

The Victim Care Service

COVID-19 – Update on current service status

The Victim Care Service is delivered by the national charity Victim Support; the service provides support to victims of crime 4 years and above who are a resident of Hampshire or the Isle of Wight. Prior to the current COVID-19 outbreak the service was able to offer a range of support over the phone as well as face to face and accommodated drop-ins at our offices in Chandlers Ford, Havant, Basingstoke, and Newport, Isle of Wight. In addition to the core service, the VCS has specialist teams for Domestic Abuse, children and young people (CYP), and a team of Priority caseworkers who work with victims of the most serious crimes, such as Sexual Abuse, and those who are entitled to special measures under the Victims Code¹.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has required the Victim Care Service to adapt in accordance with Government and Public Health England advice to protect the safety of our staff, volunteers, service users and the public. This statement will document what we are doing in response to COVID-19 and what changes will take place due to the advice given on 23rd March 2020 to stay at home².

We have been working closely with Victim Support's national support function and The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police and Crime Commissioner's Office who are providing frequent and necessary updates in regard to the changes of the service.

Service Delivery

Here we will set out the parts of our service that will remain the same as well as the changes that we have had to make. All changes are temporary and may change pending updates and advice received.

- Our phone line will now be open for self-referrals and queries from 9am-5pm Monday to Friday. This is a change from opening times being 8am-8pm Monday-Saturday. Any calls to the service made within 8am-9am and 5pm-8pm Mon-Fri and 8am-8pm Saturday will be diverted to Victim Support's national Supportline, so the call will still be answered.
- All staff members from Monday 23rd of March will be working from home and the Chandlers Ford office will be closed. This will not affect volunteers as they are already home based.
- Service Users will no longer be able to 'drop in' to any of our office locations due to office closures.
- Referrals via the Automatic Data Transfer from Hampshire Police, as well as any referrals received to our secure email address from other agencies, will continue as usual.
- Self-referrals can still be made via the Victim Support website or via our Live Chat facility.

¹ <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/special-measures>

² <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

- All face to face visits have been postponed and we will be offering phone-based support only.
- We will no longer be able to send security items to service users.
- Support over the phone, including advocacy, information provision, making referrals, will continue.
- Online resources will be shared with service users, including self-help guides and toolkits. This includes a range of information that has been specifically developed in response to the COVID-19 situation and its likely impact on service users.
- All community events have been cancelled
- Internal training has been postponed.

Community Engagement and Social Media

All community events, conferences and meetings have been cancelled or postponed. Communication has been sent to all stakeholders, partners and other agencies we work regularly and closely with. We are still working on the launch of the Victim Care Service website which should not be affected. We will remain active on our social media channels Twitter and Facebook found below:

Twitter: https://twitter.com/VCS_HantsIOW

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/VCSHampshireIOW>

Contact Details:

Freephone number open 9-5pm Monday to Friday: 0808 178 1641

General Email: hub.hiow@victimsupport.org.uk

Secure email: hiow.referrals@victimsupport.cjsm.net