



**Candidate briefing
for Northamptonshire
Police, Fire and Crime
Commissioner Elections
2024**



Our CEO...



As CEO for Voice for Victims and Witnesses it is with great pride that I am able to share with you our service report for your consideration. At Voice we believe everyone should be offered an excellent service with high standards of care, so victims/survivors and witnesses of crime are able to cope and recover.

Please read the below report which highlights the demand for our service within the county of Northamptonshire and some of the fabulous feedback from our victim/survivors who we have supported. Our staff really do help to change the lives of those who we support. They are committed to providing the very best advice, safeguarding and emotional support so victim/survivors can start to rebuild their confidence and lives.

We hope to make a very real positive difference to all of our clients at their time of need, and I hope the below gives you a small insight of that and the extremely valuable work Voice do!

Fiona Campbell

Chief Executive

“ Thank you so much for everything you have done for me over these nearly five months. I really wouldn't be where I am now if it wasn't for all your amazing support. It has been a pleasure to talk. I'll definitely drop you an email now and then and let you know how I'm doing. Thanks again, I can never thank you enough. ”



About Voice...

Voice for Victims and Witness is managed by the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to provide free, independent advice, guidance, and support to those who have been;

- a victim of crime,
- a witness to crime going through the court process,
- a victim of repeated Anti-Social behaviour or a victim,
- witness or family member affected by life changing fire incidents or road traffic collisions.

We know that crime can affect people in a variety of different ways. Our specially trained support workers will work with victims to understand the specific support they require. Our support is available to victims and witnesses aged over 6 years of age regardless of whether they have reported it to the police or not and irrespective of where and when the crime occurred.

Voice provides a single point of contact and has access to a wide network of local and national services to help guide them to appropriate support that best meets the individual needs for the residents of Northamptonshire.

Our staff and volunteers are trained to listen and help victims make sense of what they have been through. We can discuss their options and help them feel like they are getting their life under control again. Talking with us gives them the chance to get things off their chest and let go of distressing experiences. While some people can do this with friends and family, it doesn't work that way for everyone, especially if those around them have been affected by crime too. We can provide a safe, neutral place for victims to voice their fears, worries and emotions. Our emotional support is independent, free, and non-judgemental.

Being a victim of crime can lead to all kinds of practical problems. This can range from minor issues, such as damage to your property or having to fill in insurance forms, through to serious medical problems or the loss of your home. We can help with tasks such as filling out forms (for example, compensation claims), providing victims with home security measures such as window alarms, personal attack alarms, and range of crime prevention advice. We also give victims all the information they need to understand their options and rights alongside next steps, and we comply with the Victims Code of Practice.

Whether it be;

- ✓ a chat about how someone is feeling
- ✓ providing crime prevention advice
- ✓ guiding people through the criminal justice system
- ✓ supporting people living in abusive situations
- ✓ helping to navigate services
- ✓ providing dedicated, regular one to one emotional support sessions with our team of highly skilled staff and volunteers
- ✓ or referring to one of our specialist service providers for trauma therapy or counselling

Voice is here to help victims to cope, recover and thrive.



Voice services include the Adult service, Children and Young People's service, Road harm service and a Restorative Justice service and incorporate the counties Witness Care Unit (WCU)

In addition, we also contract specialist service provider, to provide counselling and trauma therapy to children and young victims and witnesses of crime, to anyone affected by road traffic collisions involving serious life changing injury or bereavement and to provide the counties Independent Sexual Violence Advisory (ISVA) service.

Voice for victims and witnesses is a joint data controller with Northamptonshire Police and receives an automated data transfer daily for all victims of Home office (HO) recorded crimes in the preceding 24 hours. All crime types are included in the data transfer, including Medium & Standard risk domestic abuse but with the exception of the crimes of Homicide and Child Sexual Exploitation. Referrals can also be received from professional agencies and victims and witnesses can also self-refer into service.

In October 2019, Voice incorporated the counties partnership funded MARAC administration service and Independent Domestic Violence Advisory (IDVA) Service, The Sunflower Centre. The MARAC administration and IDVA services are funded through contributions from the Integrated Care Group (ICG), North Northamptonshire Council, West Northamptonshire Council and the OPFCC.

“ Being there for me when others weren't. Getting updates for me and making sure this got back to me. You helped me more in one phone call than [agency] did over week. ”

All MARAC administration and IDVA service staff were TUPE'd to Voice having previously been managed through Northants Police. The IDVAs are now line managed by three Senior IDVAs and in 2020 the service was successful in achieving further funding for specialist roles via MoJ funding in response to the COVID 19 pandemic. Those roles include Crisis IDVAs who work from Northamptonshire Police Force Control Room on Fridays and Saturdays from 17:00–02:00, this will increase to Thursdays through to Sundays from 16:00-01:00 by end of March 2024, a Diversity and Inclusion IDVA, a Complex Needs IDVA and a DVDs IDVA.

Northamptonshire Sunflower Centre provides free, advice and support across:

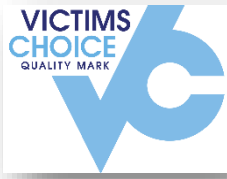
- Crisis intervention, risk assessment and individual safety planning to help keep the client and their family safe;
- Advice and support on civil and criminal court proceedings;
- Signposting to other services such as crime prevention, immigration advice, legal advice, group work and counsellors;
- Advocacy with other agencies on their behalf;
- The development of an individual support plan to help meet their safety and wellbeing needs; and
- An extensive domestic abuse training programme.

The Sunflower Centre employs qualified Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA's) who have specialist knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse, including the effects it has on individuals, their family, the local community, and society as a whole.

From 01/04/2023 Voice Services TUPE'd into the management of the OPFCC.

Voice for victims and witnesses is funded in part by the Ministry of Justice Victims Grant, partners and the OPFCC.





Victims Choice Award

In May this year Voice for victims and witnesses was awarded The Victims Choice Quality Mark by Supporting Justice CIC in recognition of the:

“...high standards of care and support offered” and the way in which staff made people feel “valued and listened to”.

The Victims Choice Quality Mark is an independent assessment of the quality of the service provided to victims and witnesses. It is designed to provide confidence to those who may need to access the service in the future and to help commissioners determine if their resources are being targeted and spent effectively.

David Kenyon the lead assessor said:

“Voice Northants provides an excellent service and a high standard of victim care. There is a strong and supportive culture among management and staff and clients are at the heart of all the organisation delivers.

“We found a high level of collaboration and a willingness to deliver a comprehensive and inclusive support service to those who needed it. Partner organisations work well with Voice and hold the organisation in high regard.

“Our assessment shows a service dedicated to continuous improvement and a determination to support victims of crime to cope and recover.”

“ Thank you for helping me get a handle on my anxiety, I wasn't sure about therapy as I haven't got along well with CBT before, but it must have worked as I haven't had a panic attack since starting. ”



Performance...

This report is based on data captured from Voice case management systems between 01.03.23 -31.12.23

We received ...



32,394 referrals into our Voice and Sunflower Centre services combined



25,900



3,607



136



5



2,746

Of those referrals...

5,838 Adult referrals related to domestic offences assessed as standard and medium risk

477 Adult referrals related to sexual offences

736 across Adult and Children and Young People's referrals related to Hate Crime

The Crisis IDVAs (Independent Domestic Violence Advisors) working in the Force Control Room on Friday and Saturday nights referred **691** victim/survivors into the Sunflower Centre. By end of March 2024 this will increase to include Thursday and Sunday nights.

*Crisis IDVAs' referrals are included in the Sunflower Centre referral total.

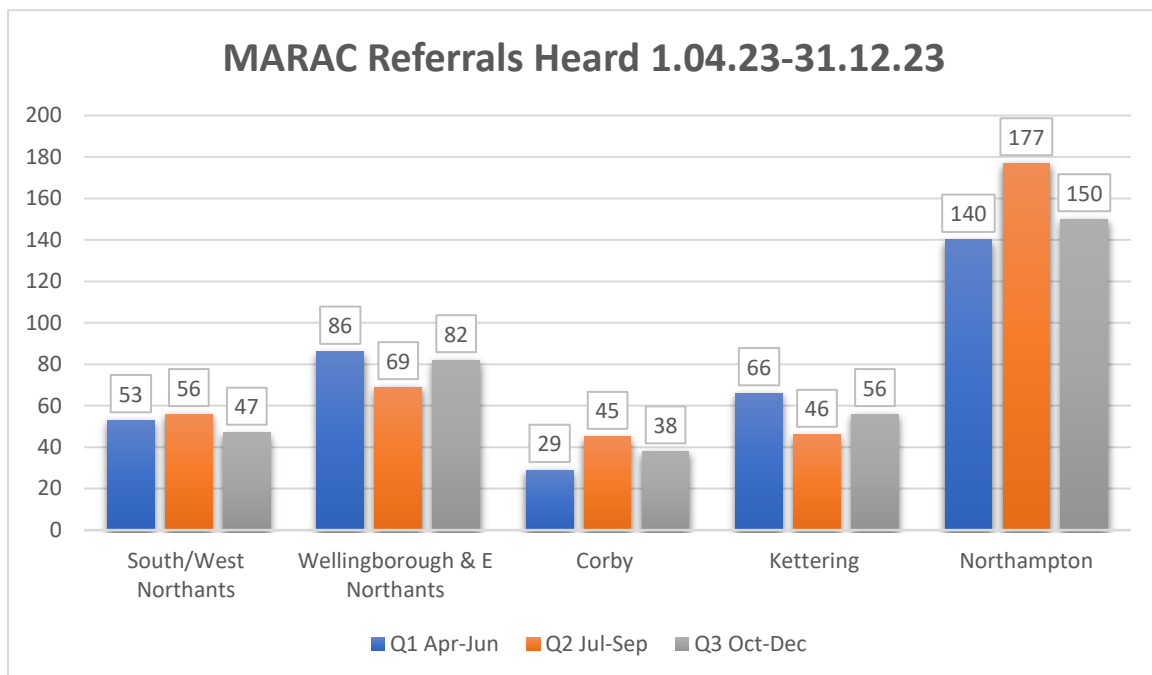
The volume of referrals is **1.5%** lower than for the same reporting period 1st April – 31st December 2022 where there were **32,876** referrals.



MARAC - Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences



Voice manages the counties Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) for high-risk domestic abuse cases. These meet across the county and are partnership meetings that safeguard victims of domestic abuse, they seek to manage perpetrators' behaviour, safeguard professionals, and make links with all other safeguarding processes.



Referral Volumes 1/04/23 to 31/12/23

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| MARAC Referrals Received | 1,188 |
| MARAC Referrals Heard in conferences | 1,140 |

Witness Care Unit (WCU)

Voice manages the counties Witness Care Team and are the single point of contact for victims and witnesses of crimes that are going through the criminal court process with advice, information, and practical support. Victims and witnesses are updated and informed of progress in their case and updated at key stages, so they are fully aware of progress and outcomes.



Witness Care attendance rates are measured against the regional and national average, we aim to ensure victim and witness attendance is within **5%** of those regional and national percentages. Under challenging circumstances with hearings being delayed and waiting to be heard the WCU team continue to provide an excellent service.

| Q3 1 st Oct – 31 st Dec 2023 | Witness Attendance rate |
|--|-------------------------|
| Northants | Q3 81.67% |
| Regional | Q3 84.37% |
| National | Q3 84.67% |

On average Northamptonshire Witness Care Team manage **1,551** cases per month.

Voice supported... **3,783** clients

This means already being supported, accepted one to one emotional support, or received immediate and/or practical support, onward referral support, advice, guidance, or signposting information.



1,579
Sunflower
Centre



16
Road harm
Service



2,106
Adult Service



82
Children and
Young
People



Of those people accepting some form of support...

648 were domestic abuse victims assessed as standard and medium risk

43 were victims of adult sexual offences

55 were victims of hate crime across Adult and Children and Young People's

The Crisis IDVAs (Independent Domestic Violence Advisors) working in the Force Control Room on Friday and Saturday nights referred **157** victim/survivors into the Sunflower Centre. By end of March 2024 this will increase to include Thursday and Sunday nights.

“ Thank you for teaching me how to find my calm again. It will take some time before I feel comfortable to drive again, but I will one day. ”

Emergency packs



For high-risk victims/survivors experiencing abuse we offer emergency packs and tailor them to individual needs comprising of a combination of mobile phones, food vouchers and sets of toiletries. From the Victim's Fund we are able to supply white goods, travel and household essentials and work with a network of charities and organisations to ensure that victim/survivors fleeing domestic abuse have the essential items they need.

How quickly do we contact people?

We have a service level agreement with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to contact victims within certain time limits.

We are contracted to:

- ✓ Contact **95%** of High-risk victims referred to the Sunflower Centre within 24 working hours of receiving the referral, year to date we did this in 95.68% of cases.



95.68%

- ✓ For victims referred to Voice adult services who are classed as 'Enhanced' under the ministry of justice definition – we did this in **96.21%** of cases, and for children and young people – we are contracted to make initial contact attempts within 3 working days of receipt of the referral and did this in **98.18%** of cases.
- ✓ For all other victims referred to our services, we are contracted to attempt first contact within 4 working days of receipt of referral and did so in **98.21%** of instances.



Changing lives...



Case Study:

Ongoing case: Voice for victims and witnesses were approached by East Midlands Special Operations Unit - Major Crime unit asking if we could support a victim of a non-recent crime. This matter was being investigated as part of a larger investigation. The victim was vulnerable due to a number of factors and the investigator was concerned for individual's safety and welfare. Voice were asked if they could engage with the victim to support them. One of our Specialist Support Worker's engaged with the victim and over time, they started to talk more openly and freely. The victim is now in a position where they have the trust and confidence to speak with officers about the incidents being investigated. This is an excellent example of partnership working and supporting victims to help them deal with events in their past that otherwise would have continued to adversely affect them.

“ Thank you for talking to me and showing me not to be scared so I can sleep better, I'm worried about Mum still but will just keep eyes out, thanks. ”



Case study:

A repeat high-risk victim had fled domestic abuse with her three children. Following a further significant incident, the victim was offered temporary accommodation in a hotel and was due to be moved into a property temporarily, but this was entirely unfurnished.

The victim explained that she had no money, no food and very little support. She stated that agencies had told her that they were unable to help her with accessing the essentials for her and her children.

Due to the concerns for the family around moving into an unfurnished property, the Senior IDVA raised concerns with regards to the accommodation in a multi-agency meeting, resulting in the hotel accommodation being extended.

The Senior IDVA contacted a number of organisations and charities, completing extensive referrals, whilst always keeping the victim updated and reassured throughout.

They liaised with Northamptonshire Police who were able to donate multiple items to support the client and her children, including a double buggy.

One of the referrals to a charity meant that the victim and her children were provided with two beds, a fridge, an air fryer, sofa, kitchen utensils and duvet/pillows.

Another service provided the client with a Moses basket and items for her young children.

Another charity were able to order a cooker for the victim. Finally, the Sunflower Victim Fund was able to purchase a washing machine, so that could wash their clothes for the first time in months.

The Senior IDVA identified that the victim had no baby milk formula, and after extensive enquiries was able to identify a service who has accepted a referral and has since provided formula, as well as referring her for further support.

Previously the victim had felt hopeless, having lost all that she had to flee the abuse the family experienced. They have since moved into a property temporarily and the victim is so grateful for all of the support which has been offered, saying *"I really would have been lost without you honestly I know you probably hear this all the time, but I really am grateful for all you've done."*



Voice contact details

Please visit our website at www.voicenorthants.org for further information and to access either our free to download support app, our online information or to refer into our service.

Alternatively, please call on **0300 303 1965** or email us at: info@voicenorthants.org

“ None of what I’m about to tell you would have been possible without your support in building me back up. I’m forever grateful to you... Thank you again for all of your help and support. I genuinely wouldn’t be where I am right now if it wasn’t for your help! ”

“ I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the great advice and support you have given me. My biggest concerns were feeling like an idiot telling my story and being judged but you reassured me otherwise and I cannot tell you how much I appreciate that. You gave me very realistic advice and whilst difficult times are still ahead, I am much happier and stronger than I have been in a very long time. ”

