

# Incorporating feedback from children and young people who have been victimised

Bespoke training on the voice of the child, Victims' Code of Practice videos, forensic specialist child interviews and an intranet site around learning and tools.

First published

1 November 2023

## Key details

<b>Does it work?</b>	Untested – new or innovative
<b>Focus</b>	Organisational
<b>Topic</b>	Criminal justice Crime prevention Diversity and inclusion Ethics and values Intelligence and investigation Leadership, development and learning Operational policing Violence against women and girls
<b>Organisation</b>	<a href="#">Bedfordshire Police</a>
<b>Contact</b>	Marie Gresswell
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:marie.gresswell@beds.police.uk">marie.gresswell@beds.police.uk</a>
<b>Region</b>	Eastern
<b>Partners</b>	Local authority

## Key details

<b>Stage of practice</b>	The practice is at a pilot stage.
<b>Start date</b>	April 2022
<b>Scale of initiative</b>	Local
<b>Target group</b>	Adults Children and young people Victims Workforce

## Aim

- To improve competency around supporting children and young people who are victims by providing training.
- To identify if there are any disparities in our service and support.
- To give a voice to victims by asking them for feedback.

## Intended outcome

- Increased early identification of children who are in need by increasing the skills of officers.
- Use feedback from children and young people who are victims of crime to change practice and support them to move forward.

## Description

### Background

Different victim satisfaction surveys had not previously been carried out with victims of child abuse, whether physical or sexual. This included adult victims of non-recent offences.

This initiative aimed to give a voice to these victims by asking them for feedback.

Data shows that black children might report a crime but not support the investigation. Bedfordshire Police anticipated that focused feedback may help them to understand why these children disengage from the process.

## Video

Police need to speak to children and be curious when attending any incident where children and young people reside.

To enhance this message, Bedfordshire Police produced a bespoke 'Voice of the child' video. It shows young children in a school, who tell officers they need to be reassured and checked on. The video demonstrates how officers should engage with them – for example, coming down to the child's level by bending and crouching down. It also identifies opportunities for officers to speak with children and young people when they go to incidents, although the focus of the incident might not directly involve the child. This reinforces the need for officers to be curious and to speak up or make a referral if they identify anything that does not feel right.

## Training event

Bedfordshire Police developed a bespoke training event around voice of the child. It's a half-day event run in person by an external facilitator and includes real examples of strong case development. The training is being delivered to force control room staff, response staff and detectives. Later phases are expected to include all frontline officers.

It's cost Bedfordshire Police £3,000 for the training for all force control room staff, frontline officers and detectives.

## Feedback postcards

Bedfordshire Police uses feedback postcards. These have been designed for children and young people to complete and return to the force with any feedback they wish to give. The postcards are handed to every child victim and every child in custody.

Children, young people and adult victims of non-recent abuse could also complete the reverse of the postcard with drawings or words, or use a specially created email address to submit comments. The force has had a 20% response rate from the postcards.

The postcards were given at three distinct points. These were:

1. at the start of the investigation before taking the achieving best evidence (ABE) video statement
2. post-charge
3. post-trial

Alternatively, an email or QR code can be used.

This is an inexpensive initiative, with 400 brightly coloured postcards costing less than £100.

## Overall impact

Good practice case studies were cascaded to senior officers in relevant teams and shared with the force's victim engagement officers. This helped to improve the capture of the child's voice and prevent missed opportunities. The practice examples were added to Bedfordshire Police's victims' site on their internal system. Efforts have been made to use the feedback from children and young people to change the way Bedfordshire Police works with young people.

Feedback from children and young people:

- showed that the force did not always consider the child's voice
- informed the force that children wanted to be told or informed first, before their parent or guardian

Feedback was also received from several non-recent cases where the victim was older.

Respondents told us that they appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback and this helped them with closure.

## Learning

It was recognised that police officers did not speak to children directly. Bedfordshire Police felt that this wasn't appropriate as they had no powers and would have required consent to speak to the children at the scene of an incident from the parent or caregiver.

This message was shared with senior officers on the relevant teams and posted on the internal what works site in force. This reinforced the importance of the child's voice being heard and captured using this method.

## Copyright

The copyright in this shared practice example is not owned or managed by the College of Policing and is therefore not available for re-use under the terms of the Non-Commercial College Licence. You will need to seek permission from the copyright owner to reproduce their works.

## Legal Disclaimer

Disclaimer: The views, information or opinions expressed in this shared practice example are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or views of the College of Policing or the organisations involved.