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Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales

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The Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer

08 February 2025

Dear Chancellor,

SPENDING REVIEW 2025

Victim support services are the backbone of our justice system. These crucial services ensure victims have the support they need to recover from crime and stay engaged in the pursuit of justice. This is especially critical as the wider criminal justice system faces record Crown Court backlogs, leaving victims waiting months – sometimes years - for their cases to be heard. Without this support, many victims might not last the distance, and many offenders may may never face justice. These services are the fabric of our justice system – they cannot be taken for granted.

But these services are facing mounting challenges. Inflation, frozen budgets, increased overheads and rising demand and caseloads mean service providers have repeatedly over the years been asked to do more with less. In its recent funding settlement, the government imposed further real terms funding cuts, despite the clear challenges this would present. Meanwhile, demand continues to rise and-exceed supply.

Over the years, service providers have risen to the challenge and made themselves leaner and more efficient. But services can only tighten their belts so much. Now, the situation has reached a crunch point. Since my reappointment as Victims' Commissioner in 2023, victim support organisations have been unwavering in their message: they are facing an existential funding crisis and are struggling to deliver essential services to those affected by crime.

While I understand the present pressures on the public purse, context is key: spending on victims presently accounts for less than 1% of the Ministry of Justices' total annual expenditure. Meanwhile, crime direct impacts millions of people every year. Anyone can become a victim, and under the Victims' Code, they should have access to support. Yet, without proper funding, the government risks undermining this fundamental pillar of our justice system.

I am therefore calling for these critical services to not only be protected from further cuts but to receive an urgent increase in funding. Funding these services is not just an investment in victims – it must be viewed as a cornerstone of the government's 'Safer Streets' mission. This uplift is essential to enable these services to absorb the additional demands being placed on them.

In the face of ever-increasing court delays, overstretched police and prosecutors, and overcrowded prisons, victim support services are more critical than ever. They don't just keep victims engaged in the justice system and prevent prosecutions from collapsing—they also provide frontline services with the breathing space they desperately need to perform their roles. Without this support, prosecutions will falter, criminals will go unpunished, and we risk jeopardising a sense of security and justice in our communities.

As my submission to your Spending Review makes clear, the steady erosion of funding of these services has ripple effects that stretch far beyond the individual victim. Now is the time for sustained investment. These services are not a luxury – they are a necessity, ensuring victims can cope, recover, and rebuild their lives after crime.

Ultimately, a strong justice system and robust economic growth go hand in hand. If you undermine one, you jeopardise the other. Only by investing in these crucial services can we ensure a viable and effective justice system - one that is fit for today's society and economy.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal flourish.

Baroness Newlove LLD (hc) DCL
Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales

Spending Review 2025

Representation from the Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales

Summary

My submission sets out the case for funding victim support services. It will explain the benefits these organisations bring both to the individual victims but also to society more widely. There is a clear economic benefit to funding these essential services, one that aligns with the Treasury's and the government's broader priorities. The success of the government's 'Safer Streets'¹ mission depends on the long-term engagement of victims with the justice system, which in turn requires a sustainable and viable infrastructure for victim support services.

My submission draws upon evidence submitted by individual charities and organisations in response to a call for evidence from my office. I initiated this exercise to better understand the pressures these organisations are under and the emerging funding gap they are facing. Despite clear pressures on their time and resources, and the call for evidence occurring over the busy Christmas period, responses were received from more than 23 organisations of all sizes—ranging from the largest, such as Victim Support, to small local charities with annual budgets of less than £50,000. All 23 organisations reported they were struggling to cope financially, with budgets being squeezed beyond sustainability, and facing increasing difficulty in meeting the growing demand for their services.

Seventeen of these organisations (74%) have reported that, due to the current funding situation, they will have to, or have already begun, making plans for job cuts—either through planned redundancies or by implementing recruitment freezes and not replacing staff when they leave. For some, it is already too late, and some centres have already closed.

These closures and redundancies will have a direct impact on other public services. Victims of crime often suffer from complex mental health issues, and without the necessary support to cope and recover, they are at risk of experiencing additional mental and physical health problems. These issues can manifest in various ways, including increased risks to their own welfare and that of others, reduced engagement in the workforce, and a heightened risk of criminality. However, with appropriate support and intervention, these services can keep victims engaged with the justice system, safeguarded from further harm, reduce the burden on the NHS, and lower the likelihood that victims will become economically inactive. Ultimately, they all contribute to building a safer, more resilient society and workforce.

These services fill a crucial gap where the state is often unable to provide adequate support, and they do so in a highly cost-effective manner. For example, a study by Women's Aid in collaboration with ResPublica showed that for every £1 invested in specialist domestic abuse support in England, there is a return of £9.14 in benefits. This highlights the tremendous value these services offer at a relatively low cost².

I believe investing in victim services is not only cost-effective—it is essential for economic growth. It directly reduces the long-term costs of crime, including healthcare expenses, lost productivity, and the immense strain on the criminal justice system. The more effective the support, the fewer resources are needed to manage long-term trauma or prevent repeat offenses, ultimately saving taxpayers money and strengthening society as a whole.

¹ [Safer Streets - GOV.UK](#)

² [Investing to save: The economic case for funding specialist domestic abuse support](#) Women's Aid (2023)

I have set out below how increasing the funding to victims support services can help the governments priorities in helping to halve violence against women and girls (VAWG) and make our streets safer while also reducing the pressures on the NHS.

The current landscape

Anyone can be a victim of crime, and there has never been a more pressing need for adequately funded support services for victims. The latest Crime Survey for England and Wales (year ending September 2024) estimates that 9.5 million offences were experienced by individuals aged 16 and over³. Being a victim of crime is often a traumatising experience, disproportionately affecting some of society's most vulnerable people.

For many victims, this is the first time they have interacted with the criminal justice system (CJS), and they will need support and advice to navigate it. The last twenty years has seen a rise in the role of victim advocacy in England and Wales, with staff trained to support and advocate for victims, particularly in sexual assault and domestic abuse cases. Research suggests that victim advocates are highly valued by those going through the criminal justice system. According to a recent study, victims who received specialist advocacy-based support were 49% less likely to withdraw from the criminal justice process than those who received no support⁴. Victims also emphasise that therapeutic support is essential to help them cope and recover from their ordeal, with many citing it as the number one resource they need.⁵

Yet services have long been grappling with recruitment and retention issues, leaving them in a precarious financial position that makes it difficult to plan for the future. For example, the previous funding settlement, awarded in 2020, was made before the onset of the cost-of-living crisis (2021 onwards). Since 2020, the UK has experienced significant inflation, with consumer prices increasing by 20.8% over the period May 2021 to May 2024, for example⁶. However, the funding awards lacked any flexibility for organisations to implement salary uplifts to compensate and retain staff or to cover the increased running costs.

Since then, the financial situation has become markedly more challenging for those organisations:

- In November 2024, the Budget included an increase in employer's rates of National Insurance Contributions (NICs), adding an unfunded burden onto these charitable organisations. This amounts to £865.80 for every employee earning £30,000, placing a significant financial strain on already struggling services⁷.
- The funding settlement for 2025-26 (announced in late 2024) was awarded at the same rates as 2024-25. In real terms, this constitutes a funding cut, as the allocation does not account for the rising direct costs and inflation, which has risen by over 20% cumulatively since 2020.
- Compounding this, the Ministry of Justice implemented a 4.2% cut to the core funding for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). Since PCCs commission and fund victim services from their budgets, this reduction will force them to cut their spending, leading to cuts in the vital services available to victims. This will further

³ [Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#) (2024)

⁴ Walker, Hester, McPhee, Patsios, Williams, Bates and Rumney (2021). Rape inequality and the criminal justice response in England: The importance of age and gender. See: [PDF](#)

⁵ ['A Patchwork of Provision' - Domestic Abuse Commissioner](#) (2021)

⁶ House of Commons, parliamentary briefing 'The Rising Cost of Living in the UK' (2024) See -[CBP-9428.pdf](#)

⁷ [Does the 2025 National Insurance Rise Really Affect Employers? - Talk Staff \(2025\)](#)

stretch the already limited resources and undermine the support these organisations can offer.

In some cases, this cumulative effect of rising costs and cuts in funding will force these services to close, as they will no longer be able to operate. I understand that this is already happening. These closures will have far-reaching consequences, extending well beyond the criminal justice system. They will further strain an already overburdened health service, where mental health provision is widely recognised as inadequate and facing years-long waiting lists⁸. Without access to the necessary support, some victims may become unfit to work, placing additional pressures on the economy and increasing the burden on social security budgets.

A strong and effective justice system is vital for long-term economic growth. Cuts to victim services undermine this foundation, creating a ripple effect: increased strain on the NHS, a reduced workforce as victims struggle to return to work due to the lasting impacts of crime, and heightened pressure on social security budgets as a result. Investing in victim services now will help mitigate these pressures, deliver long-term savings, and support sustainable economic growth.

The vital role of support services

The impact of crime on victims differs. It depends on the crime, and on the person who has experienced that crime. For some, the impact will not be discernible, and they will not require any support. However, for many, the experience of being a victim of crime can leave them struggling to cope. For example, the average time taken off work following a rape offence is 138 hours followed by an average of 184 hours of reduced productivity after returning to work. The average cost of this lost productivity per rape victim is £5,900⁹. Access to appropriate support is crucial, not only to help victims cope but to ensure they can recover and rebuild their lives. Research from Women's Aid shows that every pound invested in domestic abuse support services, for example, brings in at least £9 in savings to the public purse. This investment yields returns far greater than many recent infrastructure projects¹⁰.

Providing psychological and emotional support

For victims who need assistance, victim support services provide a vital lifeline. These services offer a wide range of support, including one-on-one counselling, guidance throughout the criminal justice process, information provision, and group support sessions. Well-resourced services play a crucial role in helping victims cope, recover, and break the cycle of trauma and abuse. This support is essential not only for the emotional and mental wellbeing of victims but also for their physical health and overall recovery.

Victim services, including counselling and mental health support, play a crucial role in helping victims regain a sense of normalcy and hope for the future. Research by *Victim Support* found that 81% of victims of crime experience were emotionally affected by the crime, with one in five developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)¹¹.

When victims are unable to access the help needed to address their trauma, they may be left facing complex issues that are difficult to resolve on their own. Unresolved trauma can result in long-term and complex mental health issues such as anxiety disorders, PTSD and

⁸ [Failing mental healthcare system](#) – British Medical Association (2024)

⁹ [The economic and social costs of domestic abuse - GOV.UK](#) (2018)

¹⁰ Ibid. 2

¹¹ [Understanding victims of crime](#) Victim Support (2017)

depression¹². Often these issues can make everyday life feel overwhelming and people can struggle to cope with day-to-day tasks. This trauma can also have implications for people's physical health as ongoing stress can result in heart problems and a weakening of the immune system. In an attempt to cope with traumatic events, it is not uncommon for some people to turn to illicit substances to help them handle their situation. For some victims this can develop into a substance misuse problem¹³. Without the necessary support, victims can be left unable to work or unfit for work, contributing to economic inactivity, added strain on an already overburdened health service, and greater reliance on social security. Failing to provide support not only harms the victims themselves but also places additional pressures on society and the economy.

Early intervention by appropriately resourced support services can mitigate these outcomes and will reduce the economic burden on these other parts of society, as well as being the best response for the victims. A 2013 found that Rape Crisis counselling significantly improved survivors' well-being, doubling the number who felt in control of their lives. Symptoms such as flashbacks and panic attacks were alleviated in around a third of participants, with reductions in self-harm, alcohol use, depression, and suicidal thoughts. The proportion unable to work or study also decreased.¹⁴

The costs of inaction

The health costs of crime are significant. For instance, a violent crime with injury has an average health cost of £920, while the cost of a rape-related incident is even higher, averaging £1,110¹⁵.

Sexual abuse can result in high costs to both the individual who has experienced the abuse as well as to society in terms of the economic burden faced. Research by the UKRI Violence, Abuse and Mental Health Network found that in Essex the lifetime cost for a victim of child sexual abuse was £472,048.53 per victim, and for an adult victim of sexual abuse it was £ 248,431.50¹⁶. These figures highlight the immense cost sexual violence is placing on society through increased costs in long-term healthcare, mental health treatment and lack of economic productivity.

Yet recent unpublished research from the Women's Budget Group has shown that each individual type of intervention costs an average of £289 per victim¹⁷. This highlights the real cost savings benefits of investing in support services in order to achieve financial gains in the longer term.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ _Co-occurring experiences of traumatic events and substance use among young people' Kihlas I, et al , (2024) see- [LINK](#); and [Traumatic experiences and PTSD symptoms in substance use disorder: A comparison of recovered versus current users - Anna Belfrage, Anne Lill Mjølhus Njå, Siri Lunde, Janne Årstad, Elise Constance Fodstad, Torgeir Gilje Lid, Aleksander Hagen Erga \(2023\); Victimisation and its relationship to drug misuse, common mental disorder and well-being in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#) which found that victims of violent crime are more than 2 times more likely to misuse drugs.

¹⁴ Westmarland, N., & Alderson, S. (2013). The health, mental health and well-being benefits of Rape Crisis counselling. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 28(17), 3265-3282. - link [The health, mental health and well-being benefits of Rape Crisis counselling](#)

¹⁵ [The economic and social costs of crime](#) 2nd Edition 2018, UK Government

¹⁶ Lifetime cost of sexual violence in Essex A UKRI Violence, Abuse and Mental Health Network funded project Project report Principal investigator: Dr Estela Capelas Barbosa (2021) - [LINK](#)

¹⁷ [Women's Budget Group – The UK's leading feminist economics think tank](#)

The role of victim services in the criminal justice system

Victim support services bring significant benefits to the criminal justice system, playing a key role in ensuring that the system functions effectively and fairly. My research has shown that one of the most impactful contributions of these services is advocacy¹⁸, which helps victims engage with and remain engaged in the process¹⁹. This is particularly important for vulnerable victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence²⁰. Victim engagement is critical, as high withdrawal rates in cases like adult rape—58% of police investigations closed and 20% of prosecutions halted—are a serious challenge²¹.

With the court system facing unprecedented delays, the average time between case receipt and completion at the Crown Court having risen from 143 days in March 2020 to 253 days in September 2024²², it's even more essential that victims are supported to stay engaged with the CJS. Research has shown that victims who receive specialist advocacy-based support are 49% less likely to withdraw²³, highlighting how vital these services are in improving both victim outcomes and the overall effectiveness of the justice system.

Findings related to victim withdrawal were also replicated in my predecessor's 2020 survey of rape victims. This research found that those survivors who did not have the support of an ISVA or victim support service were twice as likely to choose not to pursue their case (20%) compared to those who did have this support (10%)²⁴.

My upcoming research²⁵ on the impact of court delays on victims and victim services will highlight the critical role support services play in helping victims remain engaged during these prolonged delays. This is essential for the functioning of the justice system. While these delays place an unbearable burden on victims, without the necessary support, many may walk away, leading to collapsed prosecutions and offenders avoiding justice.

The costs of victims feeling unable to continue supporting a prosecution due to excessive delays are significant. They extend far beyond the case being dropped. Substantial public resources are invested in the process, including police investigation time, the Crown Prosecution Service's prosecuting decisions and case preparation, and the courts' preliminary hearings, scheduling of trial dates and other administration. If the prosecution

¹⁸ [Going above and beyond: Mapping the provision and impact of Victim Advocacy in the Criminal Justice System - Victims Commissioner](#) 2024

¹⁹ My research is not the only research to demonstrate this. The End to End Rape Review - literature review also highlighted the role that specialist support, including Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC), Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs), advocacy and Rape Crisis Centres, have in mitigating victim withdrawals. Brooks and Burman (2017) found that support improved victim experience and assisted sustained victim engagement. A study conducted by Lilley Walker et al (2019), found victims receiving specialist support were 49 per cent less likely to withdraw from the process. - [Review into the Criminal Justice System response to adult rape and serious sexual offences across England and Wales](#)

²⁰ Ibid. 17

²¹ [Criminal justice system overview - CJS Dashboard](#) July –Sept 2024

²² [Criminal court statistics quarterly: July to September 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

²³ Walker, Hester, McPhee, Patsios, Williams, Bates and Rumney (2021). Rape inequality and the criminal justice response in England: The importance of age and gender. [See: PDF](#)

²⁴ [Rape survivors and the criminal justice system - Victims Commissioner](#) 2020

²⁵ Working Title: 'Justice delayed: The impact of the Crown Court backlog on victims, victim services and the criminal justice system' (March 2025)

has to be dropped, not only does this allow offenders to escape justice, but it also means the public does not see a return on that investment. Additionally, the failure to prosecute may contribute to further offending—particularly in high-harm cases like violence against women and girls—leading to significant societal costs. Dropping a case compounds these costs, as it risks reoffending, resulting in a cycle that drains public resources and exposes society to irrecoverable costs.

Poor experiences with the justice system can discourage victims from engaging with it in the future, which may result in further missed opportunities to prevent future offending. More concerning, victims are also influenced by others' negative experiences, meaning that simply hearing about one person's bad experience can deter others from seeking justice²⁶. However, when victims have access to support services to help them cope with their trauma and navigate the justice system, they are more likely to engage and report crimes. This not only increases the likelihood of offenders being brought to justice but also contributes to improving public safety and reducing future victimisation.

Fixing the delays in the court system will not be easy and will take time, but in the meantime, sustainably funded support services are crucial to keeping victims engaged in the process, which represents a potential saving to public funds overall. A functioning justice system, supported by viable and well-funded services, is essential not only for providing closure for victims but also for deterring future offending, keeping communities safe, and increasing public confidence in our services.

A shrinking sector – the cost of underfunding victim services

Impact on Jobs

To gain a clearer picture of the challenges facing the victim support sector, my team reached out to a range of organisations to understand the impacts of the National Insurance rise and funding cuts. Twenty-three organisations responded, ranging from the largest, such as Victim Support, to small local charities with annual budgets of under £50,000. All organisations reported struggling to stay afloat, with many highlighting unsustainable budgets and a growing inability to meet the increasing demand for services. These pressures have been exacerbated by the backlog of cases in the courts, which has led to unsustainable caseloads.

“There is a triple squeeze - funding harder to obtain due to increased demand, costs are going up (pay rise, NI, cost of living, utilities etc), and demand for services remains high.”
- Rape Crisis England and Wales Centre Manager

Seventeen of these organisations (74%) have indicated that they are, or soon will be, forced to implement cost-saving measures, including job cuts, redundancies, and recruitment freezes, meaning vital positions will not be replaced when staff leave.

Many victim support organisations have already been forced to make redundancies due to inadequate funding, with some opting to reduce administrative posts to protect frontline

²⁶ The domestic Abuse Commissioner found in her recent research that one of the barriers to reporting was victims either having or seeing other people have a tough time in the system ‘Shifting the Scales’ Transforming the criminal justice response to domestic abuse 2025 [dac_cjs-report_main_FINAL-DIGITAL.pdf](#)

victim support services. However, even when these cuts are made, the administrative work still needs to be done, and the responsibility falls on the remaining staff. This not only increases their workload but also heightens the risk of burnout, making it even harder to retain staff.

As caseloads grow and resources shrink, employees are being asked to manage far more than is sustainable. The strain is contributing to high levels of burnout, and poor salaries only amplify the problem, driving experienced workers to leave. At the same time, the challenge of recruiting new staff is compounded by funding uncertainty and uncompetitive wages. This leaves organisations struggling to fill critical roles, exacerbating the burden on remaining staff.

Case Study: Coventry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre

- Lost £195,000 funding from Local Authority last year
 - Resulted in 6 job losses
 - Remaining staff had to absorb existing roles
 - Waiting list was closed for 9 months
- Next Year MOJ funding remain same (a real terms cut)
- PCC will be reducing their funding
- £17,000 required for NI contributions
- Additional Increase in staff costs £50,000 (to enable recruitment & retention)
- To save £56,000 from 2025/26 budget making 2 most posts redundant
 - Remaining staff will take on an increase in caseload from 60 to 80 (35 is recommended)
 - This will mean a review of what services can realistically be offered
- Expecting 800 new counselling referrals in the next year
 - The waiting list is currently 241
 - Only have the capacity to support 204 – 260 people per year
- Currently unable to offer the following services:
 - family therapy
 - parent support groups
 - outreach services
 - peer groups
 - school's interventions

The result is a vicious cycle: staff turnover leads to a loss of expertise, and the costs of recruitment and training new staff only add to the strain. The combination of burnout, high turnover, and the difficulty of recruitment is undermining the capacity of the sector, with potentially devastating long-term consequences for victim support services.

The costs of setting up a victim support service from scratch will always be higher than properly funding them in the first place. This is the reality the sector faces—failing to invest in these services now will only lead to greater, long-term costs.

Impact on services

Unsurprisingly the lack of funding is having a huge impact on the numbers of people employed by the sector and this in turn will translate directly into a reduction of services available to victims of crime.

All 23 of the organisations who wrote to us have told us about the impact their budgets are having on the services they are able to offer to victims of crime. Victim Support has reported that the increased costs and cuts in budgets will amount to a loss of £3.5m to their funding for the next year. This will equate to 84 full time posts. This loss will greatly reduce the service they can provide, and they estimate it will result in 5,000 less victims receiving support. Despite being a multi-crime service Victim Support also provide services for many victims of domestic violence and project that 1,900 victims of domestic abuse and 300 victims of sexual violence will be no longer able to access services.

Many service providers have now reached a point where they will be forced to impose restrictions on the services they offer and the victims they can assist. With rising demand and shrinking resources, organisations are making difficult decisions about who can access support. This means that the most vulnerable victims—those in urgent need of help—are at risk of being left without the assistance they need. As funding continues to be insufficient, these limitations only exacerbate the strain on an already overburdened sector. Most of these organisations already operate waiting lists, but the waiting times are increasing, with some stretching to at least a year for new clients. In some cases, organisations have been forced to close their waiting lists altogether, leaving many victims without any recourse to support.

“We have cut to the bone, some services have already gone, and we will be looking to withdraw outreach services which, as two large rural counties with incredibly poor transportation links, will result in isolated communities being further isolated.”

- Jocelyn Anderson, CEO at West Mercia Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre

Victim support organisations are being forced to implement multiple cuts in an attempt to continue delivering their core services. However, they feel strongly that there are very few cuts left they can make without compromising their ability to operate altogether. This is unsurprising, given that these cuts follow a period of flatlined funding, which has already stretched their resources to breaking point. In response, organisations are reducing staff numbers, scaling back the services they can offer, limiting the geographic areas they can cover, and narrowing the criteria for accepting referrals. As a result, regional disparities are growing, and many victims are being left without access to the support they desperately need.

Rape Crisis England and Wales is the national membership organisation for 37 independent Rape Crisis member centres. They have reported that two of their centres have been forced to close in the last six months. In their latest report on funding, almost a third (30%) of Rape Crisis Centre directors were concerned that there was a risk of their centres closing due to insufficient funding²⁷.

Alignment with government goals

Victim support organisations have long warned of a looming funding crisis, with many already struggling to deliver the essential services that victims of crime rely on. The latest funding settlement risks pushing these organisations to breaking point, with victims set to bear the consequences. This situation is particularly concerning in light of the government's commitment to halving Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) over the next decade, as well as its overarching Safer Streets mission. Adequately funding victim support services is critical not only to meeting these ambitious targets but also to supporting victims in their recovery, preventing re-victimisation, and ensuring that they remain engaged in the criminal justice process, especially as delays and withdrawals reach unprecedented levels.

As the Treasury prepares its spending review, it is crucial the future of victim support services is prioritised. The costs of failing to adequately fund these services extend far beyond the immediate crisis facing organisations; they undermine the government's ability to meet its own strategic goals, perpetuate regional disparities, and erode public trust in the justice system. Investing in victim support services will not only help victims rebuild their lives but will also have far-reaching benefits, from reducing long-term costs to the economy to increasing public confidence and trust in our public services.

Conclusion

The need for victim support services has never been greater, yet these services are facing an increasingly precarious position. To honour its manifesto commitment on VAWG and fulfil its Safer Streets mission, the government must act swiftly and decisively to safeguard these vital services.

Victim support services deliver a range of essential benefits: they empower victims to cope and recover, break the cycle of re-victimisation, and generate long-term economic savings by reducing the broader costs of crime on public services and the wider economy—such as healthcare, social services, and lost productivity. These services are crucial for helping victims regain control of their lives, preventing further harm, and easing the burden on the criminal justice system.

Support for victims can be life changing. By offering tailored support, including advocacy, practical assistance, and emotional guidance, these services help victims navigate the complexities of their situations and reduce the risk of re-victimization. They provide the necessary resources for victims to break free from cycles of harm, whether in the context of domestic abuse, sexual violence, hate crimes, or other forms of victimization. This not only benefits the individual, but it also reduces the long-term burden on public services and fosters greater community safety and trust in our public realm.

I urge the government to use the upcoming spending review as an opportunity to secure sustainable funding for victim support services. By investing in these services now, the

²⁷ [The Rape Crisis Funding Crisis: A Survey of Managers & Directors 2024](#)

government will ensure victims receive the support they need to recover, remain engaged in the justice system, and prevent future harm.

I urge the government to invest now to reap long-term savings, to stabilise our justice system and strengthen the foundations of our economy, and to fulfil your government's mission and make our streets safer for all.

The cost of inaction is a price this nation can ill afford.