VTP should work closely with police leads to ensure that the CPS' information needs are clearly defined, and to clarify and agree how data is recorded and shared. To support these conversations with police leads, the VTP should collect and monitor the quality of victim contact data shared by police to better understand the scale of the issue and to provide clear evidence to policing colleagues on the impact of receiving delayed or inaccurate information. **[REC 11]**

Managing demand

Key Finding: The VTP is generally managing service demand, but some elements of the service may present future resourcing challenges

Since July 2025, the Universal Service Pilot team has been able to successfully contact between 84% and 95% of victims who are in scope of the service. Between December 2025 and January 2026, the Enhanced Service Pilot was able to successfully contact a similar proportion of victims in scope of the service, representing a steady increase since the summer of 2025.

Chart 7: Proportion (%) of Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot cases in scope where the victim was successfully contacted, June 2025 - January 2026¹⁵



There is substantial variation in perceptions of organisational capacity across VTP services. The 2026 staff survey shows that, in the Universal Service Pilot, 77% (n=10) agree that the CPS has the capacity it needs to provide an excellent service to victims, with 23% (n=3) 'slightly disagreeing' with this statement. However, in the Enhanced Service Pilot, only 30% (n=4) agree that the CPS has the capacity to provide an excellent service for victims, while 54% (n=7) slightly disagree and 15% (n=2) strongly disagree. Similarly, in the Enhanced Service (RASSO), 38% (n=10) agree that the CPS has capacity to deliver an excellent service for victims, 22% (n=6) slightly disagree, 26% (n=7) strongly disagree, and 15% (n=4) are unsure.

Following the same trend, Universal Service Pilot staff have a more positive perception of their personal capacity to deliver a high-quality service to victims than staff in the Enhanced Service Pilot or Enhanced Service (RASSO). However, 30% (n=3) of Universal Service Pilot staff disagree that they have enough time to deliver an excellent service to victims.

¹⁵ Data was not recorded in June 2025 for the Universal Service Pilot.

In focus groups, there was similar variation in staffs' perceptions of capacity across delivery teams. In the Universal Service Pilot team and one of the areas where the Enhanced Service Pilot is delivered, staff reported that demand felt manageable. However, in the other area where the Enhanced Service Pilot is delivered, the team reported feeling under-resourced, with allocations not adequately reflecting the time required to deliver the service.¹⁶ A significant challenge, mentioned by staff members in the Enhanced Service Pilot, is the fluctuating nature of demand which can vary on a weekly or even daily basis. This variability is largely influenced by external factors such as policing activity and the differing types of communications that the team issues. For example, issuing an NFA decision requires more preparation and delivery time than standard case updates, placing additional strain on staff capacity during periods of high demand. Notably, in the area where the Enhanced Service Pilot team felt demand is manageable, the team is dedicated to the delivery of the VTP. However, in the area where the Enhanced Service Pilot team felt under-resourced, the team is merged with the existing VLU and is therefore managing VTP delivery alongside ongoing VLU functions. These different delivery models may explain differences in capacity between the two Enhanced Service Pilot areas.

In the Enhanced Service (RASSO), VLOs felt that arranging and holding pre-trial meetings were the main aspect that presented a resourcing challenge. Several VLOs felt that pre-trial meetings are offered too early, generating an unmanageable workload for VLOs to arrange a high volume of meetings, even where the trial date is far in the future. One VLO felt that they would soon be unable to meet the level of demand for pre-trial meetings in their area, with requests frontloaded in this way, and would therefore fail to meet requirements under the Victims' Code. Data from the Enhanced Service (RASSO) pre-trial meeting tracker shows there is substantial variation in the average duration between when pre-trial meetings are held and when the trial is held or scheduled to be held across areas¹⁷. This average duration ranges from around one and a half months in some areas to around eight months in others.

Additionally, a VLM noted that, in cases where victims attend a pre-trial meeting far in advance of their trial date, "90% of those cases end up with an additional meeting" closer to the trial. This further pressurises already stretched resources and reduces meeting availability. Another VLO suggested that guidance limiting the number of possible pre-trial meetings would help VLOs to balance victims' needs with resourcing challenges. The VLO recalled a case where three pre-trial meetings had been held with a victim and a fourth meeting was offered. This felt disproportionate and difficult to accommodate alongside meeting requests from other victims. **In cases like this, the VTP should seek to understand the reasons why multiple meetings are requested,** and whether this is related to victims having different questions at different stages, a result of changes in the case or trial waiting times, or because information was not clearly explained in earlier meetings. **[REC 12]**

VLOs said they would value clear guidance on how many times to follow up with victims who decline or fail to attend scheduled pre-trial meetings. In some areas, when a victim fails to attend a meeting twice, the VLO does not try to rearrange the meeting again. However, in another area, a VLO described rearranging a meeting five or six times because the victim did not attend. A VLM suggested that the new

¹⁶ There may be wider benefits to this model of the Enhanced Service Pilot that were not captured through the surveys or were out of scope of this evaluation.

¹⁷ In the data, some of the dates for when the trial is held are in the past and some are in the future. Therefore, we have interpreted this as when the trial has been held or when the trial is scheduled to be held. Please note pre-trial meeting data limitations as set out in the Technical Report. These findings should therefore be treated with caution.

templates for pre-trial meeting invitations exacerbated this issue by prompting VLOs to send ‘nudges’ to victims who have declined a pre-trial meeting multiple times. The VLM felt that these ‘nudges’ worsened resourcing pressures, and that victims who had expressed an interest in a meeting should be prioritised.

In light of the current variation across CPS areas in when pre-trial meetings are offered and how requests are managed, alongside concerns raised by VLOs and VLMs on future resourcing issues related to these meetings, **the VTP should coordinate with Witness Care to review what information and updates victims receive on the case following the charge decision and ahead of trial to inform planning on when CPS updates are most beneficial for victims.** [REC 13]

The VTP should also ensure that CPS areas follow guidance on offering pre-trial meetings by adopting an approach that prioritises victims’ needs and preferences around the timing and location of meetings. The VTP should consider whether additional capacity is required for areas to deliver these meetings in line with victims’ needs. [REC 14]

Chapter 3: The VTP's impact

This section discusses the impact of the VTP on CPS efficiencies and victim attrition. The evidence and understanding that underpins the VTP Theory of Change outlines how improving victim experience can positively affect the flow and function of the wider CJS through organisational efficiencies and reduced victim attrition. The section below explores early findings on how the VTP is achieving this.

Key Findings: the VTP's impact

- Staff feel they have the tools and training to deliver a high-quality service which is critical to delivering the VTP efficiently
- Almost all VLOs are aware of letter templates to support high-quality communication with victims, but VLOs had lower awareness of wider resources to support victim communication
- VLOs leading VCL communications instead of lawyers saves the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot £153,000 per year
- Early indications suggest that the amount of victim complaints received by the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot is slightly lower than they would be without the services
- Early indications suggest the Universal Service Pilot is having a positive impact on victim attrition, although it is too early to be confident in these findings
- Insufficient time has passed to allow a robust assessment of attrition through the Enhanced Service Pilot and Enhanced Service (RASSO) because of the time required for cases to pass fully through the system
- VTP delivery teams and some external stakeholders think the VTP has the potential to support victims to stay engaged with the criminal justice process

Prioritising victim experience

The VTP is operating within a CJS that was originally intended to lawfully progress cases, investigate crime, and uphold the rule of law, rather than to prioritise positive victim experience. For this reason, the system measures performance through timeliness, backlogs, and conviction rates. National and organisational policy shifts towards meeting victims' needs have underpinned initiatives like the Victims' Code, dedicated liaison roles, and special measures in court. The shift in focus towards victim experience, and wellbeing measures and initiatives, is challenging to implement and sustain, particularly as agencies contend with funding constraints and increased demand.

This is reflected in the feedback we received in our evaluation of the CPS Victim Service Standards. CPS staff (lawyers, paralegal officers, VLOs, and VLMs) and external partners (policymakers and victim-facing practitioners) discussed the challenges they faced supporting victims within a complex, defendant-focused system.

"What you're wanting to do is reassure people that the service will be sensitive and responsive to them when it's not. As a whole, the system is not victim centric. It's

quite punishing. So that's the environment or the context that the [Victim Service] Standards sit in. [...] I don't know how you resolve that issue. It's not within the gift of the CPS to do that. [...] It's a more system-wide issue and maybe the standards do need sitting within that context as— 'This is what the CPS is doing; this is what else needs to happen'." (External VCS Stakeholder)

Key Finding: Investing in improving victim experience is central to creating a better criminal justice system

These challenges make the VTP's continued development since its inception in April 2023 particularly important. The VTP reflects the CPS' commitment to learn and adapt to continuously improve victim experience and wellbeing. In doing so, the CPS demonstrates an appetite to understand how victim-focused practice can be embedded and to build evidence on how to deliver wider benefits to the whole CJS.

Improving case progression and organisational efficiency

Lengthy delays and uncertain legal processes, often arising from backlogs and inefficiencies in the system, are widely recognised¹⁸ as factors that discourage victims from engaging with the criminal justice process.

The VTP is committed to improving victim experience by optimising organisational efficiency to improve case progression. Our evaluation measured efficiency benefits through reductions in staff cost by:

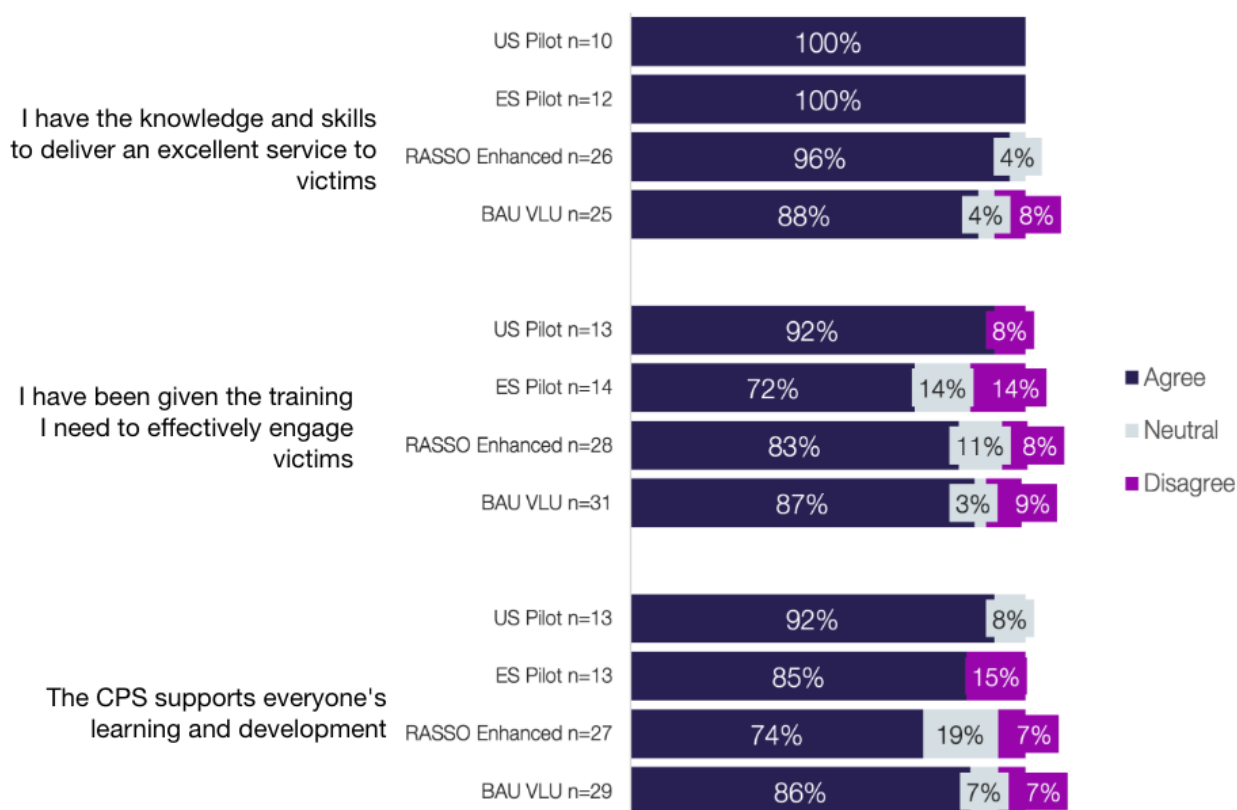
- **Ensuring staff can deliver the service efficiently:** the VCE provides staff with the tools and guidance they need to do their job effectively.
- **Ensuring activities are completed by the most appropriate roles for the work:** the VTP placed responsibility for drafting VCL communications on Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot VLOs rather than prosecutors.
- **Reducing non-productive time spent on victim complaints:** improving victim experience could reduce the number of victim complaints.

Key Finding: Staff feel they have the tools and training to deliver a high-quality service which is critical to delivering the VTP efficiently

Transforming a service and delivering this efficiently places significant demand on staff, making it essential for the CPS to invest in developing staff skills. As discussed in Chapter 2, the 2026 survey shows that all staff delivering a VTP service agreed that they had the right knowledge and skills for the role, and most felt that they had received the training needed to effectively engage with victims.

¹⁸ CPS. (2022). Rape Strategy Update. [URL](#).

Chart 8: Proportion of VLO responses to statements about the extent to which they have the tools, training and support needed to deliver a high-quality service, 2026



Key Finding: Almost all VLOs are aware of letter templates that they can use to support high-quality communication with victims, but VLOs had lower awareness of wider resources to support victim communication

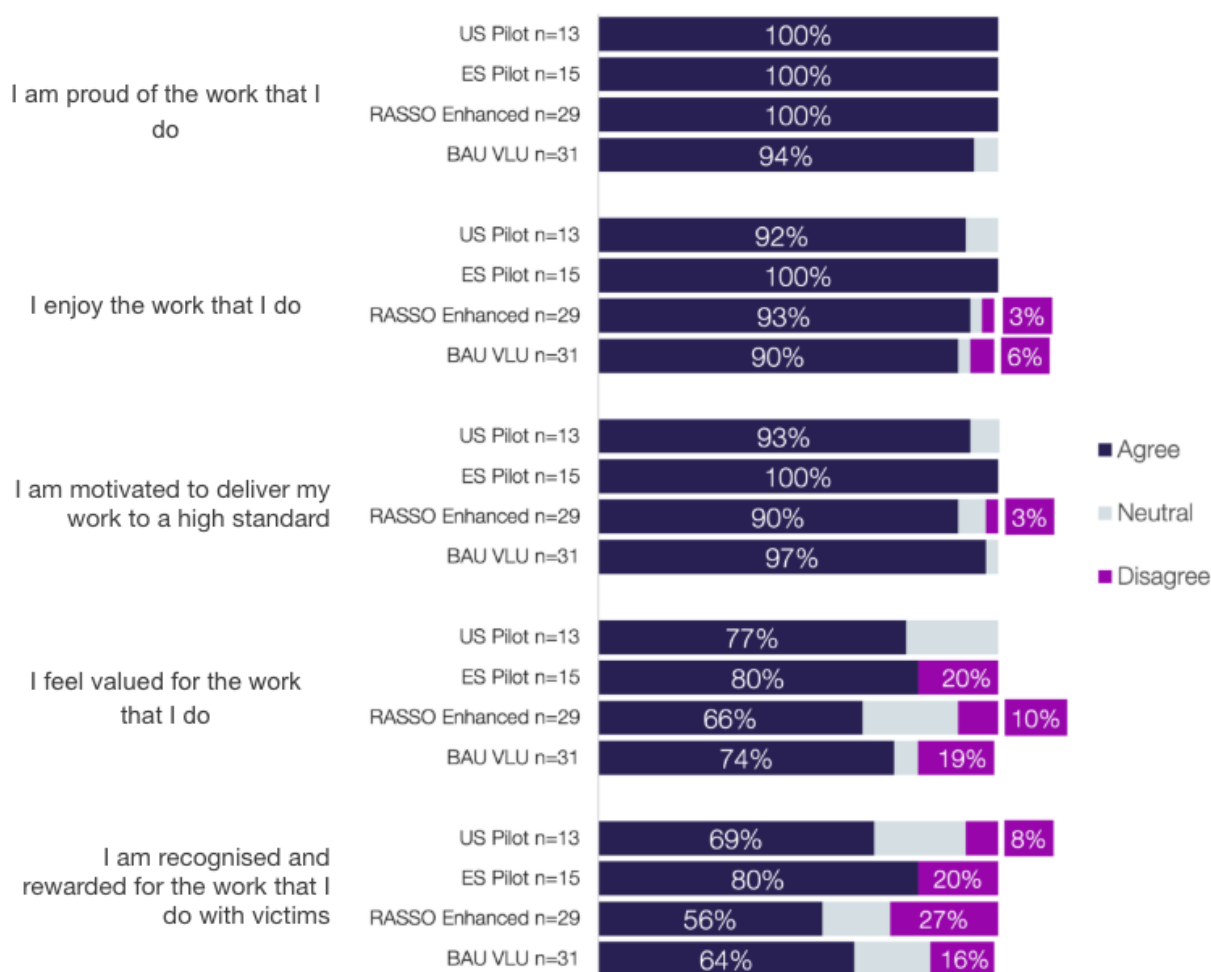
To drive innovation and pilot new ways that strengthen CPS engagement with victims and support staff, the VCE has developed templates, guidance, and training to improve staff capability (see Chapter 2). In our 2026 CPS staff survey, almost all VLO respondents (98% - 47 of 48) in the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot and Enhanced Service (RASSO) were aware of the victim letter templates. However, VLO's awareness of general victim communication guidance and resources, telephone scripts, and email templates was lower. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the VTP is testing a correspondence drafter which aims to improve quality and bring efficiencies in drafting letters and emails. The tool is in early development, and an evaluation of the tool is being planned to understand its impact as the VTP matures.

Chart 9: Proportion of US, ES, and Enhanced RASSO VLOs that are aware of internal CPS resources intended to improve communication with victims, 2026 n=48



Our 2026 CPS staff survey showed that, generally, VLOs are driven in their roles. They are proud of and enjoy their work, and feel motivated to deliver it to a high standard. However, fewer feel valued, recognised, and rewarded for their work with victims.

Chart 10: Proportion of VLO responses to statements about satisfaction in their role with victims, 2026



CPS senior management should strengthen how they communicate the importance of VLOs' roles in achieving organisational priorities, as some staff do not feel valued or recognised. Addressing this is important for the VTP's successful delivery. Staff are the CPS' most important asset in improving its service, so ensuring staff recognise their value in the CPS' overall mission is key to enabling the VTP's long term success [\[REC 15\]](#). Academic studies have shown that staff happiness at work also relates to productivity, so improving the number of staff feeling valued could also deliver efficiency gains for the CPS and help reduce capacity challenges.

Key Finding: VLOs drafting VCL communications instead of lawyers saves the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot £153,000 per year

In the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot, VLOs are responsible for preparing and sending VCL letters to victims, rather than prosecutors who complete this task in non-pilot areas. The VLOs' role in drafting VCL communications has not only improved the quality of CPS communications sent under the Pilot, but is more cost effective.

The Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot introduced this model based on evidence that VCL letters drafted by prosecutors were often low quality and lacked empathy¹⁹. The new approach allows VLOs to provide victims with higher quality explanations of VCL decisions, supported by training, guidance, and templates provided by the VCE. Prosecutors reflected positively on VLOs' ability to relay legal information clearly and ensure that victims are not overwhelmed with information.

This approach also enables a more balanced workload across roles. Prosecutors have indicated that they have limited additional capacity to draft letters which are empathetic, clear, and contain less jargon. For example, of the 215 prosecutors and legal staff who responded to our 2026 staff survey, 44% of prosecutors and legal managers agreed they can deliver an excellent service to victims without compromising other parts of their casework, and just 25% agreed they have enough time to do so.

Although the time taken to prepare and distribute VCL communications is the same regardless of which role delivers the work, the cost is lower when VLOs hold this responsibility as they have more dedicated capacity to focus on the task and are less costly due to their grade. This saves £153,000 per year for the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot compared to if letters were drafted by prosecutors. If this model were to be rolled out for VCL letters nationally, this annual saving would increase (analysis on the projected benefits is included in the Technical Report).

¹⁹A [HMCSI themed inspection in 2018](#) identified issues with timeliness, quality and lack of empathy in VCL communications. [In 2020, HMCSI acknowledged](#) CPS efforts to improve but reported they found little improvement in overall quality of the letters sent by CPS. [In 2022, Crest Advisory's research](#) found that 45% of victims surveyed rated CPS communications as "not at all timely", and 51% of victims surveyed rated CPS communication as "not at all empathetic".

Table 2: VCL Efficiency benefits

Efficiency Benefit	VTP Service	Change in Service	Cost Saving
Changes in the delivery structure of VCL communications	Universal Service Pilot	Half of the time communicating VCLs handled by lawyers shift to US VLOs	£153K
	Enhanced Service Pilot	Half of the time communicating VCLs handled by lawyers shift to ES VLOs	£0.4K
	Total	£153K	

Interpretation note:

The benefits in Table 2 are calculated by multiplying the amount of time taken to complete the tasks and the cost of that time to the CPS based on hourly staff costs (please see Technical Report for more detail).

The cost saving generated by the ES Pilot is lower than those generated by the US Pilot due to the much greater volume of VCLs the US team reported delivering than the ES.

While this approach has the potential to improve service quality and efficiency, our engagement with CPS staff found that the process is not yet delivering its full benefits. Prosecutors in the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot areas reflected that their approach to preparing VCL letters has not changed substantially in practice since the responsibility for drafting and sending this communication moved to VLOs within the pilot services.

VLOs within the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot shared similar experiences. They report generally working well with prosecutors, who are open to resolving queries about legal decisions and terminology. However, some VLOs still found it difficult to understand legal decisions when drafting the letter, and said that they would feel uncomfortable sending important and often distressing information to victims without being confident they understood it themselves. While VLOs' questions and clarifications about legal decisions puts a resource requirement back on prosecutors, it is an important part of delivering a high-quality service.

To support a more efficient process for drafting and delivering VCL letters, **the VTP should clarify the respective roles and expectations of VLOs and prosecutors in drafting and quality assuring VCL letters, focused on where each role can add most value [REC 16]**. This should be balanced with a consideration of the resources required for different roles to complete tasks and possible efficiencies, including any additional training or guidance that would better enable VLOs to understand and communicate legal terminology and decisions. Ultimately, this would allow the VTP to see the full intended benefits of improved efficiency and case progression.

Key Finding: Early indications suggest that fewer victim complaints are received by the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot areas than would be the case without the services.

We assessed the impact of the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot on the number of complaints made by victims, using an analytical method called a generalised synthetic control model (please see Technical Report for more detail). Our analysis estimates that the pilot services receive 1.01 fewer complaints per month per pilot Area than would be expected if the pilot services had not been introduced. This is equivalent to 16% fewer complaints than would have been expected without the VTP - 93 complaints were actually received between December 2024 and October 2025 in the pilot areas against 111 complaints that would have been expected without the VTP.

However, it is important to recognise that these results are not statistically significant (p-value = 0.08) and the identified reduction in complaints could be due to natural variation in complaint volumes rather than a direct result of the VTP.

We also tested the amount of time it takes Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot staff to complete daily tasks. Using these estimates of the amount of staff time spent dealing with complaints, and the hourly cost of these staff, a reduction by 1.01 per month per Area equates to a saving of £400 per year in the pilot areas. While this is a minimal estimated saving to date, if the VTP was rolled out nationally, this saving could scale up (analysis on the projected benefits are included in the Technical Report).

Table 3: Efficiency benefits

Efficiency Benefit	VTP Service	Change in Service	Cost Saving
Change in the number of staff time responding to complaints	Universal Service Pilot	- 0.56	£200
	Enhanced Service Pilot	- 0.55	£200
	Total	£400	

Interpretation note:

The benefits in Table 3 are calculated by multiplying (please see Technical Report for more detail).:

- The number of complaints;
- The hours taken on one complaint per region per month (*measured our evaluation's data collection - TTR tool*);
- The number of months in the year;
- A shadow price of £29.47²⁰

As explored in Chapters 1 and 2, the VTP was established to improve the standard of service victims receive from the CPS and ensure their communication needs are better met. This, in principle, should lead to fewer victims being made to feel the need to make a formal complaint. This could also increase capacity by reducing the demand on the CPS from non-case related communication.

However, the CPS also recognises that there will be occasions where it falls short of these standards and therefore provides victims with the opportunity to make a complaint. As the CPS is now communicating with victims more frequently through the new services, this could also lead to an increase in the overall

²⁰ The figure represents the weighted average hourly staff cost, calculated using the annual salary costs and associated accommodation costs provided by the CPS.

volume of complaints. At present, there has not been a statistically significant change in complaint volumes. As the service matures, the evaluation will continue to monitor the impact on victim complaints.

Improving victim attrition²¹

The VTP is designed first and foremost to give victims a better, more empathetic experience which is central to CPS 2030 strategy. Although not the central driver of the VTP, improving victims' experience could result in more victims remaining engaged with the criminal justice process through ensuring that they have all the information and support they need to make the right decisions for them. This may lead to fewer victims withdrawing from the process, whilst some victims who would eventually withdraw from the process anyway will do so sooner if they have all the information they need to make that decision, which has a secondary benefit to the CJS as resources which would be used to progress those cases can be used more effectively elsewhere.

Between November 2024 and October 2025, a total of 5,647 CPS registered cases were stopped after a defendant was charged because the victim no longer supported, or was unable to support, the prosecution - our measure of victim attrition in this research.

It is challenging to measure the VTP's impact on victim attrition when many cases are not yet finalised

Victim attrition is particularly challenging to analyse because cases can only be included once they are finalised, which often takes months or even years, especially for RASSO or domestic abuse cases.

The data available at this stage covers approximately one year since the Enhanced Service (RASSO) was launched, 11 months since the Universal Service Pilot was launched, and only six months since the Enhanced Service Pilot was launched.

For this reason, we have limited our quantitative analysis of the impact on victim attrition to the Universal Service Pilot, because of the length of time the service has been piloted and the average time taken for eligible cases to be finalised. Most RASSO and domestic abuse cases receiving these services are still ongoing so we cannot know if they will close due to victim attrition. This means it is not possible to robustly measure victim attrition at this stage because analysis would only reflect a small part of the overall caseload, making it too early to draw reliable conclusions.

Victim attrition outcomes will continue to be monitored by the evaluation as more victims receive the services and more cases finalise. Below we describe the findings that we can comment on.

Key Finding: Early indications suggest the Universal Service Pilot is having a positive (though minor) impact on victim attrition, although it is too early to be confident in these findings

²¹ Victim attrition in the context of the courts in England and Wales refers to victims disengaging from the criminal justice process before the case concludes, often through complainant withdrawal or retraction of the allegation. Our research focused on cases in England and Wales where victims disengage while the case is being prosecuted, though victim attrition can occur at other stages in the CJS process.

We have data on 9,044 cases that have been eligible for the Universal Service Pilot since December 2024, and 114 of those cases resulted in non-convictions because of victim attrition.

Our analysis (using a generalised synthetic control approach) found a non-statistically significant reduction in attrition. On average, 3.6% fewer cases closed per pilot Area per month compared to what would be expected if the Pilot had not been introduced. This does not mean that victim attrition is reducing in the Pilot areas²² - only that it might be lower than it would be without the VTP, and the size of the impact is minor. For example, using the above figure of 114 cases that resulted in victim attrition during our period of analysis, we would estimate that without the Universal Service Pilot this would have been 118 cases - an avoidance of four cases of victim attrition.

Using an estimated cost of CPS resources required in cases that close when a victim withdraws²³, this reduction in victim attrition would be equivalent to £111,000 per year in productivity benefits (not cashable savings) across the pilot areas as effort has now been expended on cases that will proceed rather than end due to victim withdrawal.

Given the result is not statistically significant, we provide context on the likelihood that the Universal Service Pilot is reducing victim attrition by different amounts in Table 4 below. This shows that there is a 52% chance that the Universal Service Pilot is reducing attrition at all (and thus a nearly equal chance - 48%- that it is not doing so) and shows the likelihood that it is reducing victim attrition by different amounts compared to what would be expected without the VTP. This demonstrates that there is a wide range of potential impact, and any impact has not yet translated into a noticeable change for Area teams, so caution should be taken when interpreting this data.

Table 4: Likelihood that the Universal Service Pilot reduces victim attrition by given amounts

	Likelihood of this being true
Reducing attrition at all	52%
Reducing attrition by at least 5%	43%
Reducing attrition by at least 10%	36%
Reducing attrition by at least 15%	31%
Reducing attrition by at least 20%	26%
Reducing attrition by at least 25%	22%

Interpretation note:

The results in Table 4 are calculated using a statistical analysis approach called a Generalised Synthetic Control (please see Technical Report for more detail). These percentages are calculated from a bootstrapping process used within the model creation. This involves running the model 1000 times based on samples taken from the full dataset to understand how differences in the data impact on the result obtained.

For example, of the 1000 iterations of the model, 520 (i.e. 52%) resulted in a reduction in victim attrition. 220 resulted in at least a 25% reduction in victim attrition.

²² Pilot and non-Pilot areas continue to experience increasing overall levels of victim attrition.

²³ Research by [Heeks et al. \(2018\)](#) identified a shadow price of £2,917 for CPS resources arising from victim attrition, which could be assigned on a per-Universal Service Pilot case basis.

Key Finding: Insufficient time has passed to allow a robust assessment of attrition in the Enhanced Service Pilot and Enhanced Service (RASSO) because of the time required for cases to pass fully through the system

Quantifying the impact of the Enhanced Service Pilot and Enhanced Service (RASSO) is especially challenging given the average duration of these cases and the data available since the services launched. Basing conclusions on cases that have been finalised would give an inaccurate picture of impact. Given the expected length of cases eligible for the Enhanced Service Pilot and Enhanced Service (RASSO) to finalise, we expect to more confidently draw conclusions on the impact of the VTP on victim attrition in late summer 2026.

Until more victims receive the full service, measures of impact of the Enhanced Service Pilot and Enhanced Service (RASSO) are largely qualitative. As discussed in Chapter 1, insight from victim engagement for the Enhanced Service (RASSO) shows that the CPS is not getting it right for all victims yet, but where the CPS delivers the service well, it is very impactful for victims.

Key Finding: VTP delivery teams and some external stakeholders think the VTP has the potential to support victims to stay engaged with the criminal justice process

There was consensus across delivery teams and between police and IDVA stakeholders that the VTP has the potential to support victims to stay engaged with the criminal justice process.

For example, staff from the Universal Service Pilot reflected that some of the victims they contacted said that they felt more engaged with the criminal justice process, and that giving victims a point of contact within the CPS facilitated a more consistent service.

“From [the victim’s] perspective, it’s another person to support them and it’s another person that’s in their corner. Quite often [victims] can feel very isolated, feel very out of the loop, and feel like that gap from the charging decision to court... They just flounder in between. So, for me particularly, keeping them up to date and in timely manners with updates and how it is progressing would definitely keep them engaged.”
- IDVA

Staff from the Enhanced Service Pilot reflected that it might be too soon to see the service’s impact on victims’ engagement with the criminal justice process but felt that a named point of contact within the CPS can help when they have questions or are seeking support. One IDVA suggested that having a direct line to the CPS with regular updates would support a victim to feel involved and remain engaged in the legal process.

Based on our findings across the evaluation, we expect that as more time passes and the services continue to embed, the VTP’s ability to positively impact victim attrition will become more evident. The evidence outlined in Chapter 1 gives confidence that the VTP’s intended short- and medium- term outcomes can have a significant impact on victim attrition. Victim attrition has a negative emotional impact on victims, but also has a huge capacity and financial cost to the system. **If the VTP continues**

to deliver the service where impact is evident and continues to learn and adapt its approach where improvements can be made, it has the potential to bring strong benefits to the CJS.

Chapter 4: The VTP's value for money

This section discusses whether the VTP delivers value for money for the CPS and society. We consider how much the VTP costs to run, and if its intended benefits bring enough value to justify the cost.

Key Findings: the VTP's value for money

- We estimate that in 2025/26 the VTP generated £128.7 million in benefits after discounting, with improved victim wellbeing being the largest contributor to this value
- We can say with some confidence that, even when accounting for uncertainties in our data, the benefit of the VTP in our assessment is larger than the cost of the VTP
- As the VTP matures, the evaluation will continue to develop its understanding of the programme's value for money

Interpretation note:

Our value for money assessment uses standard cost-benefit analysis. Detailed analysis and assumptions sit behind this work, which can be seen in more detail in the Technical Report.

Below we have explained some of the key terms needed to understand this work.

Key definitions:

- **Present Value of Benefits (PVB):** is the real value of benefits today. *This is used to calculate the BCR and NPV.*
- **Present Value of Costs (PVC):** is the real value of costs today. *This is used to calculate the BCR and NPV.*
- **Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR):** a key metric in a CBA that provides a measure of the benefits relative to the costs.
- **Net Present Value (NPV):** a key metric in a CBA that provides a measure of the overall benefit of the intervention after costs.
- **Optimism Bias:** accounts for the tendency of evaluators or appraisers to be over-optimistic about assumptions. Adjusting for optimism bias adjusts down the nominal benefits and adjusts up the nominal costs.

The PVB and PVC are calculated by:

- adjusting benefits and costs for the inflation rate using the GDP Deflator (*to remove the effects of general inflation*), and
- discounting by the social time preference rate (*to reflect the preference for the value now rather than later*).
- The benefits and costs before these adjustments are known as nominal (i.e. they include inflation and are, therefore, in actual prices).
- The benefits and costs after these adjustments **are known as real and discounted - giving the PVB and PVC values.**

The BCR is calculated by: dividing Present Value of Benefits (PVB) by the Present Value of Costs (PVC)

- Given the uncertainties in the data and statistical insignificance in the outputs, the BCR of the VTP in this report has been presented as a range.
- A BCR greater than 1 indicates that the intervention represents good value for money.
- A BCR below 1 indicates that the intervention represents poor value of money.

The NPV is calculated by: subtracting the Present Value of Costs (PVC) from the Present Value of Benefits (PVB)

- Given the uncertainties in the data and statistical insignificance in the outputs, the NPV of the VTP in this report has been presented as a range.

Key Finding: We estimate that in 2025/26 the VTP generated £128.7 million in benefits after discounting, with improved victim wellbeing being the largest contributor to this value

As discussed in Chapter 3, the VTP is generating benefits by improving victim wellbeing, reduced victim attrition in the Universal Service Pilot, and some organisational efficiencies. We assessed the monetised economic impact of these benefits and found:

- **Improved victim wellbeing delivers the largest benefit of £151.2 million²⁴.** More victims responding to our survey feel that the CPS has handled their case fairly and treated them with respect, compared with victims surveyed before the VTP was introduced (Victims Commissioner Victims' Experience survey, 2021). We used an analytical approach to estimate how this improvement in wellbeing brings a monetised economic benefit (please see Technical Report for more detail). We estimated that in 2025/26 this improvement brought²⁵:
 - £89.6 million in benefits by the Universal Service Pilot for 5,328 victims across the two pilot areas;
 - £23.6 million by the Enhanced Service (RASSO) for 1,646 victims across all 14 CPS areas; and
 - £38.0 million by the Enhanced Service Pilot for 4,934 victims across the two pilot areas.
- **Improved organisational efficiency brings a benefit of £154,000.** VLOs in the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot now lead VCL communications instead of lawyers. Based on staff grade and cost, this change in the delivery of VCL communications brings the pilots a saving of £154,000 per year. Additional small savings arise from reductions in victim complaints.
- **Improved victim attrition in the Universal Service Pilot brings a benefit of £111,000.** The Universal Service Pilot saw a small reduction in victim attrition compared to what is estimated to have happened without the service. We calculated the cost of reducing unproductive resource on cases that do not result in an effective trial. Using an average cost of CPS resources used in

²⁴ This is higher than the total shown above as the total includes an optimism-bias adjustment, a standard Treasury process to ensure benefits are not overstated. The wellbeing benefit is shown at its full value, while the total reflects this cautious adjustment.

²⁵ The RASSO figure is based across all areas. The US and ES figure is based on two pilot areas.

cases where victim attrition occurs, based on academic research²⁶, our analysis showed this lower rate of victim attrition could save the CPS £111,000 a year.

In total, these benefits amount to £151.4 million. After applying the standard 15% adjustments for optimism bias (an analytical approach that accounts for the risk of being over-optimistic when measuring benefits), the overall estimated benefits of the VTP in 2025/26 are £128.7 million. Our work is an estimate, and our sensitivity analysis suggests the total benefits could fall within a range.

Table 5: VTP 2025/26 value for money assessment: cost and benefit values before and after optimism bias adjustments

		Pre-adjustment for optimism bias	Post-adjustment for optimism bias
Monetisable benefits	Improved CPS efficiency	£154,000	£131,000
	Improved victim wellbeing	£151.2M	£128.5M
	Reduced victim attrition in the US Pilot	£111,000	£94,000
	Total VTP benefits	£151.4M	£128.7M
Monetisable cost	Total VTP costs	£13.2M	£13.2M
NPV			£125.2M
BCR			7.1-12.7

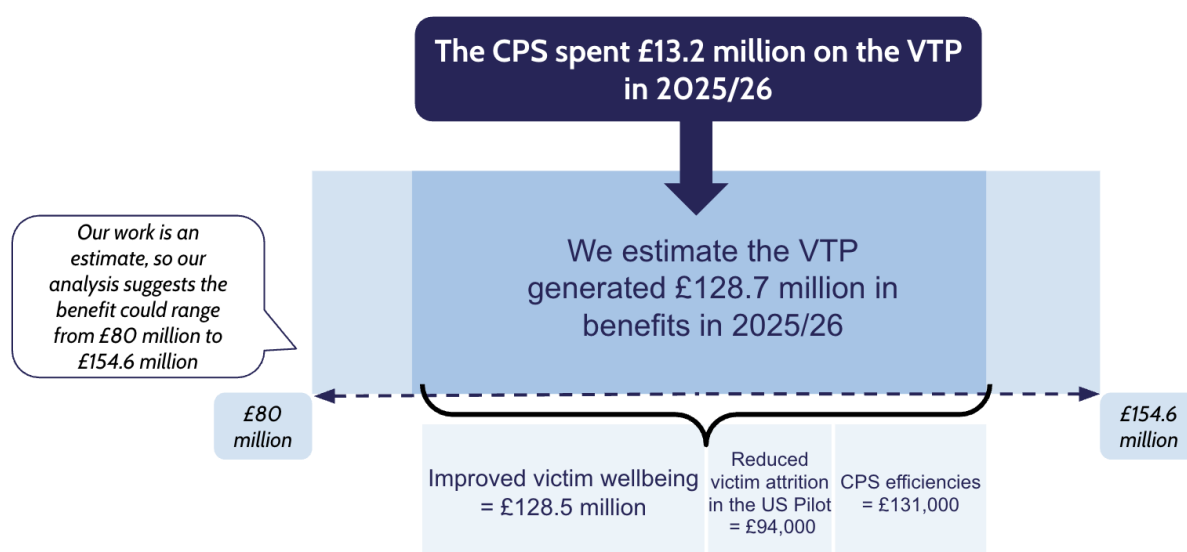
The VTP cost the CPS £13.2 million to run in 2025/26. The cost of delivering the Universal and Enhanced Service Pilot in 2025/26 was £8.5 million, and the Enhanced Service (RASSO) cost £4.7 million, covering staffing, programme management, training, and evaluation.

This means the benefits being delivered by the VTP are greater than the costs, and the majority of those benefits are being experienced by victims.

²⁶ Heeks, M., Reed, S., Tafsiri, M. and Prince, S.(2018). *The economic and social costs of crime*. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60094b86d3bf7f2ab1a1af96/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-crime-horr99.pdf>.

Figure 3: Summary of the VTP costs and benefits (after optimism bias adjustment) in 2025/26

Key Finding: We can say with some confidence that, even when accounting for uncertainties in our data, the benefit of the VTP in our assessment is larger than the cost of the VTP



As part of our value for money assessment, we carried out a sensitivity analysis to test how confident we are in our results. Our sensitivity analysis suggested the VTP's benefit could range from £80.0 million to £154.6 million. This gives a BCR of between 7.1 and 12.7, which means that for every £1 spent, the VTP is estimated to generate between £7.1 and £12.7 of benefits based on the current scale of delivery, though the vast majority of these benefits are social benefits, not cashable savings for the CPS. This shows that even when accounting for uncertainty and changes in assumptions in the sensitivity analysis, the value of the benefits is always higher in this analysis than the cost of the VTP.

As the VTP matures, the evaluation will continue to develop its understanding of the programme's value for money

While a sensitivity analysis does account for uncertainty, these results should still be interpreted with caution. As discussed in Chapter 3, the impact results are not statistically significant, and this is in part due to the relatively small number of people who will have experienced the full VTP service they are eligible for. As the ability to quantify and robustly identify impact (such as victim attrition through the Enhanced and Enhanced RASSO services) improves, the value for money of the overall programme is likely to be more significantly robust and demonstrably higher.

The current analysis presents an assessment of the value for money of the VTP in 2025/26 based on current data. The annex to this report also includes an analysis of total costs incurred and benefits generated to date, alongside projected cumulative benefits as they are expected to accrue. As the VTP evolves, the evaluation will continue to measure its value for money and broaden the scope of what can be included - either through more robust data on outcomes, or additional evaluation of tools and activities that contribute to value for money²⁷.

²⁷ For example, a tool called Correspondence Drafter is currently being tested which could reduce the time taken to compose letters and emails, enhancing the efficiency savings already identified. An evaluation of the tool is currently being planned.

Conclusion

Where the CPS delivers the VTP service well, it positively impacts victims. However, this does not yet happen consistently meaning not all victims are benefitting.

Most victims experienced a high-quality service from the CPS, including clear and empathetic communications sent under the VTP and impactful pre-trial meetings with the prosecution team which have reduced victim anxiety and improved trust and confidence in the CPS. However, this has not been the experience of all victims, and some felt that the CPS did not adopt a trauma-informed approach to communication or wider service delivery.

Delivering a high-quality service to victims is a key outcome for the VTP and aligns with the CPS' strategic priority to place victims at the heart of the CJS and ensure that they receive a supportive service. To achieve this outcome for all victims, the VTP should review how victims' needs and preferences are considered and embedded across all processes and levels of service delivery. This includes updating training and guidance for CPS legal and non-legal staff to ensure clear, empathetic, and trauma-informed communication is delivered as standard; reviewing processes to identify and accommodate accessibility needs and use victims' preferred method of communication to support them to fully engage in the legal process; and improving coordination and consolidation of processes with police partners and victim services to deliver a joined-up and victim-centred experience.

Going forward, the evaluation will continue to focus on gathering victims' feedback on their experiences of the service as a key measure of impact, and to support longer-term feedback mechanisms within the VTP to ensure that the service is shaped by victims' needs.

We expect that as the VTP becomes more established and delivery of it becomes more consistent, its ability to reduce victim attrition will become more evident.

Through ensuring victims have all the information and support they need to make the right decisions for them, the VTP has the potential to support more victims to stay engaged with the criminal justice process. We found positive early signs, through a statistical modelling approach, that the Universal Service Pilot could be impacting victim attrition.

VTP delivery teams and some external stakeholders believe the VTP has the potential to support victims to stay engaged with the criminal justice process, and for some victims, the service has demonstrated impact. However, a robust assessment of the impact of the Enhanced Service Pilot and the Enhanced Service (RASSO) is not yet possible due to a lack of available data.

We expect to more confidently draw conclusions about the impact of the VTP on victim attrition in summer 2026 when more eligible cases will have finalised. To demonstrate this, the VTP needs to continue to deliver elements of the service that we know are working well and learn and adapt its approach where improvements can be made. As evaluators, we will continue to support the CPS to collect data in a way that enables robust analysis to understand the outcome of cases. This will produce a clearer picture of the impact of the VTP on victim attrition and the benefits it can bring.

We can say with some confidence that the benefit of the VTP in our assessment is larger than the cost of the VTP, even when accounting for uncertainties in our data.

The VTP demonstrated positive value for money in 2025/26, delivering benefits through improving victim wellbeing, reduced victim attrition in the Universal Service Pilot, and some organisational efficiencies. Even when accounting for uncertainties in the data, the value of these benefits was always higher in this analysis than the cost of VTP.

In the next stage of the evaluation, we will develop a greater understanding of the VTP's value for money. Some of the VTP's benefits are not being fully realised yet, in particular the organisational efficiencies available via digital solutions. These innovations have not been established long enough to be included in our assessments of value for money to date. As work on digital solutions matures, we will help the CPS to understand the impact of these innovations.

The CPS is expected to consider if and how the VTP should be expanded and embedded in a business-as-usual operating model. We will continue to work with the CPS as it refines the VTP operating model to bring benefits to victims and the wider CJS.

Recommendations

We have made the following recommendations for the VTP to support greater efficiencies and improved outcomes, based on the evaluation findings.

Ref.	Recommendations
REC 1	The VTP should review guidance materials and quality assurance processes for preparing and drafting victim communications, focusing on known areas where clarity can be improved (e.g. clear explanations of legal jargon).
REC 2	VLOs should clearly explain the purpose of pre-trial meetings to victims before they attend to help manage expectations about what topics can be discussed, and to help victims prepare and get the most out of meetings.
REC 3	The VTP should encourage delivery teams to generate area-specific reference documents cataloguing local support services to better equip staff to provide victims with Area specific support.
REC 4	The VTP should continue to iteratively review and update staff training to deliver a high-quality service that meets victims' needs.
REC 5	The VTP should draw on the victims' feedback in this report to update guidance and training for victim-facing staff (including lawyers) on what good practice looks like in clear and empathetic communication. This will support ongoing work to centre victims' voices in staff learning materials.

REC 6	The VTP should update guidance for staff drafting victim communications so staff review letters to ensure that sentences are clear, understandable, grammatically correct and contain accurate information about the victim and the case.
REC 7	The VTP leadership should continue to embed and champion the 'test and learn' culture across programme delivery to drive improved efficiencies and data quality.
REC 8	The VTP should review processes to accommodate a broad range of victims' accessibility requirements and communicate these clearly to VTP delivery teams.
REC 9	The VTP should clearly communicate the purpose and value of the VTP to partners in policing and victims' services to secure their buy-in, facilitating strong communication and coordination.
REC 10	The VTP should review messaging to partners about the purpose of pre-trial meetings and partners' expected role within meetings. This should be communicated to local forces and services at a strategic level, as well as directly between frontline practitioners when meetings are arranged.
REC 11	The VTP should work closely with police leads to ensure that the CPS' information needs are clearly defined, and to clarify and agree how data is recorded and shared.
REC 12	The VTP should seek to understand the reasons why multiple pre-trial meetings are requested, and whether this is related to victims having different questions at different stages, a result of changes in the case or trial waiting times, or because information was not clearly explained in earlier meetings.
REC 13	The VTP should coordinate with Witness Care to review what information and updates victims receive on the case following the charge decision and ahead of trial to inform guidance on when CPS updates are most beneficial for victims.
REC 14	The VTP should ensure that CPS areas follow guidance on offering pre-trial meetings by adopting an approach that prioritises victims' needs and preferences around the timing and location of meetings. The VTP should consider whether additional capacity is required for areas to deliver these meetings in line with victims' needs.
REC 15	CPS senior management should strengthen how they communicate the importance of VLOs' roles in achieving organisational priorities as some staff do not feel valued or recognised.
REC 16	The VTP should clarify the respective roles and expectations of VLOs and prosecutors in drafting and quality assuring VCL letters, focused on where each role can add most value.

Appendix - Full programme CBA

This appendix provides an overview of the full programme's value for money. The analysis draws on the costs and benefits presented in the summary report. However, rather than considering a single year, it assesses the costs incurred in delivering the VTP since its initial set-up in 2022/23 and considers whether the benefits generated to date (i.e., January 2026) justify these costs. A detailed breakdown of methods is included in the accompanying Technical Report.

A1a. Full programme costs

After adjusting for inflation and discounting, the total real, discounted economic costs amount to £23.7M, as shown in Table A1 below. These are also known as the present value of costs (PVC). These values form the cost input used in the full programme CBA.

Table A1: VTP full programme costs

Category	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Programme staffing	£0.7M	£1.5M	£2.5M	£4.0M
GAE & Capital	n/a	£0.3M	£2.4M	£4.9M
RASSO (PtM & VLO)	n/a	£0.3M	£4.6M	£3.9M
VRRs efficiency disbenefits ²⁸	n/a	n/a	£200	£500
Total Nominal Costs	£0.7M	£2.2M	£9.5M	£12.9M
Real, discounted economic costs (2025/26 prices)	£0.8M	£2.2M	£9.1M	£11.5M

A1b. Full programme benefits

This section outlines the key monetisable benefits included in the full programme CBA of the VTP. As discussed through the summary report, the VTP generates benefits through improving victim wellbeing, lower victim attrition than would have been expected without the Universal Service Pilot, and some organisational efficiencies. The timeline below has been applied to estimate the economic benefits generated by the VTP to date. This reflects the point at which each service was implemented and therefore when benefits began to accrue.

Table A2: Timeline by service

VTP service	Implementation starting point	Number of months in 2024/25	Number of months in 2025/26
US	December 2024	4	10
ES	April 2025	0	10
RASSO	September 2024	6	10

²⁸ The increased awareness of a victim's right to request a review (itself an aim of the VTP creates an additional cost for the CPS to respond to these requests and is counted here as a disbenefit.

Based on governance data provided by the CPS, between July 2025 and January 2026 the Universal Service Pilot communicated with 3,303 victims. To estimate the total number of victims that have been communicated with since the implementation of the Universal Service Pilot, the recorded count for the first month of the Universal Service Pilot (361 victims) was used as a proxy for each month prior to July 2025, back to the start of the implementation. Combining the observed data with these estimates provides an estimate of the total number of victims communicated with by the Universal Service Pilot since the implementation. The same approach was applied to the Enhanced Service Pilot.

The Enhanced Service (RASSO) held pre-trial meetings with 1,802 victims between the beginning of implementation and January 2026. For the period from implementation to March 2025, a proxy for engagement was used as detailed breakdowns of the data were not available. For the period between April 2025 and January 2026, governance data collected by the teams was used.

Table A3. Estimated number of victims successfully engaged by each service since its implementation

	Number of victims recorded	Recorded count for the first month	Estimated number of victims in FY 2024/25	Estimated number of victims between April 2025 and January 2026
US	3,303 (July 2025 – January 2026)	361 (July 2025)	1,440 (December 2024 – March 2025)	4,383
ES	3,608 (June 2025 – January 2026)	212 (June 2025)	0	4,032
RASSO	1,802 (September 2024 – January 2026)	n/a	400 (September 2024 – March 2025)	1,402

Using this timeline, after adjusting for optimism bias, inflation and discounting, the total real, discounted, economic benefits were estimated at £119.7 million. This reflects the monetised benefits generated over the appraisal period. This is also known as Present Value of Benefits (PVB).

Table A4: VTP full programme benefits by financial year and benefit

Monetisable benefit	2024/25	2025/26*	Total
Efficiency	£25K	£0.128M	£153K
Victim Outcome	£29.2M	£124.8M	£154.0M
Victim attrition	£36K	£92K	£128K
Total Nominal Benefits	£29.3M	£125.1M	£154.3M
Real, discounted economic benefits (2025/26 prices)	£23.8M	£95.9M	£119.7M

***2025/26 figures are based on April 2025 to end of January 2026**

Table A5: VTP full programme PVBs by financial year and benefit(2025/26 prices)

Monetisable benefit	Real, discounted economic benefits		
	2024/25	2025/26*	Total
Efficiency	£20K	£98K	£0.1M
Victim Outcome	£23.8M	£95.7M	£119.5M
Victim attrition	£29K	£71K	£0.1M
Total Present Value of Benefits (PVB)	£23.8M	£95.9M	£119.7M

*2025/26 figures are based on April 2025 to end of January 2026

A1c. Full programme CBA assessment

Table A6 presents the results of the CBA for the full VTP programme, expressed in 2025/26 prices. The analysis compares the full programme CBA assessment (2025/26 prices) PVB generated by the VTP against the PVC associated with its set-up and delivery. The VTP is estimated to produce a net present value (NPV) in the range of £63.0 million to £132.9 million, representing the net economic benefits once programme costs have been taken into account.

The corresponding BCR is estimated to lie between 3.7 and 6.6. This indicates that for every £1 invested in the VTP, between £3.7 and £6.6 of the economic benefits are expected to be generated.

Overall, these results suggest that the VTP is expected to deliver good value for money.

Table A6: Full programme CBA assessment (2025/26 prices)

PVB	£119.7M
PVC	£23.7M
NPV (PVB – PVC)	£63.0M – £132.9M
BCR (PVB / PVC)	3.7 - 6.6

This full programme CBA provides an indication of the VTP's value for money based on costs and benefits realised to date. Please note that the results should be interpreted with caution when considering any future extension of the VTP, because the analysis includes upfront implementation costs incurred during the initial set-up of the VTP. These represent sunk costs²⁹ that would not be expected to recur if the VTP were continued, and that “should not affect decisions about what to do next” according to the Green Book guidance³⁰. The annualised CBA, which provides a more appropriate indication of the programme's value for money on an ongoing basis, is presented in the summary.

²⁹ Sunk costs are costs that have already been incurred and cannot be changed.

³⁰ HM Treasury (2026). The Green Book UK Government Guidance on Appraisal. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/698dbcd17da91680ad7f4308/The_Green_Book_2026.pdf.

Glossary of abbreviations and acronyms

The following abbreviations and acronyms are used throughout the report. Please refer to this glossary as needed.

BAU	Business as usual	RASSO	Rape and serious sexual offences
CBA	Cost-benefit analysis	TTR	Task Time Recording
CJS	Criminal justice system	VCE	Victim Centre of Excellence
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service	VCL	Victim Communication and Liaison (Scheme)
CSEW	Crime Survey for England and Wales	VLM	Victim Liaison Manager
DtC	Decision to Charge	VLO	Victim Liaison Officer
FAQ	Frequently asked questions	VLU	Victim Liaison Unit
GAE	General Annual Expenditure	VPS	Victim Personal Statement
GDP	Gross domestic product	VRR	Victims' Right to Review
HMCPsi	His Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate	VSM	Victim Service Manager
ISVA / IDVA	Independent Sexual Violence Advisor / Independent Domestic Violence Advisor	VTP	Victim Transformation Programme
NFA	No Further Action	WCO	Witness Care Officer
NPV	Net Present Value	WCU	Witness Care Unit
OIC	Officer in the Case, or Officer in Charge	WELLBY	Wellbeing-adjusted Life Year
ONS	Office for National Statistics	WTP	Willingness to Pay
PMoC	Preferred Method of Contact		
PVB	Present Value of Benefits		
PVC	Present Value of Costs		