

<b>Title:</b> Updating the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (The Victims' Code)		<b>Impact Assessment (IA)</b>
<b>IA No:</b> MoJ022/2025		<b>Date:</b> Feb 2026
<b>RPC Reference No:</b>		<b>Stage:</b> Consultation
<b>Lead department or agency:</b> Ministry of Justice		<b>Source of intervention:</b> Domestic
<b>Other departments or agencies:</b>		<b>Type of measure:</b> Primary legislation
		<b>Contact for enquiries:</b> Victim and Witness Policy and Strategy Team
		<b>Email:</b> victims.code@justice.gov.uk

## Summary: Intervention and Options

**RPC Opinion:** RPC Opinion Status

<b>Cost of Preferred (or more likely) Option (in 2025 prices)</b>			
<b>Total Net Present Social Value</b> -£11.9m	<b>Business Net Present Value</b> £m	<b>Net cost to business per year</b> £m	<b>Business Impact Target Status</b> Qualifying provision
<b>What is the problem under consideration? Why is government action or intervention necessary?</b>			
<p>The Victims' Code (the Code) sets out what victims can expect to receive from criminal justice agencies. The Ministry of Justice have worked with parliamentarians and the victim support sector to identify how we can strengthen the Code to make sure that it sets clear and deliverable minimum standards through the criminal justice system and so that victims have the support and information they need to engage with it. This includes strengthening the assessment of victims' needs to ensure victims are told about the Code three times, being clearer about how the Code should be applied to certain victims such as children, providing victims with quality communication at the right time, providing victims with a standardised product and improving how and when victims are given the chance to participate. The Government is proposing to make changes to the Code to address these issues as well as updates to reflect the latest operational practice and legislation. Government intervention is necessary as the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 places a duty on the Secretary of State for Justice to issue a new Victims' Code which reflects the new statutory principles.</p>			

### What are the policy objectives of the action or intervention and the intended effects?

- Set the right minimum standards for what victims of crime should receive. Make sure that the services and standards victims can expect to receive under the Code are clear so that agencies can be held to account for delivering them.
- Meets new statutory obligations under the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024

### What policy options have been considered, including any alternatives to regulation? Please justify preferred option (further details in Evidence Base)

- Option 0:** Do nothing. Maintain the existing Code by reissuing it under the new provisions in the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024.
- Option 1 Implement the new Code following a public consultation:**
  - Measure 1A – Needs assessments including informing victims about the Code three times
  - Measure 1B – Standardised product for victims.
  - Measure 1C – Introducing a framework for engagement with victims under 18 years of age.
  - Measure 1D – Victim submissions to the Parole Board.
  - Measure 1E – Updating who is defined as a victim under the Code.
  - Measure 1F – New restorative justice information entitlement.
  - Measure 1G – Additional information and technical changes.

The Government's preferred approach is **Option 1, Measures 1A-G** as these bests meet the policy objectives and is required to meet statutory obligations to issue a Code under the 2024 Act.

Is this measure likely to impact on international trade and investment?	No		
Are any of these organisations in scope?	Micro No	Small No	Medium No
What is the CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent change in greenhouse gas emissions? (Million tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent)	<b>Traded:</b> N/A <b>Non-traded:</b> N/A		

**Will the policy be reviewed?** The Government will monitor measures following the implementation of the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024. The Act will be subject to post-legislative scrutiny five years after Royal Assent. The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims 2004 also requires the Victims Commissioner to keep the operation of the Victims' Code under review.

*I have read the Impact Assessment, and I am satisfied that, given the available evidence, it represents a reasonable view of the likely costs, benefits and impact of the leading options.*

Signed by the responsible:

*Alex Davies-Jones* Date: 4/2/26

## Summary: Analysis & Evidence

## Policy Option 1

**Description:** Implement the new Code following a public consultation

### FULL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

Price Base Year 25/26	PV Base Year 25/26	Time Period 10	Net Benefit (Present Value (PV)) (£m)				
			Low: -6.7	High: -17.2	Best Estimate: -11.9		
<b>COSTS (£m)</b>		<b>Total Transition (Constant Price) Years</b>	<b>Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)</b>		<b>Total Cost (Present Value)</b>		
Low		NA	0.8		6.7		
High		NA	2.0		17.2		
<b>Best Estimate</b>		NA	<b>1.4</b>		<b>11.9</b>		
<b>Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups'</b>							
The total present value cost of the measures is between £6.7m and £17.2m, with a central estimate of £11.9m over a 10-year appraisal period. The police and HMPPS will incur costs associated with increased interaction with victims additionally, new standardised products for victims will incur costs. The average annual cost of these options is between £0.8m and £2.0m, with a best estimate of £1.4m.							
<b>Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups'</b>							
As victims become more aware of their rights, there may be an increase in their expectations of service providers to ensure they are complying with the Code. The new Code may also result in more victims seeking support as they become aware of their ability to access it, but it is not possible to quantify any costs for external victim support services. The preferred option will add groups to those considered to be a victim and this should also increase costs.							
BENEFITS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years		Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)			
Low	NA		NA	NA			
High	NA		NA	NA			
<b>Best Estimate</b>	NA		NA	NA			
<b>Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'</b>							
It has not been possible to identify any monetised benefits.							
<b>Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'</b>							
The key non-monetised benefits of these measures are to improve the level of service provided to victims of crime by criminal justice agencies and to increase their confidence in accessing support and engaging with the criminal justice system. This will support their continued engagement with the criminal justice process and therefore support prosecutions and improve the effectiveness of the system.							
<b>Key assumptions/sensitivities/risks</b>							
<b>Discount rate (%)</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This Impact Assessment assumes that the level of provision, timing and scope of services under this proposed Code will be equivalent to those provided under the current Code unless otherwise stated.</li> <li>Measures with monetised costs have low and high scenarios modelled to reflect the uncertainty in estimated costs and sensitivities regarding assumptions made.</li> <li>Optimism Bias uplifts have been applied where appropriate.</li> </ul>							

### BUSINESS ASSESSMENT

Direct impact on business (Equivalent Annual) £m: N/A			Score for Business Impact Target (qualifying provisions only) £m: N/A
Costs: N/A	Benefits: N/A	Net: N/A	

## Evidence Base

1. This Impact Assessment (IA) assesses the following measures, with the aim of updating the Victims' Code.

**Table 1: Measures included**

<b>Policy Measure</b>	<b>Policy Description</b>
<b>1A</b> Needs assessments including informing victims about the Code three times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proposal to include clearer information about how and when victims' needs will be assessed by service providers throughout the criminal justice process and a requirement to be told about their rights under the Code when a victim has their needs (re)assessed.</li></ul>
<b>1B</b> Standardised product for victims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proposal to consult on different materials at the different points of communication when a victim has their needs (re)assessed. The different materials are:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A business card with a QR code and link to the Code webpage.</li><li>• An A5 leaflet setting out the headlines of each of the Code rights.</li><li>• A digital version of the business card.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>1C</b> Introducing a framework for engagement with victims under 18 years of age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proposal to address how criminal justice agencies should engage directly with child victims, and how this can be tailored across the 0–18-year-old age bracket.</li></ul>
<b>1D</b> Increasing victims' voices within parole proceedings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proposal to consider a new victim submission within Parole Board hearings.</li></ul>
<b>1E</b> Updating who is defined as a victim under the Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An updated definition of a victim that reflects the definition in the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024, to make it clear who is now defined as a victim under the Code and what their entitlements are.</li></ul>
<b>1F</b> New restorative justice information entitlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An additional entitlement to receive information about restorative justice after the outcome of a court case, in addition to being provided with this information when reporting the crime.</li></ul>
<b>1G</b> Additional information and technical changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make minor changes to the Code to clarify what should, in practice, be occurring.</li></ul>

## A. Background

### The Victims' Code

2. The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (Victims' Code) sets out the services and a minimum standard for these services that must be provided to victims of crime by organisations (referred to as service providers) in England and Wales.
3. The Victims' Code first came into force in 2006 through provisions in the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. Since then, it has been updated several times, with the most recent Code<sup>1</sup> coming into force on 1 April 2021.
4. The Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 (the Act) restates (with some amendments) the statutory framework for the Code and requires a new Code to be introduced. The Act therefore provides an opportunity to make necessary updates to the Code, e.g. reflecting legislative or operational changes since 2021, and to ensure that it sets the right minimum standards for agencies to deliver services to victims. The current consultation, which this Impact Assessment (IA) supports, forms part of this updating process.

### The Consultation

5. Ahead of introducing the Act, there was a public consultation in 2021 (*Delivering justice for victims*<sup>2</sup>) setting out the intention to improve victims' experience of the criminal justice system. That consultation included areas relevant to the provisions in the Code and has informed some of the changes discussed in this IA and reflected in the current consultation.
6. The current consultation proposes changes to the current Code to ensure that the new Code is up to date, accurate and clear, and that it reflects legislative and/or operational changes. We will use the consultation, of which this IA is a part, to understand whether certain proposals would be beneficial to improve provision for victims in the new Code, subject to their feasibility and affordability. As the service providers responsible for delivering the Code to victims may incur costs associated as a result of these proposals and subsequent changes to the Code, this IA sets out the likely impact of the proposals on these organisations to inform the consultation.
7. Given the draft nature of the Code being considered at consultation, the cost estimates presented reflect the best information currently available. As part of this consultation, we are also asking respondents whether they are aware of any evidence or sources of information that would help us to understand and assess the equality and economic impacts in greater detail, and what they think these impacts would be.

## B. Policy Rationale and Objectives

8. The conventional approach to government intervention is based on efficiency or equity arguments. Government may consider intervening if there are strong enough failures in the way markets operate, for example monopolies overcharging debtors, or if there are strong enough failures in existing government interventions, such as outdated regulations generating inefficiencies. In all cases the proposed intervention should avoid generating a further set of disproportionate costs and distortions. Government may also intervene for

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<sup>1</sup> [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales \(Victims' Code\) - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime-in-england-and-wales-victims-code)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/delivering-justice-for-victims-a-consultation-on-improving-victims-experiences-of-the-justice-system>

reasons of equity (fairness) and for re-distributional reasons (e.g. reallocating resources from one group in society to another).

9. The primary rationale for intervention in this case is on the grounds of equity. The options in this IA aim to set the right minimum standard for the services that victims of crime should receive from relevant agencies. This will give criminal justice agencies clear expectations on what they should deliver for victims, which can be monitored to improve compliance. It will also ensure that victims of crime have the information they need to access support to help them cope and recover and to engage with the criminal justice system, if they choose to do so.

## Policy Objectives

10. The policy objectives are to:
  - Set the right minimum standards for what victims of crime should receive.
    - To introduce a framework for how victims under 18 should be engaged with during the criminal justice process, which will give them more agency and choice over the communication they receive (Measure 1B)
    - To understand whether there are opportunities, outside of the Victim Impact Statement, for victims to have their views heard during parole proceedings (Measure 1C)
    - Ensure that victims receive information about restorative justice services once there has been a verdict to remind them of the opportunity to participate in this process (Measure 1E)
  - Make sure that the services and standards that victims can expect to receive under the Code are clear so that agencies can be held to account for delivering them.
    - Set clear expectations for victims and agencies on how, when, and why needs should be assessed (Measure 1A)
    - Provide clarity as to which rights under the Code different victim cohorts are entitled to receive (Measure 1D)
    - Reflect changes in practice or as a result of legislation to ensure the Code is up to date and clarify throughout the Code what agency should deliver specific entitlements, within which timeframes, and to which victims, to better support consistently monitoring compliance and victim understanding (Measure 1F)
  - Meet new statutory obligations under the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024.

## C. Description of options considered

11. In order to meet the policy objectives, the following options are assessed in this IA:

- **Option 0:** Do nothing. Continue with the existing Code, including the current set of obligations.
- **Option 1 (preferred): Implement the new Code following a public consultation**
  - Measure 1A - Needs assessments including informing victims about the Code three times.
  - Measure 1B - Standardised product for victims
  - Measure 1C – Introducing a framework for engagement with victims under 18 years of age.

- Measure 1D – Victim submissions to the Parole Board.
- Measure 1E - Updating who is defined as a victim under the Code.
- Measure 1F - New restorative justice information entitlement.
- Measure 1G – Additional information and technical changes.

12. The preferred option is all measures under option 1, Measures 1A to 1G, as they best support the policy objectives and will support the delivery of the Government's commitment to provide victims with the information and support they need.

## Option 0

13. Option 0 would mean reintroducing the existing Code under the new legislation. While there are no costs associated with this option, it does not meet the policy objectives or the Government's commitments to victims. Option 0 is therefore undesirable.

## Option 1

14. Option 1 would allow for introduction of a new Code following public consultation. A description of each measure has been included below:

### ***Measure 1A - needs assessments including informing victims about the Code three times.***

15. Needs assessments allow criminal justice agencies to identify how a victim may need to be supported to understand and engage in the criminal justice process. They are how agencies identify whether any adjustments to services should be made. However, we recognise that these are not delivered in a consistent way and in some cases can lack important details.

16. The new Code provides an opportunity to set out expectations of service providers, so that victims' needs are properly identified, and services can be appropriately adjusted to their needs. The consultation asks questions about how to use the Code to set a clear baseline for when and how these assessments are conducted and how the information gathered should be used to inform delivery of rights under the Code.

17. We are consulting on a new requirement for the police to inform victims about the Code when they have their needs (re)assessed. This is to make sure all victims understand their rights and are empowered to receive the support and services they should be provided with. We propose consulting on a new requirement for the police to inform victims about the Code at three distinct points: when they report, when there is a charge, and before trial. This would be done at the same points that the victim has their needs (re)assessed. We think this approach will mean victims are told in a considered way rather than a "tick-box" approach.

### ***Measure 1B - standardised product for victims***

18. We know in practice that different police forces and criminal justice agencies have their own standard materials and ways of communicating about the Code, much of which is done online, which reflects the shift in how victims are reporting crime. We are seeking views in the consultation on placing a new requirement on police to offer victims a standard physical product to make them aware of the Victims' Code, and on different options for what that product could be. We consider that this may improve victims' awareness of the Code. These products are:

- A business card with a QR code and link to the Code webpage.

- An A5 leaflet setting out the headlines of each of the Code rights.
- A digital version of the business card.

19. The different products have advantages to them. The consultation will seek views on which product(s) would be used across police forces in England and Wales.

***Measure 1C - introducing a framework for engagement with victims under 18 years of age***

20. Child victims going through the criminal justice process are not consistently communicated with or provided with updates about the case that they are involved in. Research from the Children's Commissioner's office<sup>3</sup> suggests that child victims desire more agency and choice when they are engaging with the criminal justice system. This also reflects views of some stakeholders and Parliamentarians during passage of the Act.

21. We recognise that a child's ability to understand and consent is complex and will evolve over time, so we have proposed a national framework with different general approaches based on age brackets (under 12, 12-15, 16-17 years). The proposed national framework would require criminal justice agencies to consider whether children have sufficient understanding and maturity to fully appreciate the implications for them of certain decisions ahead of applying the general principles supporting direct engagement. The consultation is seeking views on whether this proposal supports criminal justice agencies (namely police Witness Care Units and His Majesty's Prisons and Probation Service's Victim Contact Scheme) to safely and effectively engage with child victims.

***Measure 1D – Increasing victims' voices within parole proceedings***

22. Victims can have a voice in parole proceedings by making a Victim Impact Statement to the Parole Board, which allows the Board to understand the impact of the crime; to explore the prisoner's understanding of their actions; and to inform licence conditions. The Board's decision on whether to release the offender is based on whether the legal test for release is met, which is whether it is necessary for the protection of the public that the offender remains in custody. This risk assessment will be based on reports from relevant probation staff and in some cases psychologists. That decision cannot take into account the victim's opinion on whether the offender should be released.

23. The consultation seeks views on whether there could be a way for victims to express their views about an offender's release, for example through a separate submission to the Parole Board. Some victims may wish to do so, regardless of whether these can formally be taken into account by the Parole Board. For others, the time and effort that goes into submitting any views may not be worthwhile if they cannot influence the decision.

***Measure 1E - updating who is defined as a victim under the Code***

24. Section 1 of the Act sets out the definition of a victim, which will be reflected in the new Code. This brings the following additional groups explicitly into the definition of a victim for the purposes of the Code:

- Where the person's birth was the direct result of criminal conduct (for example, persons born of rape)
- Where the person is a child who is a victim of domestic abuse which constitutes criminal conduct.

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<sup>3</sup> Children's experiences as victims of crime | Children's Commissioner for England

25. Persons in these specific circumstances have been included to ensure they are given victim status for the purposes of the services they can expect to receive under the Code, in recognition of the likely harm caused by these circumstances and to reflect legislative definitions including in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, where child witnesses of domestic abuse were named as victims in their own right.
26. The Act's definition of a victim also includes cohorts that are already within scope of the Victims' Code. This includes:
  - Where the person has seen, heard, or otherwise directly experienced the effects of criminal conduct at the time the conduct occurred (for example, witnesses). The inclusion of witnesses who have suffered harm in the Code is to ensure they are able to access services that support victims, and this is clearly set out in the Code.
  - Where the death of a close family member of the person was the direct result of criminal conduct (for example, bereaved family members).
27. Where any of those persons included in the definition of a victim meet the criteria for Enhanced Rights under the Code (who are more likely to require specialised assistance, including vulnerable or intimidated victims, victims of the most serious crime and/or persistently targeted victims), they can expect service providers to provide them with Enhanced Rights. Such support may include being offered a referral to a specialist support service, being contacted sooner after key decisions.
28. We have set out in the draft new Code how we propose that the entitlements under the Code apply to those who fall under the definition of a victim to ensure that those affected groups understand what they can expect. This clarity will also help service providers understand how to undertake their responsibilities under the Code.
  - All victims, including those in the newly added groups, are eligible for Right 4 under the Code (the right to self-refer and/or to be referred to services that support victims).
  - The remaining Rights under the Code relate to the criminal justice process and therefore apply if a crime has been reported to the police and depending on the progression of the case. These apply to all victims listed above, other than witnesses of crime, where the Witness Charter covers how they can expect to be treated.

#### ***Measure 1F – new restorative justice information entitlement***

29. Responses to the *Delivering justice for victims*' consultation highlighted the importance of restorative justice as a service that victims and defendants/offenders can access. Restorative justice is a voluntary process that allows victims and offenders to come together and collectively resolve how to deal with the aftermath of a crime, either through victim-offender mediation directly or through third parties.
30. We know that restorative justice can improve victim satisfaction and reduce reoffending when delivered in the right circumstances. In recognition of this, the existing Code already includes a requirement for police to provide victims with information about restorative justice at the time they report a crime to them. However, we understand that this may be too early for many victims to think about engaging with such a service.
31. In addition to the current requirement, we recognise that there may be further opportunities to ensure victims have access to information about this service. We are proposing to introduce an entitlement for victims to also be told about restorative justice after the outcome of the case and, in relevant cases, any appeals. This will allow victims multiple opportunities to consider this information and make an informed decision about whether they would like to engage with this service.

## **Measure 1G - additional information and technical changes**

32. There are other proposed changes to the Code that have been made in order to improve the clarity of information in the Code, including updates to reflect the latest operational practice and legislation. This follows engagement with criminal justice agencies, stakeholders and Parliamentarians during the passage of the Act and during consultation on the draft Code that was published at that time.
33. The clarity and accuracy of the Code is critical to its usefulness and effectiveness for both victims in understanding their rights under the Code, and service providers in understanding their responsibilities in complying with the Code. We are asking for feedback on the additional information we have included through this consultation.

### **Other amendments**

34. We propose to reorder some of the Code's content for coherency. We consider that these changes will have little, or no impact, on the service providers required to provide services to victims under the Code. As we expect these changes to have minimal or no cost, we have not assessed them in this IA.
35. We are also asking some broader questions relating to whether a potential digital service could improve victims' experiences at later stages of the criminal justice process. Whilst this would come with costs for development, implementation and maintenance of any digital service, we have not assessed them in this IA. This is because this consultation process would be used to inform need and design of a potential digital service, and we would need to cost for the development and creation of such service on the basis of the consultation responses and further policy refinement.
36. Similarly, we are consulting on how to improve accessibility of the Code with victims, particularly children. This includes asking about the role of digital tools and innovation in doing so. As with the above, the consultation process would be used to inform the development of any materials and whether digital innovation would be helpful in achieving this aim and so we have not assessed them in this Impact Assessment.
37. A further IA will be required ahead of introduction of a new Victims' Code, and we will consider whether the above measures should be included, subject to the outcome of the consultation.

### **Other Options Considered**

38. We considered including the following two measures in this consultation IA:
  - a. Certain victims being able to apply to observe parole hearings
  - b. Certain victims being offered pre-trial meetings with the Crown Prosecution Service
39. However, these measures are already fully operational. We decided against appraising them in this IA because they are already captured within Option 0.

## **D. Affected Stakeholder Groups, Organisations and Sectors**

40. The main groups affected by the options assessed in this IA are as follows:
  - Victims of crime, their families, and other close associates.

- The service providers with specific obligations under the Code, such as the Crown Prosecution Service, all police forces (including Victim and Witness Care Units) in England and Wales, the British Transport Police, the Ministry of Defence Police, His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service, His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, Youth Offending Teams, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority, and the Parole Board for England and Wales.
- There may also be impacts on other service providers who either prosecute crime or have a role in managing offenders including the National Crime Agency and the Serious Fraud Office.

#### **Note on territorial application**

41. The proposals as set out in this IA will have effect in England and Wales only.

#### **E. Cost and Benefit Analysis**

42. This IA follows the procedures and criteria set out in the Impact Assessment Guidance and is consistent with the HM Treasury Green Book.

43. Where possible, IAs identify both monetised and non-monetised impacts on individuals, groups and businesses in England and Wales with the aim of understanding what the overall impact on society might be from the proposals under consideration. IAs place a strong focus on the monetisation of costs and benefits. There are often, however, important impacts which cannot sensibly be monetised. These might be impacts on certain groups of society or data privacy impacts, both positive and negative. Impacts in this IA are therefore interpreted broadly, to include both monetisable and non-monetisable costs and benefits, with due weight given to those that are not monetised.

44. The costs and benefits of each option are compared to option 0, the counterfactual or “do nothing” scenario, where fees are maintained at their current levels. As the counterfactual is compared to itself, the costs and benefits are necessarily zero, as is its net present value (NPV).

45. Given this is an IA to accompany a public consultation, the cost estimates presented in this Impact Assessment reflect the best information currently available and are subject to revision. It is intended that the costs will be refined, with an updated final IA published alongside formal introduction of the new Code in due course. We will work with relevant agencies and other government departments to refine the measures and costs before that point, taking into account the responses to the consultation on the measures.

46. The impacts in this IA have been estimated as follows:

- Figures are quoted in FY25/26 prices.
- The impacts have been discounted using a 10-year appraisal period, with a base year of FY25/26.
- Optimism bias uplift of 20% has been applied to cost estimates unless where otherwise stated.

#### **Measure 1A - Needs assessments including informing victims about the Code three times**

##### **Cost of Measure 1A**

###### **Non-Monetised Costs**

47. As a matter of best practice, needs assessments should already be conducted in the manner set out in the new Code. Formalising the structure of assessments may, however, lead to increased compliance which could take up policing resources. We cannot quantify the potential impacts of this measure as data on how and when needs assessments are conducted currently is not currently available. We expect this to be a no cost option.

## **Benefits of Measure 1A**

### Non-Monetised Benefits

48. More victims might receive services under the Code in ways that are adjusted and reflective of their needs as a result of introducing this measure. This may reduce attrition if victims feel more supported. If this is the case it could lead to more cases reaching trial, increasing the effectiveness of, and trust in, the criminal justice system

## **Measure 1B - standardised product for victims**

### **Costs of Measure 1B**

#### Monetised Costs

49. There are a range of options for delivering standardised products for victims of crime. Using the ONS latest data on crime in England and Wales shows that the total number of victim-based crime (exclude fraud, offences against society and computer misuse) was 4.4m in FY24/25. If in the low scenario we assume that 70% of victims of crime (3.1m) receive a business card at a cost of £0.01 per card, the cost is approximately £40k p.a. If in the high scenario, alongside the business cards we include an A5 leaflet and apply the same assumption of 70% uptake to the £0.12 cost per A5 leaflet, the cost is approximately £0.5m p.a. A best estimate of costs is the midpoint between the low and high cost scenarios at £0.3m p.a. These costs include production and distribution of both products. We expect the digital version of the business card to have no cost.

## **Benefits of Measure 1B**

### Non-Monetised Benefits

50. The standardised Victims' Code product can be linked to the 'Understand Your Rights' Victims' Code campaign which aims to increase awareness of the Victims' Code. The campaign launched in January 2025, and a second wave of the campaign is due to launch in early 2026, aimed at reaching vulnerable victims at the most impactful time.

## **Summary: Measure 1B**

51. The 10-year NPV for Measure 1B, including a 20% optimism bias level, is estimated to be between -£0.3m to -£4.2m with a central estimate of -£2.3m. The NPV is negative as there are no monetised benefits.

## **Measure 1C - Introducing a framework for engagement with victims under 18 years of age**

### **Costs of Measure 1C**

#### Monetised Costs

## Method

52. If implemented, directly engaging with child victims would increase the workload of the police-run Victim and Witness Care Units (Witness Care Officers (WCOs)) and HMPPS (VLOs and Administrators) for those eligible for the Victim Contact Scheme in cases where this cannot be delivered in parallel. In addition, there would be transitional costs associated with developing parallel age-appropriate materials and staff training.
53. Communication with child victims would take place in parallel with existing communication with parents/guardians (unless the child is aged between 16-17 years old and living independently) and therefore would not duplicate all work involved e.g., in preparing relevant communication. To account for the extra work involved in ensuring communications are child-friendly and the cases in which communication will not happen in parallel, data from Surrey Police (who already engage with child victims) has been used to ascertain the extra workload this measure would create.
54. Due to this limited evidence base a best estimate of 35% extra workload for each case affected by the measure was applied and a higher optimism bias uplift of 40% was applied to the costs associated with this measure
55. Best estimates of take-up are assumed to be 100% for 16–17-year-olds, and 30% for 12–15-year-olds at the police stage, and 55% for both categories at the post-conviction stage. The measure would not apply to those child victims under 12 years of age and communication will continue to be provided to parents/guardians in these cases. The best estimates are midpoints and sensitivity analysis can be found in section F.

## Police

56. By using data from Surrey Police, who already engage with child victims, we estimated the extra workload this measure would create for WCOs.
57. By applying the assumptions in paragraphs 46-47 to the data on victim engagement by age group from Surrey Police, we obtained an estimated total increased workload of 1.33%. Multiplying this percentage by the current number of WCOs (600) gives an estimated requirement of an additional 8 FTE WCOs.
58. Applying the £39k p.a. salary of a WCO, the estimated annual costs to the Police are £0.4m.

## HMPPS

59. This measure would increase the workload of VLOs and Administrators providing services under the Victim Contact Scheme<sup>4</sup>. Where a victim eligible for the Victim Contact Scheme is under 18, the Scheme is offered to their parent or guardian (other than 16–17-year-olds living independently). By taking the average number of 12-15 and 16-17 year old victims per year, for the relevant offence groups (sexual offences and violence against the person) and applying the proportion of police recorded crime that result in immediate custodial sentences in 2023 (1.29%), as well as the uptake assumptions (paragraph 79), we estimate the total number of affected victims to be approx. 1,500. This figure does not cover estimated cohorts of child victims born as a

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<sup>4</sup> The Victim Contact Scheme offers eligible victims the opportunity to be contacted at key points of their offender's sentence, including being told information about upcoming release or discharge, and to enable them to exercise their statutory right to make representations about licence conditions or supervision requirements.

result of rape or by witnessing domestic abuse, but we expect these uncertain figures to be covered within the optimism bias uplift.

60. HMPPS analysis estimates these cases to take 4.92 hours of VLO time and 2.08 hours of Administrator time. By applying the extra workload assumptions (paragraph 47) we get the extra hours of work required as a result of this measure. Dividing the total hours of work created by this measure by the number of hours in a working year (1293) gives the FTE that will be required to deliver this measure.
61. Applying the £50,915 p.a. salary of a VLO, the estimated annual costs to HMPPS are £0.2m.

#### Non-Monetised Costs

62. It has not been possible to identify any further non-monetised costs for this measure.

#### **Benefits of Measure 1C**

##### Non-Monetised Benefits

63. Research shows that child victims report feeling disempowered by the criminal justice process through not being kept informed and being given very little agency to make decisions, where relevant. We know that many criminal justice agencies take the approach of engagement with children through the parent or guardian. This measure proposes a framework to guide criminal justice agencies to increase their direct engagement with child victims, providing children with a more active role to address their reported lack of involvement and encouraging them to remain involved in the criminal justice process.

#### **Summary: Measure 1C**

64. The 10-year NPV for measure 1B, including a 40% optimism bias level, is estimated to be **-£5.5m**. The NPV is negative as there are no monetised benefits (see sensitivity analysis in Section F).

#### Measure 1D – Increasing victims’ voices within parole proceedings

#### **Costs of Measure 1D**

##### Monetised Costs

65. Whilst we don’t yet have a defined model for this measure, there may be a variety of ways to facilitate any new process. For the purposes of this IA, we have considered an option where allowing victims to make further contributions to the parole proceedings may take the form of further written representations in addition to their current Victim Impact Statement. The cost of an additional process would fall primarily on Victim Liaison Officers who would need to explain the entitlement to victims, help them write their contribution and to discuss the outcome.
66. Initial operational estimations are that further written contributions from victims could involve c.5 hours of administrative staff time per case, with c.9k cases a year. Once applying the £32,034 p.a. salary, this additional administrative time is estimated in the region of £0.4m p.a. plus one-off costs for implementation, such as training.

67. Once we apply 20% optimism bias, the average annual costs rise to approximately £0.5m per year.

#### Non-Monetised Costs

68. We do not have a defined proposal of how to expand victim entitlements and therefore the potential for non-monetised costs could be significant depending on what, if any, changes are made to the current model. For example, any changes will likely have impacts upon the Parole Board and other parts of HMPPS, but it is not possible to define them at present.

69. Victims may want to have their views on an offender's release heard, despite the fact that this can have no bearing on the decision being made by the Parole Board. However, we are mindful that any expansion of victims' entitlements could potentially negatively impact victims if they are given false expectations about the purpose of their contribution and its potential to influence the outcome of a parole review. That could also result in complaints from victims that would require staff time to address and may result in a loss in confidence and trust in the system from victims.

#### **Benefits of Measure 1D**

##### Non-Monetised Benefits

70. This measure could improve victims' confidence in the parole system when victims' entitlements are proportionate to the purpose of their contribution.

#### **Summary: Measure 1D**

71. The 10-year NPV for Measure 1C, including a 20% optimism bias level, is estimated to be -£4.1m. The NPV is negative as there are no monetised benefits.

#### **Measure 1E - Updating who is defined as a victim under the Code**

##### **Costs of Measure 1E**

##### Non-Monetised Costs

72. As explained above, the inclusion of new groups of victims that fall within the definition of a victim under the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 is primarily about ensuring that the Code is clear that they are all able to access victim support services. Broadly the same Code entitlements apply as they did before to direct victims of crime, families bereaved by crime, and witnesses harmed by crime.

73. The new definition may result in more victims who have been explicitly added to the definition of a victim under the Code (such as persons born of rape) seeking support from victim support services, but it has not been possible to quantify, and therefore, cost the impact of any increased demand for those support services.

74. Further to the above, this measure could lead to increased demand from victims who have been explicitly added to the definition of a victim under the Code (persons born of rape and child domestic abuse victims) to receive other information and participation rights under the Code relating to criminal justice proceedings, which could incur costs for service providers required to deliver services to victims. It has not been possible to quantify or cost any impact of these new groups of victims seeking Code rights.

75. All criminal justice agencies required to provide services to victims of crime under the Code may need to update their guidance so that it reflects the definition in the new Code, which may carry associated costs, but it is expected that this cost will be minimal.

### **Benefits of Measure 1E**

#### Non-Monetised Benefits

76. This measure would ensure that agencies have a clear understanding of who is a victim under the Code and which services they should receive.
77. Broadening the definition of a victim would allow some individuals who were not previously considered victims under the Code but had suffered harm, to receive Code rights and to access victim support services.

### **Measure 1F - New restorative justice information entitlement.**

#### **Costs of Measure 1F**

#### Non-Monetised Costs

78. The new entitlement for victims to be told about restorative justice services after there has been a verdict in the case would take place at the same time that the Victim and Witness Care Units provide victims with information about the outcome of the trial. This should minimise any impact on workload that may occur as an impact of requiring them to inform victims about restorative justice services at this later stage of the criminal justice process. This is not expected to involve any additional costs to Victim and Witness Care Units.
79. Victims being more informed about restorative justice services may lead to increased uptake, which would have cost implications for providers of restorative justice services. It has not been possible to quantify or cost any increased uptake as a result of this new entitlement, particularly since it requires both victim and offender to engage.

### **Benefits of Measure 1F**

#### Non-Monetised Benefits

80. Victims would be reminded of the option of accessing restorative justice services once there has been a verdict in the case. We know that participating in restorative justice can improve victim satisfaction and reduce reoffending when delivered in the right circumstances. This not only benefits victims and offenders but also their community.

### **Measure 1G – Additional information and technical changes**

#### **Cost of Measure 1G**

#### Non-Monetised Costs

81. This measure could lead to an increased demand from victims for compliance from agencies with the measures detailed in the Code which could incur costs. As service providers should already be complying with the Code, they would be expected to meet this additional demand through existing resources.

## Benefits of Measure 1G

### Non-Monetised Benefits

82. There will be benefits to victims by improving their access and understanding of the Code. An increased understanding of measures within the Code may improve victims trust and confidence in the criminal justice system.

## Benefits of Measure 1G

### Non-Monetised Benefits

83. Victims' willingness to engage with the criminal justice system is contingent upon their confidence, knowledge and satisfaction of the criminal justice system. Helping victims understand what they should receive under the Victims' Code can increase their confidence in and satisfaction with the criminal justice process, thereby potentially increasing victim engagement.

## Summary: Measure 1

84. The net present value of each of the measures in Option 1 are set out in Table 3 below. As is shown, the total NPV is -£9.6m over the appraisal period. This figure is negative as there are no monetised benefits.

*Table 3: Summary of the monetised costs of Option 1 (Best Estimates)*

Policy Measure	10-year NPV (£m)
<b>Measure 1A:</b> Needs assessments including informing victims about the Code three times	NM
<b>Measure 1B:</b> Standardised product for victims	-£2.3m
<b>Measure 1C:</b> Introducing a framework for engagement with victims under 18 years of age	-£5.5m
<b>Measure 1D:</b> Increasing victims' voices in parole proceedings	-£4.1m
<b>Measure 1E:</b> Updating who is defined as a victim under the Code	NM
<b>Measure 1F:</b> New restorative justice information entitlement	NM
<b>Measure 1G:</b> Additional information and technical changes	NM
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-£11.9m</b>

## F. Risks and assumptions and Sensitivity Analysis

85. This IA assumes that the level of provision, timing and scope of services under the proposed updated Code will be equivalent to those provided under the current Victims' Code unless otherwise stated.
86. As victims become more aware of their rights, there may be an increase in expectation on service providers to ensure they are provided for, which is what the new Code sets out to achieve.
87. The key assumptions behind the cost benefit analysis presented in section E are described in the table 4 below. Where applicable, sensitivity analysis is also presented.

<i>Table 4: Risks and Assumptions of Option 1 Assumptions</i>	<b>Risk / Uncertainties</b>
<b>Measure 1A: Needs assessments</b>	
This measure will have no additional costs.	Formalizing a structure for needs assessments may result in extra resources required by criminal justice agencies like the police with regards to compliance with conducting assessments properly. The level of this risk cannot be assessed accurately due to limited data on agency compliance with existing needs assessment guidance.
<b>Measure 1B: Standardised product for victims</b>	
There is a monetary cost of providing standardised products for victims. Applying an uptake rate of 70%, we estimate this cost will be approximately £0.3m p.a.	<p>The product cost is indicative and depends on victim-based crime figures and uptake assumption.</p> <p>We expect there could be some victims where providing a physical product is not suitable, such as, DA victims as this could endanger them further.</p> <p>A digital product may not be suitable for particular demographics of victims, such as, those without internet or smartphone access.</p> <p>Sensitivity analysis of the uptake rate has been presented in Section F to demonstrate low and high scenario of costs.</p>
<b>Measure 1C: Introducing a framework for engagement with victims under 18 years of age</b>	
Take-up will be 100% for the 16-17 age group and a low of 20% and a high of 40% for 12-15-year-olds. The best estimate, used in the analysis (paragraph 55), is 30%, the average of the two.	The proposal suggests that this measure should always be applied to 16-17-year-olds, and so take-up of 100% must be assumed. If the ranges were to differ from the assumptions, this would affect costs.
Take-up for post-conviction will be 40% in the low scenario and 70% in the high scenario.	This assumption is based off current take-up rates for the Victim Contact Scheme and Victim Notification Scheme, provided by HMPPS, which this proposal looks to extend to certain victims under 18 years of age. In

	practice, as this measure is specifically for children, the take-up could differ, and this would alter the costs.
Proportion of police recorded crimes that result in sentences to immediate custody: 1.29%	This is taken from aggregate Police Recorded Crime 2023 data <sup>5</sup> . However, this proportion for under 18s is likely to be different from population averages. Since VCS offences are only applicable on cases with a custodial sentence of 12+ months, these cost estimates are likely to be slight overestimates.
4.92 hours of Victim Contact Scheme Victim Liaison Officer time and 2.08 hours of Administrator time per case is associated with the measure.  These assumptions are taken from the Victim Notification Scheme Extension Model, as the work required for engagement with child victims is similar.	By applying these VLO and Administrator time assumptions to the estimated number of victims affected, we derive the total extra FTE employees required. If the workload impacts were different, this would have a significant impact on the total costs.
The following assumptions around salaries were used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Witness Care Officer: £39,000</li><li>• Victim Liaison Officer: £50,915</li><li>• Administrator: £32,034</li></ul> In addition, it is assumed that there are 1628 hours in a working year for VLOs and Administrators	These assumptions include NI, Pension contributions and calculations around annual leave allowances. The costs associated with this measure are sensitive to changes in these assumptions.
<b>Measure 1D: Increasing victims' voices within parole proceedings</b>	
Additional costs will be generated by any expansion to victim entitlements and would fall mainly on Victim Liaison Officers.	Estimated costs are indicative only at this stage and will depend on what, if any, changes we decide to pursue following the consultation.

<sup>5</sup> Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables, 2023 ([Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-and-outcomes-open-data-tables))

<b>Measure 1E: Updating who is defined as a victim under the Code</b>	
This measure will not create additional costs.	This measure increases the number of people considered victims under the Code. This could lead to increased demand from those newly eligible victims for compliance from agencies with the measures detailed in the Code which could incur costs. It may also increase the number of victims accessing external victim support services, which could lead to these services incurring associated costs.
<b>Measure 1F: New restorative justice information entitlement</b>	
The added clarity on when victims should be provided with information about restorative justice will not result in significant changes to uptake of restorative justice services, particularly as these services require both victim and offender to engage.	This measure might increase uptake of this service, which could put a burden on provision of restorative justice services.
<b>Measure 1G: Additional information and technical changes</b>	
This measure will have no additional costs.	These changes aim to put in writing the way in which the Code should already be being implemented. However, if this measure leads to increased compliance, there could be increased costs to any relevant agencies listed in section D.

## Sensitivity Analysis

88. High and low scenarios for measure 1B and 1C were estimated to demonstrate the uncertainty in our results.

### Sensitivity Analysis: Measure 1B – Standardised products to victims

89. For this measure, we have adjusted the 70% uptake rate to demonstrate what the central scenario costs impacts could be if this varied. These are shown in Table 5.

*Table 5: Measure 1B sensitivity assumptions*

	50% Uptake (Low Scenario)	70% Uptake (Best Estimate)	90% Uptake (High Scenario)
<b>Average annual cost</b>	<b>£0.2m</b>	<b>£0.3m</b>	<b>£0.3m</b>
<b>NPV</b>	<b>-£1.6m</b>	<b>-£2.3m</b>	<b>-£2.9m</b>

Note: The above figures have been rounded.

### Sensitivity Analysis: Measure 1C – introducing a framework for engagement with victims under 18 years of age

90. For this measure, we adjusted key assumptions to demonstrate the uncertainty relating to the extra workload this measure might create, and the take-up it might have. These can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6: Measure 1C sensitivity assumptions

	Low Assumption (%)	Best Estimate (%)	High Assumption (%)
<b>Assumption</b>			
<i>Increase to workload on eligible cases</i>	20%	35%	50%
<i>Take-up rates for 12–15-year-olds (WCOs)</i>	20%	30%	40%
<i>Take-up rates (post-conviction)</i>	40%	55%	70%

91. These assumptions created cost ranges associated with the number of extra staff that might be required, which can be seen in Table 5.

	Low Costs	Best Estimate	High Costs
<i>Police</i>	£0.2m	£0.4m	£0.7m
<i>Post-Conviction (HMPPS)</i>	£0.1m	£0.2m	£0.3m

## G. Wider impacts

### Equalities

92. An Equality Statement has been completed and will be published alongside the consultation document and this Impact Assessment.

### Better Regulation

93. These proposals are exempt from the Small Business Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 and do not count towards the department's Business Impact Target.

### Environmental Impact Assessment

94. We expect there to be no environmental impacts associated with the options within this Impact Assessment.

### International Trade

95. There are no international trade implications from the options considered in this Impact Assessment.

### Economic Growth Impacts

96. The options considered in this IA are not expected to have an impact on the rate of economic growth.

## **H. Monitoring and Evaluation**

97. The Government will monitor measures following the implementation of the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024. The Act will be subject to post-legislative scrutiny five years after Royal Assent.
98. Under section 49 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims 2004, the Victims Commissioner must also keep the operation of the Victims' Code under review.
99. Once the relevant provisions are commenced, the Act will place a duty on criminal justice bodies to collect and share Code compliance information and to keep their compliance with the Code under review. Criminal justice bodies will share this information with Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), who will be required to keep the Code compliance of the criminal justice bodies under review in their local police area. Equivalent arrangements are in place for non-territorial police forces, who operate nationally and so do not fall within PCCs' local areas. The MoJ will set up a national oversight structure and publish appropriate transparency information. These measures will improve data collection and review of compliance with the Code, so we can better see how criminal justice bodies are performing and drive any necessary improvements.