



Victim First Newsletter

Welcome to our newsletter. It's been a busy and yet strange quarter at Victim First, with the final few weeks being spent trying to adapt to the 'new normal' way of working from home and still delivering a service across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

We are continuing to engage with our stakeholders and service users. Due to the COVID-19 situation, you might have noticed an increased Victim First virtual presence, with an increase in blogs written by the team on our website and increased engagement through our social media.

I do hope you enjoy flicking through our newsletter. We've shared some of the highlights from the past few months, including how we have adapted during COVID-19.

As always, thank you to everyone who works alongside us to provide the best possible support for victims. Please don't hesitate to give us a call if you'd like to find out more about Victim First. Stay safe!

Manjeeta Sunnar
Head of Service, Victim First



Our Service in Numbers

Between January and March 2020:

We offered support to **3,282** new referrals

We provided enhanced support to **637** victims

We provided emotional support via phone to **311** victims

We provided advocacy to **78** victims

We also provided standard support to **1,742** victims including information via post, signposting to our website

Service User Feedback (January 2020):

70%
of victims were
satisfied with their
overall Victim First
experience

"My caseworker was brilliant. Great listener and kept in contact with me. She understood me and gave me loads of info about other services"

"They were very understanding of my situation and they agreed with my timescale for call backs"

"They were good, I liked having someone to speak to. They were supportive, they sent panic alarms"

Victim First | 0800 953 95 95 | office@victimfirst.pnn.gov.uk | www.victimfirst.org | @Victim1st

What have we been up to?



Lauren Deacon
Caseworker

It is important to address what has changed for Victim First since COVID-19. Victim First are still proactively supporting victims and witnesses of crime across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Due to the government guidance, we are unable to offer community or home visits during this period and have had to postpone several community surgeries. Although, our opening times still remain the same and we have the option of a webchat service on the website. We are open 9am-6pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday and 9am-8pm on Wednesdays and our number is 0800 953 9595.

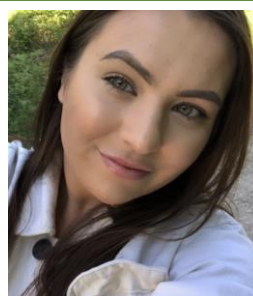
We at Victim First can appreciate it is a difficult time for all of us. So we have detailed below some ways to keep yourself safe during COVID-19.

In reference to the Government advice:

- Stay at home, only go outside for food, health reasons or work (if you cannot work from home and are a key worker)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Do not meet others, even family and friends.
- Contact NHS 111 if you are experiencing any health concerns and keep updated on their website.

In reference to Self-care:

- Create a daily routine and keep yourself motivated with 'to do lists'
- If you are working from home, create a space for your working area to allow for a boundary to be created from work and home life.
- Social interaction is important so communicate with family, friends, colleagues via SMS, telephone calls and facetime.
- Take regular breaks.
- Make sure you exercise daily.
- Practise mindfulness to help manage worries and anxieties.
- Eat well.
- Sleep well.
- It's OK not to be OK. Stay calm, remain grounded and look at techniques which have helped you previously.



Francesca Hartill-Speak
Caseworker

Like many of us, I was doing my bit by staying at home during COVID-19, but how many times can you walk the same route for your daily exercise, and watch the same Netflix programme, without feeling bored? After a couple of weeks out of work, I was itching to get stuck back in to the work life and get some sort of routine.

So what is it like to change jobs during a global pandemic? Is it scary, and would I recommend it? With my first day ahead of me, only time would tell.

On the morning of my first day at Victim First, I was absolutely terrified. I remember waking up with those first day butterflies we all know too well. I felt so anxious to be heading into a new career during a national lockdown. Despite this, I drove to Headquarters to collect my equipment for working from home for the foreseeable future. On arrival, I was greeted by the Head of Service who promptly reminded me that there was an unlimited supply of hand sanitizer, if I had wished to use it. We spent around an hour setting up my equipment when I arrived. It was undoubtedly a first to be shown how to set up technology at a two meter distance. After the collection, I walked back to my car with a rucksack full of equipment, notepads and lots of hand sanitizer, with a more positive outlook on the lockdown in front of me.

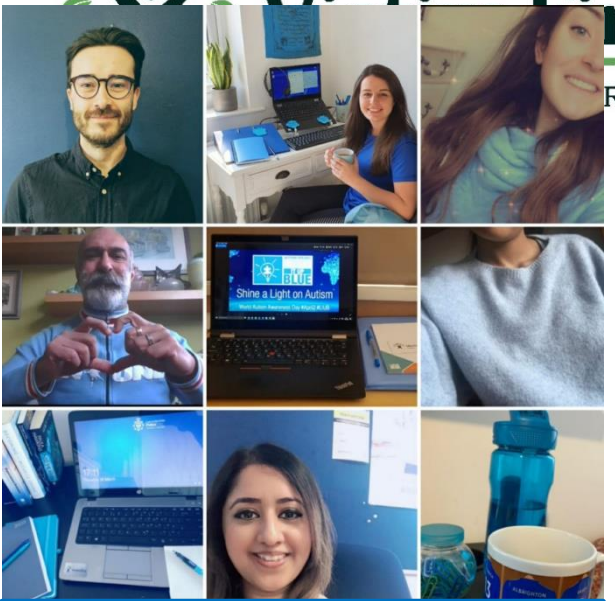
When I returned home, I received a call from my team lead. She welcomed me to the team and introduced me to Victim First and the training program. After my first day of figuring out Skype and various other computer programmes, I closed my laptop, and at that point, I knew I had made the right decision to change jobs despite the uncertain times we are in.

What are the unexpected benefits of training during COVID-19? Training virtually has still been as fun and as engaging as it would be in an office, and even more so due to technical errors, making it very entertaining. I virtually met the team in the following week of training through Skype, which I guess saves the awkward first meeting in the office. I also had the opportunity to shadow my colleagues on their work days.

Each and every one of them made it extremely interactive by screen sharing on skype, meaning I could observe what they were doing, and I could even control their computer to have a go myself. I also got the chance to carry out practice calls with my colleagues, who acted as the service users. I can confirm this is as scary as it sounds, but my colleagues made me feel relaxed, and doing them over skype was definitely less frightening. I also had the chance to observe some real calls from my colleagues, which felt exactly the same as if we were in an office environment, except the difference was I was wearing slippers! After only two weeks of employment with Victim First I already feel part of the team, virtually and otherwise. Everyone in the team has gone above and beyond to make me feel welcomed, even if it's a quick 'good morning' message or asking how I am getting on, meaning being trained virtually has not once felt lonely.

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What have we been up to?



We used the theme of 'blue' to raise awareness for **World Autism Awareness Day**



We are delighted to receive the **Victim's Choice Quality Mark** from Supporting Justice. Feeling proud of the support we provide to victims & witnesses across LLR.



Spent **International Women's Day** raising awareness of gender related violence alongside Zinthyia Trust.



Victim First were awarded the **LGBT+ Inclusion Award** for being an LGBT+ Inclusive service.



Victim First coming together to celebrate **International Women's Day**



Victim First and several of the domestic violence champions across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland came together to show support for the **#YouAreNotAlone** campaign during COVID-19

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Good News Story

An international student attended one of our Loughborough University drop-in surgeries in a panic as she had been a victim of fraud. Someone was using her bank details and taking money from her account. Due to being an international student and in a foreign environment, the client was unsure what the process was in the UK and what she should do about the situation.

The student was encouraged to report the incident to Action Fraud which she did and also informed her bank. However she was having trouble getting her bank in her home country to take any action and due to the language barrier was finding it difficult to get the information that she needed from Action Fraud to send to her bank back home. Our Caseworker was able to provide advocacy with Action Fraud and get them to provide a report for the client to evidence that she had been a victim of fraud. A supporting letter was also provided from the Caseworker for additional evidence. Further advice was provided to the client to ensure her cards had been cancelled and to ensure that all necessary safeguarding measures had been taken to protect her details from any further fraud.

The advocacy with Action Fraud meant that the client was able to prove to her bank in another country that she had been a victim of crime in the UK and they were able to look into freezing the account and refunding her money. The client was really grateful for the support and sent an email into the service thanking the caseworker for her help in resolving the issue.

Keep on referring:

Anybody can self-refer by simply calling our Freephone number **0800 953 95 95** or emailing us at support@victimfirst.pnn.gov.uk

Police colleagues can refer to us via the **Victim and Witness Contact Management report page on Niche (VCOP)**

Other professionals can refer a service user to Victim First via the website or by contacting us directly on **0800 953 95 95** or emailing office@victimfirst.pnn.gov.uk

Remember we have a live chat feature. Here you can chat anonymously without calling into our service!



Victim First
Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland



Putting Victims First

A free, independent and confidential service supporting victims and witnesses of crime across **Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland**

Live Chat



Victim First

Hi Anonymous, welcome to Victim First WebChat.

Before we start, it is important to let you know that we are a confidential service and that anything you do say will be kept confidential unless we are concerned for your or anyone else's safety.

How may I help you?



Your message...



powered by Click4Assistance

What's coming up:

18th – 24th May: Mental Health Awareness Week
18th – 24th May: Learning at Work Week
June 2020: PRIDE Month
1st – 7th June: Volunteer's Week

Please note that due to COVID-19, we have suspended community engagement events and visits.

Check out our [twitter page](#) and [website](#) for updates.

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