



"I'm Still Here You Know"

**Report of the Consultation and Conference between
Young People who have experienced sexual crime,
The Police and The Crown Prosecution Service.**

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Safety Net Advice and Support Centre is a
Registered Charity No: 1109056





"I'm still here you know!"

Report on consultation and conference November 2006

Safety Net Advice and Support Centre 1109056

FOR YOU

For all the children
Who when they were small
Had their childhoods stolen
And suffered the fall

There is a light at the end of it all
It's just a case of reaching so tall
Though the hardest thing to do is talk
It's like you're a baby learning to walk

The struggle so hard, for achievement to reach
So you can experience your inner peace

For all the precious moments taken away
When all you did was survive each day
At the end of the rainbow is your pot of gold
Be proud of yourself, you achieved, you told.

(Rachel, Wedgewood steering Group, Whitehaven, Cumbria)

Forward

Many conferences are about discussing progress, about demonstrating effectiveness, about back-patting. This conference was very different. It was about where things are going dreadfully wrong. It was about listening, and it was about finding creative ways to improve. It was positive, but in a very non-conventional way.

We are so grateful to all the speakers who attend this difficult event. We are particularly grateful to those young people who found the courage to speak of their own experiences because they want to see change for others. We are grateful to the decision makers for being able to hear this. We are indebted to those agencies represented at conference and all the individuals present who were able to witness change in action. I hope you find the results of this conference stimulating. The Young People who spoke at this event share common themes in their testimonies. They are not unique. If you can, I hope you too can be instrumental in considering the changes needed so that the negative aspects of people experiences are learnt from and changes are made as a direct result.

This conference was extraordinary in that it did have at once a critical focus on failing service provision within the Crown Prosecution Service and the Police, and that these two organisations felt capable of hearing the issues presented and are acting on the same points.

It is an unfortunate reality that many feel it is inappropriate to work with victims of sexual crime on this level. There are many reasons why this is considered so, not least the prejudiced view that victims are damaged and as a consequence unreliable. Others consider that young people should only do this in a confidential, therapeutic environment. I would offer the challenge

that for some of the speakers this was very much therapy in action. Others believe that young people should be protected to the extent that they are effectively silenced.

Much has been written academically about false memory syndrome in relation to the "flawed evidence" given by victims with mental health issues. Indeed the Guardian (History Revision, Wed 29th November 2006) ran a two page article on the need for survivors of institutional sexual abuse to "put it in the past". Attempts to bring abusers to justice is a real, and painful effort for victims. The process for achieving justice is currently long, arduous, and perceived by many as arbitrary.

Many believe that when the accused is found 'not guilty' that they did not do it, and the victim is vilified as a liar. When in reality what has happened is that the case has not been proven. Indeed if the case were fabricated, given the low conviction rate (6%) we should expect to see many more cases of perjury and perverting the course of justice.

The volume of statements that are retracted and the reasons for this were discussed following the conference with the police – where the belief by the police was that retraction was indeed because the accuser had lied. The sad reality is that many will say that because they cannot bear to go through with the prosecution process. Indeed Safety Net recently had a case where a young girl was voluntarily arrested and charged with perverting the course of justice and perjury, three years after her father had been convicted of sexually abusing her and a sibling. She was released without charge when it became clear that she had attempted to do this as a result of mailices from her mother.

Outlined at this conference were just some of the barriers to prosecution. These are not secrets. Nor are they new. However now they have been heard and it is our hope that young people across the country will benefit from the

outcomes of this conference and others will be encouraged by it. The Sexual Abuse of Children and Young People must be on the agenda. It must be addressed.

The purpose of this conference was to establish a young people's forum within the city capable of influencing the policies and practices of those services accessed by children and young people in need.

The specific objectives of the conference are detailed below as they appeared in the funding bid. The extent to which these objectives were met is given below each one:

- a) Children and young people in need will have the opportunity to take part in a consultation exercise with those agencies providing services within their local communities.

Three independent young people and a steering group (Wedgewood Steering Group) of young people in operation within the NSPCC had the opportunity to present to decision makers, including the Crown Prosecution Service and the Police at conference and further discuss the issues directly affecting them. The Chief Executive of Victim Support in Cumbria, and Safety Net Advice and Support Centre, a local charity working with young people who have been victims of sexual crime, also presented at this conference.

- b) Children and young people will have the opportunity to develop a peer group network where they can discuss the positive and negative experiences within the locale facilitated by senior group members and elected (by the group) professional practitioners.

There is one steering group in operation within the NSPCC. The Crown Prosecution Service has furthermore invited those young people who spoke at the conference to advise on policy at a national level.

- c) Safety Net will use the results of this consultation to develop service provision. It is anticipated that other agencies and organisations will benefit from this consultation to the extent that the identified best-practices by the steering group will be shared.

As a result of the work with Young People leading up to this conference we hope to develop the support services Safety Net presently offer to young people. We are working towards working with the Local Safeguarding Board to ensure that the voices of young people can be heard at a countywide level. We would like to see a Young Person's Victim's Panel in operation within the county working with both the CPS and the Police.

A big issue which emerged from the consultation was the use and attendance of appropriately trained police officers for young victims of sexual crime. There appear to be issues presently with accessing module 4 trained officers out of hours in Cumbria, and accessing female only officers to attend to female victims. We hope that this issue has been heard and will be addressed.

- d) The Consultation is expected to effect change at various levels within the North of the county with recognised best-practice models being adopted where appropriate.

A meeting Held with Bob Pallas, Detective Superintendent, Specialist Operations, Cumbria Constabulary following the conference considered the following points:

- Need for a mapping exercise of all the available support for Young victims of crime.
- Consideration of pro-active response to victims who are in need of support. It is felt that whilst consent referrals for support for serious crime is a good thing, there does need to be additional considerations of the emotional state of a client at the time of completing an MG11 and that follow up should be a considered option.
- There is a real need for a client to have a “debrief” following giving a statement and evidence in court. This latter is covered by the Witness Service. The former is yet to be comprehensively considered.
- A need for enhanced training for both the police and prosecutors. A consideration of structured partnership working with the voluntary sector is required so that the needs of the victim are understood wholly.
- The formation of a Victim’s Panel in Cumbria which should incorporate Young Victims of Sexual Crime. This panel should have the capacity to affect practice positively and be consulted where changes are being considered.
- Need for an off-duty rota of Module 4 trained officers so that response can be done by an officer who is suitably trained and of the appropriate gender.
- Police officers should be aware that the complaints procedure is a reality, and the promotion of that system with victims of crime to identify areas for improvement.
- Debate surrounding the use of special measures and the appropriate presentation of evidence in chief. The standard referral for videolink with little or no consideration of other available options, without the full pros and cons of each method being fully explained to the victim is unacceptable. The choice

for special measures should be done by the client, or on their behalf by someone other than the police officer.

- Representation by Safety Net on the Local Safeguarding Board in Cumbria.

e) Safety Net will provide a one day workshop on citizenship for the steering group.

Some of the young people who gave their views at the conference were already engaged in a steering group which gave them the capacity to deliver a sound objective appraisal of the issues as they stood. Other Young People were not able to commit to a workshop because of timing constraints and work leading up to the conference was done on a 1:1 basis.

f) This workshop will develop the understanding of children and young people in respect of their rights and responsibilities within the society where they live.

Encouragement was given to young people to develop the awareness that they have the right to contribute and that by contributing they can effect change. Many of the Young People who contributed stated that they could not change what had happened to them but hoped that by speaking out they could improve the experience of others who would go through the system.

g) The knowledge gained by the steering group during their meetings and citizenship workshop will raise aspirations within the group in respect of their capabilities in influencing change.

Initially some of the Young People were sceptical about whether it was really possible to make a difference. They were sceptical that adults and

institutions could hear them. All were encouraged that decision makers were present and willing to listen to what they had to say. Moreover the commitment in particular by the CPS to consult with them was confirmation that this was not just an exercise.

h) We propose to hold a young person's conference where speakers will come from the steering group itself and professionals and practitioners approved by the group. Professionals from all children's services in Carlisle and District will be invited to attend the conference and participate in an open debate following the presentation by young people and professionals.

We were encouraged by the representation of different organisations and agencies on the day. The following organisations were represented:

Crown Prosecution Service
Cumbria Constabulary
Witness and Victim Support
West Cumbria Rape Crisis
Youth Offending Service
NSPCC
Safety Net Advice and Support Centre
Borderline Counselling
Let Go (Domestic Violence)
Domestic Abuse Support
Northern Rock Foundation

Apologies were given from:

No Witness No Justice
Cumbria Youth Work Partnership
Mpath

Eric Martlew MP
YWCA
Cumbria Youth Alliance
Carlisle City Council

Sadly only 50% of those who had committed to the conference were able to attend. In retrospect the issue for professionals appeared to be the timing – a Saturday. From the perspective of Safety Net we were conscious that Young People should not have their schooling affected and it was this issue which led to the scheduling of the conference.

All those who initially expressed an interest in the conference will receive a copy of this report.

It was considered closer to the occasion that the conference was not the appropriate forum for debate.

Which decision makers do you hope to reach and how will the activity have an input into decision-making processes?

The Police and The Crown Prosecution Service.

Both the Police and the CPS were represented at the conference.

We hope the activity will stimulate debate about the methods used by the Police in obtaining evidence for prosecuting the perpetrators of sexual violence towards children and young people.

The following is from the Wedgewood Steering Group's summary which succinctly outlines the issues raised under this heading:

Young people's views on what does and doesn't work in the Criminal Justice System regarding young people who have been victims of sexual crimes

We think that one of the hardest things a person who has suffered sexual abuse is to tell someone, and speak out. Sometimes, we feel that the police and the justice system in general do not understand this.

The Justice System

We identified some of the following as problems;

- 1. The time it takes for a case to come to court.*
- 2. The communication between the victim and the court.*
- 3. Forensic evidence handling.*
- 4. The Prosecution undermining victims in court.*
- 5. How difficult it is to complain about court and the Crown Prosecution Service.*
- 6. Plea Bargaining, the victim not having any say.*

The Police

The Wedgewood Steering Group identified the main problems as being;

- 1. A lack of support and information given to the Victim/Witness.*
- 2. Taking, then later returning, personal items for forensic evidence with a lack of sensitivity and information.*
- 3. Liaison between the local CID, CAPU staff, CPS and the victim.*
- 4. We felt that training of the CAPU and CID staff was not sufficient.*

Issues we raised;

- We wondered if there was any guidelines relating to time limits for charging alleged perpetrators and what could be done if case takes a long time.*

- *We wondered whose job it is to communicate between the victim and the court.*
- *We felt that holding onto evidence (e.g. mobile phones and computers) without replacing them was unfair on the victim.*
- *We wondered if there was a hardship fund in such cases.*
- *We felt that sometimes the Prosecution undermines victims' evidence in court. We wondered if this was a lack of training and sensitivity.*
- *Some members of the Wedgewood Steering Group found it hard to complain against the CPS because they didn't know how to.*
- *We wanted to know if the victim had any say in Plea Bargaining.*
- *We felt there was a lack of support and information given to victims prior to a case coming to court or alleged perpetrator being charged.*
- *Training of CAPU and CID staff regarding sexual abuse and victim awareness e.g. taking statements and keeping people informed.*

Conclusion

We would like to continue to try and change aspects of the Justice system and the Police services but at the moment we can't do this by ourselves; our main focus at the moment is to encourage young people to speak out against sexual abuse

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Linda Vance Divisional Crown Prosecutor for Carlisle also contributed on this issue with a presentation discussing the following:

Cumbria is one of four CPS areas taking part in a pilot in which prosecutors are able to interview witnesses in criminal trials. The pilot is aimed at cases which are indictable only i.e. serious cases which have to be dealt with at the Crown Court but prosecutors can also conduct interviews in other cases such

as cases of sexual abuse in which an interview is considered desirable. The pilot is running to the end of January when it will be evaluated.

A team of prosecutors has been trained to conduct the interviews. In Cumbria we have three interviewers and between us we have conducted seven interviews.

The purpose of the interview is to enable the prosecutor to meet the witness to make sure they understand the witness's evidence and that the prosecutor has all the information they need to enable them to make a decision on whether or not a case should proceed. The attendance of the witness is voluntary and the interview is tape recorded.

So far the interviews in Cumbria have resulted in the prosecutor being able to make informed decisions on cases as to whether they should proceed or whether there is insufficient evidence to put before the Court.

The second point was that now the CPS has taken over responsibility for charging. The police consult the CPS on charging and a CPS lawyer, based in the Police Station will be able to advise on the charge. That lawyer will normally be assigned to prosecute the case. In cases in which a Lawyer has conducted a pre-trial interview with a witness that Lawyer will also take over the case. Some Crown Prosecutors have now qualified in the CPS to conduct Crown Court trials. In the future it is envisaged that a CPS lawyer will be able to conduct a pre-trial interview, decide on charges and handle the case throughout conducting the trial in the Crown Court.

Children and Young People are presently fearful of involving the police and going through the legal process to seek justice for what has happened to them because of a lack of faith in the CJS's capabilities for securing convictions.

"Here is another issue – if victims did put themselves through the system, if he was found guilty. What would he get? A couple of years for ruining lives, families and dreams.

What would be the point? They deserve more, so much more.

When a life is taken through murder. When a person stops breathing. The murderer goes to jail for a very long time to reflect what has been lost.

A rapist does the same, only the victim is not 6 feet under. Two years, six years – could never be enough.

Making a statement, having forensic evidence taken, standing in court. Each of these would be like being raped again.

And the Criminal Justice System wants us to do that.

But they can't give any guarantees of any justice. In fact they told me that he probably won't be convicted because of lack of witnesses – ironic really because most rapists don't do it in public.

The structuring of the Police force needs rethinking when it comes to dealing with sexual crime. Police officers who are to attend at the scene, or at any point thereafter need to be trained to a level which exceeds those presently in place.

I did not need a uniform, I needed a person, who had some understanding of how I felt.

It's my opinion that training for Police officers working in this field should be done with support agencies like Safety Net who have the capacity and knowledge of the issues directly affecting victims.

Whoever is providing the training at the moment is not hitting the mark.

Training at the current levels is not acceptable."

Lauri

"I was sexually abused by my best mate's dad. I was 8 at the time, and I didn't know it was wrong then... There were three of us giving evidence. One of the victims was his own daughter.

He was found not guilty on all counts.

I felt like I was a liar. The relationship I had with my friends was never the same again. Strangely his daughter was taken into foster care after that.

Looks like someone believed us...."

Ana

"I was sexually attacked by two males last year. I would like to tell you that the ordeal was over once I contacted the police. But it wasn't. In fact it had really only just begun... Finally a not guilty verdict was returned by the three magistrates. I was a witness in this case. I was not given the respect I deserved as a human, and as a victim of a devastating crime. It was made clear to me that the Police were taking the case to court and not me.

When I started the process I felt I would be getting the power back. What actually happened was that the criminal justice system took what shreds of power I had left and destroyed it.

Perhaps the final nail in the coffin was that they told my dad the outcome of the trial. I didn't happen to him. It happened to me."

Hayleigh

If methods were to be reviewed we would hope that the result would be the presentation of sound evidence presented by the police to the CPS for consideration that would hold weight in court and secure a greater number of convictions.

Contributions by the CPS and the Police went a long way to reassuring those in attendance that indeed many of the issues presented were already under consideration within the CPS. In particular the current pilot (discussed above) demonstrates that changes are in process to meet this end. The CPS were represented by three speakers Martin Kirby-Sykes – Senior Policy Advisor, York; Beccy MacGregor - Senior Crown Prosecutor and Linda Vance - Divisional Crown Prosecutor for Carlisle.

We hope that this conference will lead to a de-mystification of the legal process for children and young people, and if that is not possible a consideration of how to de-mystify the process to make it more transparent and less arbitrary.

Jon Rush, Cumbria Constabulary Professional Standards Department, spoke about the role of the Police in North Cumbria. He gave an overview of the new interview suites sited at four locations across the county; the use of Forensic Medical examiners and the internal structures for dealing with vulnerable witnesses. He spoke of the work of the Child and Adult Protection Unit and closed with a summary of the training in relation to specialist staff for working with victims of sexual abuse and rape.

Which young people is this targeted at?

Children and Young People who have experienced rape or sexual abuse,
Children and Young People in rural communities, children and young people

in deprived wards, Young carers, Young Mothers, Children and Young people with disabilities, Children and young people in refuges/homeless, Travellers, Young gay, lesbian and bisexual children and young people.

The young people present at this conference represented a cross section of our target audience.

A conference on sexual violence by Young People has not, to our knowledge, been done before because of a culturally reinforced belief that Young People who have been abused should not be engaged by anyone other than professionals in the field of psychological services. This has meant that we rarely hear from the children themselves until they reach adulthood, reinforcing the stigma of the abused child. Children MUST have a voice here. It is too late to effect change if we can only hear from Adult Survivors.

Impact and follow up

The Young Person's forum will remain in operation under the umbrella of Safety Net, and hopefully become formally constituted and capable of raising funds for further development of the forum with help from Safety Net. We anticipate we will be able to recruit one trustee from the group to sit on the board and participate at a strategic level in Safety Net. We hope that individuals will also be invited to sit on boards associated with other professional bodies in the County, providing a pilot to be recommended nationwide. Evaluation questionnaires will be formulated for the Young People's workshops, the Conference (making specific comment upon aspects of the event and efficacy of the methods used). Results of the conference and any on-going commitments made by organisations to extend the consultation will be recorded and followed up by forum members and Safety Net staff where appropriate. De-mystifying legal processes will be the task of the police and CPS as a joint venture and one that Safety Net are willing to participate in. Follow up workshops that are to implement this can be delivered jointly by the Police/CPS and Safety Net in Schools and Local Community groups e.g. Sure Start Centres and Connexions.

Conclusion

The main issues for consideration by the **Crown Prosecution** Service were:

1. The length of time it takes for a case to come to court.

The longer it takes, the more the emotional strain on the victim. Emotional strain inevitably translates into strain in other aspects of life including friendships, education, work and family life to name but a few.

2. The communication between the victim and the court.

This is about sensitively handling cases. It is about making literature and letters understandable by Young People and keeping people up to date with their case on a regular basis by a means that is practicable and accessible.

3. Forensic evidence.

Again this is about sensitivity. It is humiliating for photographs of a victim's genitalia to be handed around a court room whilst the victim is present. In fact this could in fact be construed as abuse by the victim. The display of other personal effects e.g. underwear is similarly unacceptable. The return of computers and mobile telephones. The length of time taken for electronic equipment to be returned to a victim is perceived by many as further victimisation. A consideration was for the provision of short term replacement equipment so that victims are not unnecessarily penalised.

4. The Prosecution undermining victims in court.

Many felt that the prosecution was not always au fait with the case before questioning. Prosecution counsel were also considered to have not challenged unduly harsh cross-examination of victim's.

5. Perceived difficulties for making complaints about The Courts and the Crown Prosecution Service.

6. Plea Bargaining, the victim not having any say.

The issue surrounding plea bargaining is extremely emotive. Many feel that for "lesser" charged to be dropped is to ignore the effects of those crimes on the victim. The issue of reduction of sentencing for guilty pleas is similarly viewed as unacceptable by the majority. The common held

belief being – why does the defendant get favourable treatment for admitting that they did something terrible to me?

7. Sentencing

Without exception it is always felt to be too lenient and too arbitrary. Rehabilitation is a continued issue. What happens once they are released?

8. Recategorisation of sexual offences – to make all sexual offences indictable.

The prosecution of either way offences in magistrates again is seen by victims as minimising the impact of the crime on them. Without exception ALL victims of sexual offences suffer to very similar degrees. The decision to try at magistrates is seen as demeaning. And once again the issue where the defence is allowed to ask for the trial to be held in Crown Court and the victim having no say in this process is seen as unfair and again giving preferential treatment to the defence.

9. To provide victims with the same rights as the defence

This was particularly highlighted in the case of either way offences where the defence has the right to "choose" which court he would like to be tried in. The Victim has no say.

10. A need for enhanced training for both the police and prosecutors.

A consideration of structured partnership working with the voluntary sector is required so that the needs of the victim are understood wholly.

11. Are there any guidelines relating to time limits for charging alleged perpetrators and what could be done if case takes a long time.

Victims of sexual crime find the waiting hard. It is very easy for a victim to feel that time delays are due to not being believed, or their case not being important. There is scope here for improved communication between agencies and victims.

The Police

12. A lack of support and information given to the Victim/Witness.

Victims felt that the Police were not always sensitive in the way they communicated with victims. They felt that the matter of fact approach of some officers did not acknowledge the emotional distress they were in and made it difficult to pursue with making a statement; made it difficult to provide all the relevant details eg the full story (many young victims later admit to counsellors and family that they couldn't tell the whole story to the police); or simply made the victim give up. It was felt that many investigating officers did not understand just how hard it really is to make that initial step of picking up the phone, let alone telling, what is without exception, a humiliating account of the emotional, physical and sexual damage inflicted upon them.

Many were not given regular feedback in respect of the stage a case was at, or whether arrests had been made. Many did not understand what they were to expect next. Not all cases were referred to the Witness Service making preparation for court impossible and leaving the victims and their family without desperately needed support.

13. Liaison between the local CID, CAPU staff, CPS and the victim.

Covered above, this is seen as dis-jointed and leaves the victim feeling vulnerable within the criminal justice system.

14. We felt that training of the CAPU and CID staff was not sufficient.

Capacity for working with victims is not consistently of a good standard according to victims. Understanding of the psychological, emotional and physical needs of the victims is not consistent. It was felt that if the police do not see emotional support as their job then support agencies should be working along side the police from the very beginning. If emotional support is part of the job of an investigating officer then training should be further developed to assist in the development of officers to respond to this pressing need.

15. First contact by the police – use of appropriately trained officers of suitable gender

Module 4 trained officers are often not the first response and this can be very difficult for a victim. There is piecemeal understanding by untrained officers as to why victims do not feel capable of co-operating when this happens. The provision of officer of a suitable gender is equally paramount. Currently it is not guaranteed that a female victim can expect a female officer in Cumbria. This will present a barrier to providing any information to the police and often is the source of hostile feelings towards the police by a victim.

16. Perception of joined up services

Referrals to other support agencies are slow or non-existent. Victims find it frustrating that if the investigating officer is not available that there can be no-one else who can help.

17. Consistency in referrals to witness support

Referrals are not always made to the witness service, isolating the victim from an excellent source of support. Consent referrals for serious crime needs addressing and made more proactive in line with effective models demonstrated by Domestic Violence.

18. There is a real need for a client to have a "debrief" following giving a statement and evidence in court.

The latter is covered by the Witness Service. The former is yet to be comprehensively considered.

19. The formation of a Victim's Panel in Cumbria which should incorporate Young Victims of Sexual Crime.

This panel should have the capacity to affect practice positively and be consulted where changes are being considered. Police officers should be aware that the complaints procedure is a reality, and the promotion of that system with victims of crime to identify areas for improvement.

20. Need for a mapping exercise of all the available support for Young victims of crime.

Current provision of support for young victims of sexual crime is almost non-existent and where it does exist referrals are patchy and protocols are not established.

21. A need for enhanced training for both the police and prosecutors.

A consideration of structured partnership working with the voluntary sector is required so that the needs of the victim are understood wholly.

22. Are there any guidelines relating to time limits for charging alleged perpetrators and what could be done if case takes a long time.

Victims of sexual crime find the waiting hard. It is very easy for a victim to feel that time delays are due to not being believed, or their case not being important. There is scope here for improved communication between agencies and victims.

23. We wondered whose job it is to communicate between the victim and the court.

To many Yong people the array of people to navigate once a case is underway is bewildering. The need for the one-stop-shop of the Witness Care Unit is demonstrable here. Unfortunately the one-stop-shop is about to become a two-stop-shop with the Victim Care units. The Home Office must take care to make the boundaries between the two organisation transparent and clear to ALL victims.

24. Debate surrounding the use of special measures and the appropriate presentation of evidence in chief. Appropriate use of special measures.

The police are too quick to recommend the use of video link where the impact of a screen could be better. Victims are not made aware that the offender will be able to see them. There needs to be a consideration of pro-active response to victims who are in need of support. It is felt that whilst consent referrals for support for serious crime is a good thing, there does need to be additional considerations of the emotional state of a client at the time of completing an MG11 and that follow up should be a considered option.

The standard referral for videolink with little or no consideration of other available options, without the full pros and cons of each method being fully explained to the victim is unacceptable. The choice for special measures should be done by the client, or on their behalf by someone other than the police officer.

25. *It was wondered if there was a hardship fund where the victim is inconvenienced by the holding of evidence.*

Certainly there is potential in the Victim Care Units and new organisation of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority. Victims are not in a position to buy duplicate computers, clothes and Mobile Phones to bridge the investigation gap. There does need to be access to an immediate fund.

In conclusion, a criticism of this event was that it focused on the negative experiences of young people within the criminal justice system. However advertising for this event did in fact ask for positive and negative experiences. No young people came forward who could say that the experience had been positive. Their comments were not overly critical. They were honest and open. The accounts they gave were also emotionally very powerful. For all of

the young people it was the first time they had had the chance to tell someone about the difficulties they had faced. They were all glad to have had that opportunity. In being open they gave the CPS and the Police a unique opportunity to hear the difficulties faced by young victims of sexual crime. If change is to be made, decision makers need to understand what is going wrong, and what can be done to better improve experiences.

A commendable aspect of the event was the CPS's capacity to hold the door for change open, and to acknowledge where it has gone wrong, and share how it is trying to get it right. Without exception all speakers and attendees were delighted at the invitation by Martin Kirby-Sykes, Senior Policy Maker, to the Young People to be involved in consulting for change.

Appendices

- **Conference Agenda**
- **Presentation by Ana**
- **Presentation by Lauri**
- **Presentation by Hayleigh**
- **Synopsis of the presentation given by the Wedgewood Steering Group**
- **Anita Ogilvie, Safety Net Advice and Support Centre, Carlisle**
- **Martin Kirby-Sykes, Policy Advisor, Crown Prosecution Service (Power Point)**
- **Abigail Finnegan, Safety Net Advice and Support Centre, Carlisle**
- **Dee Taylor, Chief Executive, Victim Support, Cumbria**
- **Copy of follow-up correspondence**
- **YSPEAK Decision makers evaluation summary**
- **Young People's Evaluation Report Summary**
- **YSPEAK Young People's evaluation summary**
- **Grant Holders Report**
- **YSPEAK notes**



You are invited to attend a conference where young people, the CPS, The Police and others will speak about the experiences of Young People who have been victims of sexual crime, and the developments underway to improve the prosecution of offenders and the experiences of victims.

“We’re still here you know!”

Saturday 18th November 2006

10am — 4pm

Swallow Hilltop Hotel

Carlisle

10.00—10.30 Arrivals

10.30—11.00 Anita Ogilvie Safety Net

11.00—11.15 Presentation by Young People

11.15—11.30 Presentation by Young People

11.30—11.45 BREAK

11.45—12.00 Presentation by Young People

12.00—12.15 Presentation by The Wedgewood Steering Group

12.15—13.15 LUNCH

13.15—13.45 Martin Kirby-Sykes CPS Policy Advisor

13.45—14.15 Dee Taylor Witness Service

14.15—14.45 Linda Vance CPS Cumbria

14.45—15.00 BREAK

15.00—15.30 Jon Rush Cumbria Constabulary

15.30—16.00 Abigail Finnegan Safety Net

16.00 Close

To reserve a place please contact Safety Net on 01228 515859 or e-mail us at safetynet_carlisle@hotmail.com or visit www.safetynet-carlisle.org.uk

This event is free but a discretionary donation of £5 would be welcome to help cover costs.

Ana

I was sexually abused by my best mate's dad. I was 8 at the time, and I didn't know it was wrong then.

I remember giving a video statement. The first memory I have of that was that there were lots of stairs. Because there was no other way of getting up them a man had to carry me. I hated it. I especially hate men carrying me. In the room was a two way mirror.

When it came to court I gave my evidence by video link. It was really scary and I wouldn't speak because I was afraid of the people questioning me. They kept on asking me the same questions over and over again. It was very repetitive. I am afraid of people in authority. The people in the court took off their wigs, but kept their gowns on. This did not help.

When I cast my mind back I think that a more informal setting could have helped me give my evidence. Why does it have to be in a courtroom, as they are now? Do you not realise how scary this is for a child?

There were three of us giving evidence. One of the victims was his own daughter.

He was found not guilty on all counts.

I felt like I was a liar. The relationship I had with my friends was never the same again. Strangely his daughter was taken into foster care after that.

Looks like someone believed us....

As a result of all this I find it hard having physical relationships with boyfriends. I have flashbacks. When I see people who look like him, and when I do I can't look at them.

And then it happened again. Someone else this time, and recently. I was in a state. My mum called the police for me. I made a written and a video statement.

They sent a male officer first but I couldn't cope with that so they sent a female instead.

Once again when giving video evidence access was poor. It didn't help me feel like my opinion was valued.

There was a witness, but she has learning difficulties and because of the inconsistencies in her statement they did not pursue the case any further.

The thing is, it is not about her – it was about me.

I still see him. He only lives down the road. I have a restriction order on him. That's the best I could hope for.

[Lauri](#)

This conference is part of the YSPEAK programme.

The theme of my presentation is why bother speaking?

The impact of the rape is devastating. I even wondered if I would be able to stand here and speak to you today.

From my own experiences I think that the way the police operate when responding to rape needs looking at.

The biggest hurdle to reporting rape is the fact that it has happened.

The immediate emotional effects are horrific.

It has to be one of the toughest things ever to speak about, think about, ever have to face.

Seeing your family in pain adds to the distress.

Once a victim has accepted they have been raped they then have to admit it to the police.

One sniff of disapproval or lack of understanding sends the truth back into hiding and anger can bubble over.

The police

Straight after rape the police ask for victims to have forensic tests taken.

If you don't want to the chances are that you will be accused of being uncooperative and not helping yourself. When in fact it is looking after yourself.

Officers are too matter of fact.

Who in their right mind sends a male officer out to a female rape victim?

When the Police arrive they expect you to be ready to tell the story. Expect you to be polite and cheerful. They can't seem to understand why is so hard just to make a statement.

They are astoundingly unsympathetic and seemed incapable of registering how the victim feels.

Not only do they not understand but they can be so rude. I was laughed at at one point.

In the interests of not raising my hopes it was made clear that there were no assurances of other witnesses or a trial.

So why insist that victims give forensic evidence. Why insist that victims degrade themselves. Why make victims feel that they are not helping themselves by not co-operating when they can't help victims with reassurances.

Rape becomes about a crime. But it is not. It is about people.

Sentencing

Here is another issue – if victims did put themselves through the system, if he was found guilty. What would he get? A couple of years for ruining lives, families and dreams.

What would be the point? They deserve more, so much more.

When a life is taken through murder. When a person stops breathing. The murderer goes to jail for a very long time to reflect what has been lost.

A rapist does the same, only the victim is not 6 feet under. Two years, six years – could never be enough.

Making a statement, having forensic evidence taken, standing in court. Each of these would be like being raped again.

And the Criminal Justice System wants us to do that.

But they can't give any guarantees of any justice. In fact they told me that he probably won't be convicted because of lack of witnesses – ironic really because most rapists don't do it in public.

The structuring of the Police force needs rethinking when it comes to dealing with sexual crime. Police officers who are to attend at the scene, or at any point thereafter need to be trained to a level which exceeds those presently in place.

I did not need a uniform, I needed a person, who had some understanding of how I felt.

It's my opinion that training for Police officers working in this field should be done with support agencies like Safety Net who have the capacity and knowledge of the issues directly affecting victims.

Whoever is providing the training at the moment is not hitting the mark.

Training at the current levels is not acceptable.

When the police, the crown prosecution and the courts understand that rape is about the victim, this process will look very different. If I could imagine it another way it would look like this....

Only women would attend, only women who were understanding that I would be in a state, only women who could cope with that.

Only women who could take the statement with respect, and not with the full force of the law which feels it must bring in the question of doubt.

You wouldn't have doubted me.

You wouldn't force the issue of forensic tests.

You would have understood.

You would have given me time.

You would have been kind.

But you weren't and you didn't.

So I couldn't speak. You sent me back into my box.

The after effects

Two weeks later I was relaxing here, at this hotel. And guess who walked in. Him. The man who raped me. I asked for him to be removed, and I told the staff why. They refused. I went mad. I'm not sure if you can imagine what it is like coming face to face with the man who raped you in a place you felt was safe.

I'll be appearing in court next week charged with various offences including resisting arrest. Amazing how easy it was for me to become the criminal!

Here's a question for you to think about.

What would you have done if you were me?

And the bigger question – what do I feel towards the police now?

Hayleigh

Then

I was sexually attacked by two males, one aged 13, the other aged 16 last year. I would like to tell you that the ordeal was over once I contacted the police. But it wasn't. In fact it had really only just begun.

It took me a couple of months for me to get to a point where I felt capable of telling the police. Initially I was only able to tell my younger brother.

The first police officers to attend were two males. I was not able to work with these people. I was not able to do this because of the intimate nature of the information I was about to report. They left and a woman attended instead.

The female officer felt it was acceptable to attend at 9pm and insisted that I gave my statement then. It was a verbal statement. She decided what would and wouldn't be put in the statement. For instance I showered straight after the attack. She said it was not relevant and left it out. When I was later in court I mentioned the shower and got a hammering because it was not in my statement. She judged what was important – not me. I now know about video statements and I wish that option had been given to me so that my story could be properly heard. To be honest I felt that the officer was at the end of her shift and just wanted my statement over and done with.

2 -3 months later another officer came to take my victim impact statement. This woman was amazing. She gave me her number to call if I needed support. She treated me not only like a human being, but she was also able to acknowledge my pain and work sensitively with me.

There was another victim of these two males who had been attacked before me. For reasons I do not understand and no-one has felt the need to inform me of her statement was never sought by the police. She was 12 years old and considered to be "unreliable". I wonder what "unreliable" really means.....

I was led to believe by the Police that I had a strong case. I thought this meant that they would be found guilty.

I would not consider reporting to the police again following this experience.

I suppose you could say that I was fortunate because my case got to court.

I would agree. If it had gone to the right court. By the right court I mean Crown Court – you know the one. Where they try serious sexual crime. My case was heard at Carlisle Magistrates Court. And postponed twice. I was told it was because other cases came first. I understood it was because they were more important.

There was no jury, only three magistrates who I understand have no experience in dealing with these cases.

For any of you who know this court, you will recall how dingy and smelly this court is; how there is no privacy.

I was allowed to give my evidence by video link. But they got the video angle wrong. I could see my attackers and they could see me. I can't describe to you how terrifying this was for me.

I remember talking to a solicitor and a barrister. Though it was not clear at the time to me who was who. The solicitor seemed to care. The Barrister did not.

There was a real feeling for me that the Barrister was just in it for the pay cheque. I really needed to know that he cared. My Barrister also assured me that I would not be torn to shreds because I was a minor.

6 hours of being torn to shreds is exactly what followed. My Barrister did not once intervene for me. Thankfully the Magistrates did.

Here was a bizarre feature of the trial. I was cross –examined for 6 hours by two barrister, whilst my attackers were JOINTLY cross examined for only 1.5 hours by one. I think this feature more than any other really outlines that it was me that was on trial and not them.

To add insult to injury the Barristers also frequently used language that I did not understand making me feel stupid.

I was further cross-examined on my reasons for delaying making a report to the police. Have these people any idea what it is to be human. You try bearing intimate details about yourself

to strangers. Then try and do that when the intimate details aren't about a nice time that you had, but a harrowing experience that will never leave your mind again.

Throughout the trial the witness service supported me and they were incredible and really looked after me and my Dad. They were the only part in this horrific chapter of my life that really shone through. They made the process bearable.

Finally a not guilty verdict was returned by the three magistrates. I was a witness in this case. I was not given the respect I deserved as a human, and as a victim of a devastating crime. It was made clear to me that the Police were taking the case to court and not me.

When I started the process I felt I would be getting the power back. What actually happened was that the criminal justice system took what shreds of power I had left and destroyed it.

Perhaps the final nail in the coffin was that they told my dad the outcome of the trial. I didn't happen to him. It happened to me.

Now

I want a re-trial. I want the other girl's statement taking. And I want it held in crown court. The outcome is irrelevant now. I simply want what is my right. It is my right to have a fair trial and to see correct procedures being followed and not be relegated to a Magistrates Court where everyone knows people go for not paying their council tax and alcohol licences.

Sending males out to interview a female sex crime victim is just WRONG. What are they thinking?

To have a woman come out to me who was rude, abrupt and uncaring is unacceptable. It is my opinion that she was not up to the job.

To be led to believe I would be OK by my barrister and the police and then destroy me is unforgivable.

And finally, and perhaps most sadly, should this ever happen to me again I doubt I'll call the police, and I'm not sure I would advise anyone else to do so either.

The Criminal Justice System has destroyed me. This should never have happened and must never happen to anyone else.

I hope today is really about change, not just talk. I have begun a degree in forensic Science for one reason only – I want to see methods changed for collecting evidence. I don't want anyone else to have to go through what I did.

I'm not sure what was worse – what my attackers did, or what the Criminal Justice System did.

[Synopsis of the presentation by the Wedgewood Steering Group](#)
[Written for the Safety Net Conference held on 18th November 2006](#)

Young people's views on what does and doesn't work in the Criminal Justice System regarding young people who have been victims of sexual crimes

We think that one of the hardest things a person who has suffered sexual abuse is to tell someone, and speak out. Sometimes, we feel that the police and the justice system in general do not understand this.

The Justice System

We identified some of the following as problems;

7. The time it takes for a case to come to court.
8. The communication between the victim and the court.
9. Forensic evidence handling.
10. The Prosecution undermining victims in court.
11. How difficult it is to complain about court and the Crown Prosecution Service.
12. Plea Bargaining, the victim not having any say.

The Police

The Wedgewood Steering Group identified the main problems as being;

5. A lack of support and information given to the Victim/Witness.
6. Taking, then later returning, personal items for forensic evidence with a lack of sensitivity and information.
7. Liaison between the local CID, CAPU staff, CPS and the victim.
8. We felt that training of the CAPU and CID staff was not sufficient.

Issues we raised;

- We wondered if there was any guidelines relating to time limits for charging alleged perpetrators and what could be done if case takes a long time.
- We wondered whose job it is to communicate between the victim and the court.
- We felt that holding onto evidence (e.g. mobile phones and computers) without replacing them was unfair on the victim.
- We wondered if there was a hardship fund in such cases.

- We felt that sometimes the Prosecution undermines victims' evidence in court. We wondered if this was a lack of training and sensitivity.
- Some members of the Wedgewood Steering Group found it hard to complain against the CPS because they didn't know how to.
- We wanted to know if the victim had any say in Plea Bargaining.
- We felt there was a lack of support and information given to victims prior to a case coming to court or alleged perpetrator being charged.
- Training of CAPU and CID staff regarding sexual abuse and victim awareness e.g. taking statements and keeping people informed.

Conclusion

We would like to continue to try and change aspects of the Justice system and the Police services but at the moment we can't do this by ourselves; our main focus at the moment is to encourage young people to speak out against sexual abuse

The Wedgewood Centre, 14 Hollins Close, Whitehaven 01946 595300

www.wcumbria@nspcc.org.uk

Anita Ogilvie, Safety Net Advice and Support Centre

I'm Anita Ogilvie. I'm a qualified therapist, trainer and clinical supervisor and I have worked with survivors of sexual abuse for the last 17 years.

I couldn't tell you how many people I have seen over those years or how many hundred's of hours I've spent but I can tell you that only a small amount of them actually reported the crime and every one of them found the legal system traumatic.

I train people to listen and I know that what when we find it hard to hear something we can shut off. I know that people having coping mechanisms and they can put up defences to avoid hearing.

I remember my first training in this field and covering the legal system. What happens if someone reports the crime!! I found it hard to hear the facts. I wondered if the trainers were exaggerating, bitter, angry men hating fanatics at one stage because the facts were so hard to hear.

I had assumed that the victim would have their own team of legal heroes to fight for justice and would have a whole host of people to look after them. The accused would be locked up immediately and there would always be a trial that made sure justice was served.

I was very naïve!!!! Here's some of my harder lessons:

Called to the local rape suit, a client asked me if the doctor taking samples had put gloves on because she thought the client was dirty.

Sitting with another client after making her statement over a three day period. In a highly anxious state, unable to coherently speak at times when she said over and over....I'm classed as a witness. A witness!! I didn't witness this, it happened to me!!!! Why haven't I got a solicitor?

Is this when I explain that it's a crime against the queen and Crown prosecution service will call her as a witness if she's a good enough witness?

Yesterday I was with a client that was drugged and raped in a pub car park. She came round in her own home, wearing a man's vest. She had physical evidence of rape, her car had been driven by the offender. There was a key in her car that wasn't hers. The police did not gather the evidence and when I challenged this they said, she was in the pub, what does she expect. She is devastated.

Sitting with a client when the CPS decide the evidence isn't sufficient, the child witness is too young, too traumatised, not traumatised enough and they won't be prosecuting.

What to say when despite explaining it all very nicely the client hangs their head and says no one believes me do they?

If the case is taken, the agonising wait, the adjournments, the shame!!! Families torn apart by the waiting to pain the anger of it all.

Finally getting to court, standing in the same waiting area with the family of the accused. Being sent away again and having to prepare for tomorrow.

Giving evidence- Talking about the finer details of sexual crime in front of loads of people that are all watching and listening. Terrified!!!! Ashamed when her knickers that had been in an evidence bag for 18 months were shown to the jury.

Or the innocence, a child asking if the judge would be wearing the jewels. She was confused by the word jury (jewellery)

Preparing a client for the verdict.

Preparing a client for the sentence.

As a therapist I can say that going to report delays the client's recovery.

Gladly, Things are moving on and some great changes are happening. I'm sure our speakers can update you on this later today

My view is, We are British. Our legal system is very honourable and offers many rights to the accused. We proudly spout innocent until proven guilty here!!!

My wish list is...

1. I'd like to see the victims of this crime being offered the same rights. The scales of justice are not balanced.
2. I'd like to see specialist training for the police, many clients have left out details in their statements because they are too embarrassed and ashamed but it is these details that are the evidence.
3. I'd like to see more focus on the accused- more training into the profiles of perpetrators. This is crucial for both preparing a case and the jury being given important evidence.
4. I'd like to see more work on updating the assessments made on sex offenders that would inform their risk to society and public protection.
5. I'd like to see funding for organisations like Safety Net.

Some one once told me about a double Decker bus.....

And so I'm going to shut up and listen today to some very brave people that have come to speak.

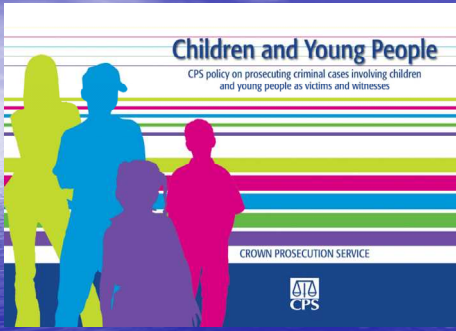
And I ask you all to just listen and if you find yourself making judgements, putting up defences, feeling uncomfortable, try to listen.

If you can't and need time out.....



Martin Kirby-Sykes
Policy Adviser
Crown Prosecution Service

Y LISTEN?



Children and Young People
CPS policy on prosecuting criminal cases involving children
and young people as victims and witnesses

Y LISTEN?
3 good reasons why

3 good ways to
LISTEN?

Children and Young People
CPS policy on prosecuting criminal cases involving children
and young people as victims and witnesses

- www.cps.gov.uk/victims/index.html
- Publicity.branch@cps.qsi.gov.uk
- 50, Ludgate Hill
- London EC4M 7EX
- 020 7796 8000



POWER

Abigail Finnegan
Manager
Safety Net Advice and Support centre

Sexual Abuse and Rape

- ◇ Physical Power
- ◇ Sexual Power
- ◇ Emotional Power

Victims

- ◇ Victims in general
- ◇ Young People and Children as Victims
- ◇ Barriers affecting Victims

Barriers to change

- ◇ What can change?
- ◇ What should change?
- ◇ How can we make change happen?

Campaigning

**Is someone you know being
abused
right now?**

**Is someone you know abusing a
Child or Young Person?**

**Child sexual abuse must stop.
Call for help.**

Who will you call?

- ◇ And what will they do?
- ◇ Social Services and the Criminal Justice System
- ◇ Resources

Stop abuse

- ◇ Before we can stop the abuse of children and young people in society we must recognise and accept that the Criminal Justice System further abuses victims of sexual violence.
- ◇ We must work PROACTIVELY on behalf of the victim.

The Dream

- ◇ Automatic referrals of victims to support services
- ◇ Support services capable of working with victims at different levels
- ◇ Enhanced training for professionals
- ◇ Changes in the processes from crime – justice and beyond.

The Victim feeling that they have been supported and that they have got the power back over their own lives.

Action Plan

- ◊ It's time to talk...

Safety Net Conference 2006

Dee Taylor
Chief Executive
Victim Support Cumbria



Who are we?

- National Charity founded in 1974.
- Receiving 80% of funding from the Home Office.
- The Cumbrian organisation is made up of 10 paid members of staff managing over 100 volunteers whom last year dealt with over 21,000 referrals.



Who are we?

- We work in the community with victims of crime from three offices based in the north, west and south of the county.
- We support witnesses in two crown and six magistrates courts.



What do we do?

- In the community –
 - Someone to talk to, in confidence.
 - Information on police and court procedure.
 - Liaison with other organisations on behalf of victims.



What do we do?

- In the community -
 - Contact with other sources of help.
 - Arrange for volunteers to accompany people to the police station and to court.
 - Information on compensation and insurance matters and help with your claim.



What do we do?

- In the courts –
 - A quiet place for you to wait before and during the hearing.
 - Someone to accompany you into the courtroom if you have to give evidence.
 - Practical help, for example with expense forms.



What cant we do?

- In the community –
 - Offer help if we are not aware of the victims.
 - Make our witness service aware of any special needs the victim may have.
 - Provide long term counselling to victims.



What cant we do?

- In the courts –
 - if we are not able to meet the victims in advance.
 - Allay peoples concerns about court and let them see the court, and witness waiting rooms, the video link facilities etc.
 - Give help with practical arrangements, whether that be access to buildings or form completion.



What would help?

- Strategic coordination of services offering support to victims of sexual violence across the county.
- Better access to specialist services offering counselling to children and young people.
- Early notification of vulnerable victims and witnesses to Victim Support.





06 December 2007

Dear All,

This is a copy of the e-mail I sent out last week to the decision makers who spoke at the conference.

"First of all my apologies for leaving this a week, my feet barely touched the ground last week! I'd like to thank you all so much for speaking on the 18th. Given the issues being addressed I and many others felt that the day was a real success. A large part of that was down to the presence of decision makers who have the capacity to hear the real needs of those who have experience of the CJS and act on those needs.

I was particularly encouraged by the invitation for the young people who participated to work with the CPS in the spring of 2007 and wait with eager anticipation of that getting off the ground. I did meet with the CPS and the Office for Criminal Justice Reform last Monday and discussed two issues - that of making all sexual offences indictable offences and the use of video link away from court. As part of my work with the office for Criminal Justice reform I hope to develop these two themes in particular.

I look forward to working with the police under the aegis of the OJCR too and hope that a victim's panel can indeed be incorporated here in Cumbria as it is in some other forces. From the angle of Safety Net we will be looking at working with the Cumbria Safeguarding board with a view to developing a proactive approach to working with victims and the supporting the police locally. We also eagerly await the development of the VCUS....

This mail can't hope to cover all the issues, comments and developments raised at the conference, however I do hope to have written the report before the Xmas break and have it all out to you all for comment by then.

Each of you also had an evaluation form in your packs on the day which I would really appreciate having back for the report. Please could you send them to the address below. If you need additional copies please do let me know and I will get them out to you.

Once again, thank you all very much for attending and I look forward to speaking with you again.

This mail has been copied to the young people who participated.

Hope you are well.

Best wishes,

Abigail Finnegan

Manager

Decision Makers Evaluation Summary

Please can you describe your experience of the Y SPEAK consultation process?

- As an agency representative giving a presentation, I was expecting a certain level of criticism about some issues, but also felt asked to give our viewpoint.
- Progressive and imperative

What was this experience to you?

- Neither positive nor negative
- Fairly positive

What was the consultation?

- Pro-active- an approach offering suggestions, comments or opinions and not directly promoted by your organisation.
- Re-active-responding to reports or actions that affected young people

What were you hoping to achieve when you agreed to be involved?

- I wanted to listen to young peoples ideas.
- I wanted to see if young people have new ideas we could use.
- I wanted the opportunity to explain how our policies work.
- I was representing a senior staff member.
- I was invited.
- I wanted to listen to young peoples ideas.
- I wanted to see if young people have new ideas we could use.
- I was invited.

What impact has the consultation had on the understanding, actions or policy of your organisation?

- We have discussed the consultation and are considering future actions.
- We do not expect anything to change.
- We have a new understanding of the concerns of young people.

Please describe any material changes that have been delivered?

- I will take new proposals back to my organisation.

- I will understand young people's views more.
- I will take new proposals back to my organisation.
- I will understand young people's views more.

If you have made any changes in policy or practice, will these impact on the Every Child Matters agenda in helping children and young people?

- Not applicable – as no changes made yet.
- Not applicable.

Do you think YOU have changed through your involvement in this consultation process?

- No.
- Yes, as cannot help but be changed by listening to harrowing experiences. I also have a deeper understanding of problems.

Do you think the young people will have changed as a result of this consultation process?

- Yes.
- Yes.

What were the best and worst aspects of your involvement in the consultation?

- The best aspects of the consultation, were listening to views of young people who had undergone the Criminal Justice process as victims.
- The worst aspects were primarily focussed on bad experiences of young people within Criminal Justice process and maybe needed better balance of any positive experiences.
- The best aspects of the consultation were having powerful presentations by three teenagers.
- The worst aspects were being unable to meet and talk to all attendees.

What do you think about young people's involvement in issues that affect them, following the consultation?

- Worthwhile and should be encouraged.
- Worthwhile and should be encouraged.
- They are entitled to there views.

Is this different from before the consultation?

- No.

- Yes

Is there anything you would change to increase the impact of the consultation?

- The style of the event.
- The style of the event.
- The amount of time given to the event (time-keeping and allocation).

Young People's Evaluation Report Summary

What was the name of the event you went to?

Y SPEAK

What was the date of the consultation?

November 2006

What were the main issues you wanted to discuss during the event?

- Something I was interested in.
- Improving things
- Improving things

Whose idea was the event?

- Workers or Leaders (counsellor)
- Don't Know
- Organisation

Why did you want to get involved?

- Want things to change
- Want things to change
- Want things to change

Did you have any training for your role in the event?

- Prep sessions/they explained
- Prep sessions/they explained
- Prep sessions/they explained

How much information were you given before the event?

- Right amount.
- Right amount.
- Right amount.

In what ways did you give your views about the issues?

- Talking, discussion
- Right amount.
- Right amount.

Where you comfortable with the process used for offering your views?

- Not at all
- Mostly
- Mostly

What did you hope to achieve at the event?

- To tell people how it is/ feels.
- Change things.
- Change things.

Where these expectations met?

- Mostly
- Entirely
- Mostly

Will the event change things?

- Yes, hopefully.
- Don't know.
- Yes, hopefully.

Did you learn any new skills through the event?

- Understand Systems.
- New information.
- Confidence
- Nothing.
- Confidence
- Communication

Have you learnt anything about decision makers?

- They are approachable, interested, helpful.
- Nothing.
- They are interested.

Have you learnt anything about yourself?

- That I can do more than I thought.
- I enjoyed taking part.
- That I can do more than I thought.

Do you plan to do anything else about this after the event?

- I will go to another event like this.
- I will do something else.
- Do things differently in future.
- I will go to another event like this.
- Other.
- I will go to another meeting.

Y SPEAK Young People's evaluation summary.

What was the day about?

- Sexual abuse, the cps and the police.
- Changing the way people deal with sexual abuse.
- Changing the way people deal with sexual abuse.

How did you feel before it?

- Very Nervous.
- Confident and really wanted to do it.
- Unable and nervous

What did you contribute to the day?

- A presentation.
- Absolutely nothing as I couldn't talk.
- A presentation

Did you learn anything? If so, what?

- The more detailed aspects of the CPS and the police service.
- No
- No

How did it help to think about the change/s you want to make?

- Empowered me to make changes.
- Other people had shared what they had been through.
- Encouraged me to help others who have been affected, also to make sure change happens.

Would you recommend it to others?

- Yes.
- Don't know.
- Definitely.

How do you feel now?

- Braver and happier that some people know the failings of the CPS.
- Glad I went but feel stupid and embarrassed because I couldn't do it myself.
- Happier to be heard and hope the effect it had, makes change. Also feel stronger in myself.

Y SPEAK attendee evaluation summary.

What was the day about?

- The way young people are treated by the police, the CPS and the Courts and ways in which this might be improved.
- For me, it was finding out about Safety Net with a view to supporting it.

How did you feel before it?

- Apprehensive about what I might hear.
- Interested.

What did you contribute to the day?

- Helped briefly with signing in.
- My support by attending, asking questions and networking.

Did you learn anything? If so, what?

- A lot not only about the process of Court and Criminal Justice system but about the power of hearing first hand experiences.
- Yes about Safety Net and that experiences via the Criminal Justice System are still bad.

How did it help to think about the change/s you want to make?

- It took some time to digest on what I had heard and made me want to research more and advocate people's needs.
- Support for victim, successful prosecutions, improve the experience ??????????

Would you recommend it to others?

- Definitely.
- Yes.

How do you feel now?

- The emotion of the day has stayed with me and I feel hopeful that I might be able to help someone through the process more aware of the issues.
- More interested.

Grant holders report

How did you find out about Y SPEAK grants?

- Local CVS.

What was the organisation hoping to achieve at the end of the consultation process?

- To get young people's views heard.
- To get more information to young people on something they were interested in /concerned about.
- To try to change services.
- To change the way organisations work with/for young people.

So, how has it been-were your hope realised?

- Partly.

Do you think you have changed through applying for funding, planning and carrying out the consultation and through you contact with decision-makers?

- I have had the opportunity to practice new skills I already had.
- I have learnt new skills.
- I have more understanding of decision makers' point of view.
- I have more understanding of young peoples' needs and wishes.
- I have more idea of how to bring about change.

What would you expect now from consultation between decision makers and young people?

- It is a very interesting process.
- It is a very helpful process.
- It can really change things.

Has that view changed since your consultation project?

- Partly.

What are your opinions about decision-makers now?

- Much more positive.

The consultation process

How did the organisation prepare young people for the consultation?

- A training session or activity.
- Young people were briefed beforehand.
- Information was sent out to groups/individuals.

Do you think young people's experience has changed them at all?

- Yes.

If yes, in what ways?

- They have gained new skills, information.
- They understand decision makers better.
- They have become more confident.
- They have shared views with other people.

How did you prepare the decision makers for the consultation?

- Met with the decision makers before the event, to explain purpose of the event and their role.
- Explained the event over the telephone.
- Wrote to decision makers, explaining what we were trying to achieve.
- Sent out invitations with a brief letter.

The outcomes.

Do you think their experience has changed decision makers at all?

- Yes.

What have you learnt about decision makers?

- They are approachable/ helpful/ interested.

In the consultation, what worked best, and what was least successful?

- The most successful was contributions by the CPS.
- The least successful was the Police.

What were the best and worst moments for you?

- Best moments, Invitation of young people to consult with CPS.
- Worst moments, Appalling criticism by police.

Can you think of one thing that would change about the process, if you were starting again, from applying for the grant up to filling in the evaluation sheet?

- I would have liked to have a clearer picture of the barriers I would have to break down and challenge.

Do you feel your organisation has helped young people have their say and given young people voice?

- Yes.

Do you think the consultation will change anything?

- Yes.

If yes what?

- The CPS's door is open to change and young people have been invited onto a panel advising policy. Watch this space.

The funding was given out under the Every Child Matters criteria. Do you think your grant has impacted on the drive to help young people with any of the following matters?

- Being healthy
- Making a contribution

Are there any other comments you would like to make about the Y SPEAK programme for funding consultation events?

- Just a big THANKYOU for allowing us extra time to do this given the barriers, which were thrown up in front of us.

Y SPEAK notes

- Where a trial is held.
- We are the customer.
- Make the world a better place.
- Sacrifice.
- Witness service and volunteers.
- Consent referrals special cases.
- Who's asking.
- Module 4 training, male/females Rotas.
- Prevention v waiting for crime to happen.
- Short term v long term.
- Short term v rota protocols.
- Young peoples' involvement.
- Emotional.
- WCU
- Forensic.
- Prosecutor.
- Complaints.
- Plea Bargaining.
- Liaison.
- Problems hard to change.
- Try to change.
- Hardship fund.
- Time limits.
- Magistrates.
- Training.
- Safe guarding children.
- Policy.
- Therapy.
- Advocates and witness.
- How to implement policy.
- Who's listening?
- Do something with results.
- Days like this.
- Listening with open mind.
- Special needs.
- Long term counselling.
- Expert witnesses.
- Tell us.
- Strategic Co-ordination.
- Who does what?
- Pre- trial interviews.
- Can't help if not aware.

