



Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland

Victim First Newsletter



Welcome to our newsletter...

In this quarter, we have received great news that our contract has been extended for a further two years, until the end of July 2023. We are also pleased to announce that we have resumed our partnership working with Kooth (previously known as Xenzone) to provide online counselling to adult victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence through the Qwell platform for a further 12 months. More on this on page 4.

On 1st April 2021, the new Victims' Code of Practice was launched, with the aim to streamline the code and offer 12 rights for victims of crime. We worked closely with Leicestershire Police to develop a new '*Information for Victims of Crime*' booklet. For the document, please click [here](#).

Although we are continuing to engage with our stakeholders and service users, we have not been able to get out into the community in person, but 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 on our social media platforms. From the end of this quarter, we have begun a phased office return and are slowly returning to business as usual with COVID restrictions starting to ease.

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 2021:

We offered support to **3,658** new referrals

We provided enhanced support to **544** victims

We provided emotional support via phone to **382** victims

We provided advocacy to **96** victims

We also provided standard support to **1,451** victims including information via post, signposting to our website

Service User Feedback (January and March 2021):

91.3%

of victims were satisfied with their overall Victim First experience

"...they were supportive, and they came across really well and they weren't judgemental"

"They believed me and took my word for it, and sympathised with me"



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

Good News Stories & Feedback

Learning at Work...

Debs Weidacher – Caseworker

In preparation for starting my new role as a caseworker for Victim First, I had all the expected emails beforehand about what to expect for the first few weeks regarding training; what to bring with me; what to collect; where to go; who to speak to etc. It's all quite exciting but can also be a little daunting...had to make sure my "to do" and checklists were updated! Due to the pandemic I had not actually personally met any of the team – interview and contact was through Skype and phone calls.

I had a 2-week break from leaving my last job, which gave me time to "shed my skin" as a police officer and prepare myself for my new venture. On my first day I was really looking forward to meeting my new colleagues and get cracking with my training. I was immediately made to feel welcome, which certainly eased my nerves. Due to COVID guidelines, only 3 people were allowed in the office at any one time, so this felt quite different as I was used to being around lots of people (albeit socially distanced of course).

I was armed with my laptop and equipment, my comprehensive daily training plan – and of course my trusty notepad – and got myself set up at my work station. There were lots of new systems to become acquainted with, but I felt very reassured that I would not have to know everything by the end of the week – which really took the pressure off thank goodness! As soon as I had logged on to Skype, I began receiving messages from my colleagues that were on shift welcoming me with smiley emojis, which made me feel so good. Any worries I had about not seeing everyone in the flesh, so to speak, were gone.

I did have several IT issues crop up over the week (we have a love/hate relationship at times..!) but these were sorted via telephone or email. I was initially concerned about working from home and how that would be for me as I had never done this. I spent time setting up a space that would feel like I was "at work" with no distractions; adequate lighting; equipment etc. I decided the dining table in the kitchen would be the best, so made sure this was all set up accordingly – with no clutter in view. Fortunately, I would be able to order a suitable chair as dining chairs not ideal for long periods. Also, someone very kindly donated a monitor to me so that I could have multi-screen usage.

On my first WFH day, I spent the time I would normally have been sat in the car doing my online Yoga class – what

a great way to start the day. So that I have my "work head" on, I make sure I feel the part with doing my hair and make-up and change out of my onesie!

I was fortunate enough to have training and meetings via various mediums, including Skype, Microsoft Teams, Zoom as well as in person. If you had asked me how I would prefer to have training before this time, I would have said, without hesitation, in person. However, over the course of the last week I have discovered that actually, a mix of the two is absolutely perfect and accommodates all learning types – even "old school" me! I tend to learn by doing, so with screen sharing this was also possible. I have nothing but praise for all of my colleagues – literally every single one of them has been more than happy to help, offer advice and make me feel as though I already belong and have my place in the team, for which I am so grateful. I feel really positive about the next stage and hope to be flying solo from next week – but I feel reassured knowing that my brilliant team are only a call or a click away should I need them!

Case Study

A female called into the service very distressed as she had been a victim of domestic violence. The victim's partner had been arrested after assaulting her but was due to be released that day. The Victim was feeling very frightened as her partner still had a key to the property.

The victim was very overwhelmed and did not know what to do. The caseworker provided emotional support to help de-escalate the victim and get her to a calmer frame of mind in order to discuss support options. The Victim needed her locks changing to ensure she was safe and needed additional support and advice to ensure she was safeguarded long term.

An emergency referral was made to 24/7 locks who were able to change the victims locks the same day. The caseworker also contacted the police officer to request a panic alarm be fitted at the victim's home. Information and advice were provided to the victim about safety planning and a referral was made to NCDV who were able to support the victim in obtaining a non-molestation order. A referral was also made to ensure specialist domestic violence support was in place for the victim long term.

A follow up call was made to the victim a few days later to see how she was feeling. The victim explained that thanks to the steps taken by Victim First she was now feeling much safer. The Victim was very thankful for the support she received and stated that Victim First were able to provide her with the right support that she needed at the right time. The victim is now open with a domestic violence specialist service to ensure she can continue to access the support she needs.

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What have we been up to?



Victim First stand against any type of hate crime. If you have been a victim of any abuse because of your sexual orientation, we can support you. Help us in the fight against discrimination of any kind. #IDAHOBIT



We supported the National Smile Month in May 2021



Chris Wright (CEO of Catch22) visited the service and participated in our monthly team meeting.



It was great to be invited by one of our service users to the Rutland Disability Youth Forum. Great to meet the group and discuss different crimes and issues they have all experienced and how Victim First can support.



For 'Learning at Work' week, our new Caseworker, Debs, put together a blog about her experience of training during the pandemic. You can read this on page 2 of the newsletter and on our website.

19th May 2021

Learning at work

Debs started working for Victim First as a caseworker in May 2021, below is how she found the experience of training during her first couple of weeks.



Catch22 have called for a National Child Criminal Exploitation strategy, to bring young people back into focus and reduce the risks they are facing. Victim First are supporting this strategy.

Our Restorative Justice Offer...

Restorative justice is a voluntary process which offers you the opportunity to potentially communicate with the offender. This can happen either directly, face to face, or indirectly.

It is an opportunity where you can talk about the incident and the harm caused, the impact of actions along with an opportunity to ask any questions you may have, in the hope of providing a means of closure and the chance to move forward with your life.

Victim First provide a safe environment for restorative justice to take place. We listen to what has happened and how it has affected your life and what is needed for the next stage.

You can access our service and find out more about what is involved by talking to the Specialist Restorative Justice Caseworker.

Qwell is back!

Qwell is a counselling service which is delivered online through Kooth (previously known as Xenzone) & the team of counsellors are BACP accredited. Kooth's online platforms provide a holistic online community with access to peer created content, peer to peer communities and direct access to qualified counsellors and mental health professionals.

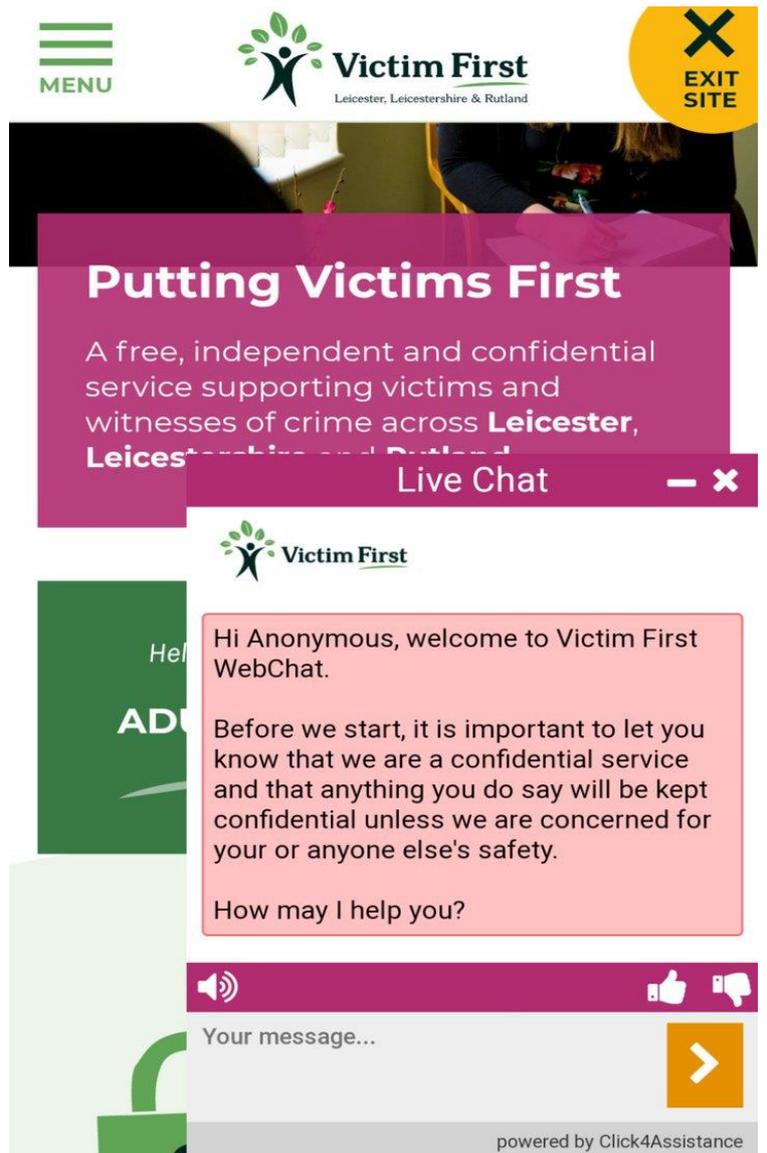
Qwell is available to support anyone 18 years + who has been a victim of domestic abuse or sexual violence; by visiting [Home - Qwell](#) (please signpost victims to tick the Victim First option).

Brief Overview of Qwell: [short video](#)

Please contact us if you would like any more information.



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



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