



 **LANCASHIRE  
VICTIM  
SERVICES**



# Lancashire Victim Services Annual Summary

2021/22



Supporting Young Victims

# 46,667

## New referrals

The majority of referrals are from Lancashire Constabulary.

We received 2,223 referrals from other agencies and 931 self-referrals.

We often get multiple referrals for the same person from different organisations or if there has been another incident. Therefore the number of cases is lower than the number of referrals. Cases refers to individual people

# 41,287

## Individual cases

# 19,880

## Enhanced cases

Total cases classed as enhanced as determined by the Victims' Code of Practice. These are primarily Domestic Violence, Hate Crime, Sexual Violence, Children and Young People, and those with additional vulnerabilities

Contacted by auto text, email, letter or telephone with an offer of support

*If we do not have a telephone number we will send a letter, but in some cases it is not deemed safe to do so as this may put the client at further risk*

# 40,317

## Offered support

# 18,915

## Contacted by telephone

84% of clients were contacted by telephone with 48 hours of receiving the referral

We successfully spoke with 15,281 victims of crime to conduct a risk and needs assessment

# 15,281

## Needs assessment

# 7,645

## Victims supported

50% of the clients we successfully contacted to conduct a risk and needs assessment benefited from the support of our caseworkers

# Domestic Abuse

**13,521** referrals received

**9,937** individual new clients

**6,537** needs and risk assessments completed

**3,347** clients supported

We have seen a slight decrease in the volume of referrals into our domestic abuse service this year. Primarily the reduction is in the number of cases referred by Lancashire Constabulary, however referrals from other agencies and self-referrals have increased with the service receiving a total of **1,378** this year (Ten per cent of all referrals).

**1,919** clients were assessed as high risk of serious harm/homicide.

An increase of **14%** on the previous year. High risk victims are supported by our team of 16 Independent Domestic Violence Advisors, all of whom are experienced and accredited with Safelives to work with high risk victims of domestic abuse. We supported **1,087** high-risk victims of domestic abuse.

**5,587** clients were assessed as medium risk of harm.

Whilst this is an **11%** reduction from the previous year this does represent the largest proportion of cases we receive and is the area of highest growth over the past few year. The reduction in medium risk cases this year and the increase in high risk cases is partly due to improvements we have made with our assessment process. Additional funding from the Ministry of Justice has given us some extra capacity to introduce more efficient and robust assessment processes. We supported **1,480** medium-risk victims of domestic abuse.

**2,437** clients were assessed as standard risk of harm and we supported **779** victims.

Every client referred into us will be contacted by telephone (where it is safe to do so) and will be given information on our service and the support we can provide. Clients are encouraged to undergo a risk assessment and where willing to do so will be provided with bespoke safety advice and a safety plan. From there we will conduct a needs assessment to address their safety concerns and wider needs including (but not limited to) accessing refuge and safe accommodation, support throughout the criminal justice process and court, benefits and housing needs, immigration, mental health and substance misuse.

# Operation Provide

In November we started to a pilot a new service called Operation Provide. The objective of this service is to try and engage with the most vulnerable, high risk victims of domestic abuse, in particular those where we know there have been multiple incidents but the victim has been unwilling or unable to engage with support services.

The IDVA is based within the police safeguarding team at Preston Police Station. The IDVA prioritises high-risk cases that have happened in the last 24 hours where the alleged perpetrator is in the custody or wanted and the victim is not in support or has not previously engaged with services.

The IDVA will contact a victim at the earliest opportunity while it is safe to do so and where possible conduct a home visit with the police. The IDVA will talk to the client about their options, and help them to decide what the best course of action is for them. The IDVA will complete a risk assessment, bespoke safety planning, and whether or not the victim supports a prosecution will encourage them to take up our offer of longer term support to ensure that they are not only safe but their wider needs and risks are being addressed.

Being able to visit the victim in their own home has helped to build that trust and provide them with all the information they need at the point of crisis and **82** of the victims we have visited from November to March have accepted our support and been passed to our IDVA team for longer term support. We have also provided information and advice to an additional **19** victims, with only nine victims declining to talk with us. As Operation Provide IDVA is working within the police safeguarding team she is able to provide timely updates on the status of the alleged perpetrator keeping the victim fully informed throughout and in liaison with the local IDVA team.

Sue Francis has worked for Lancashire Victim Services for over four years, originally starting as a Domestic Abuse Support Worker before training with Safelives to become an accredited Independent Victim Advocate. It was important that the IDVA working on the project had the right qualities and experience needed to take on this new role and Sue has proved to have that in abundance.



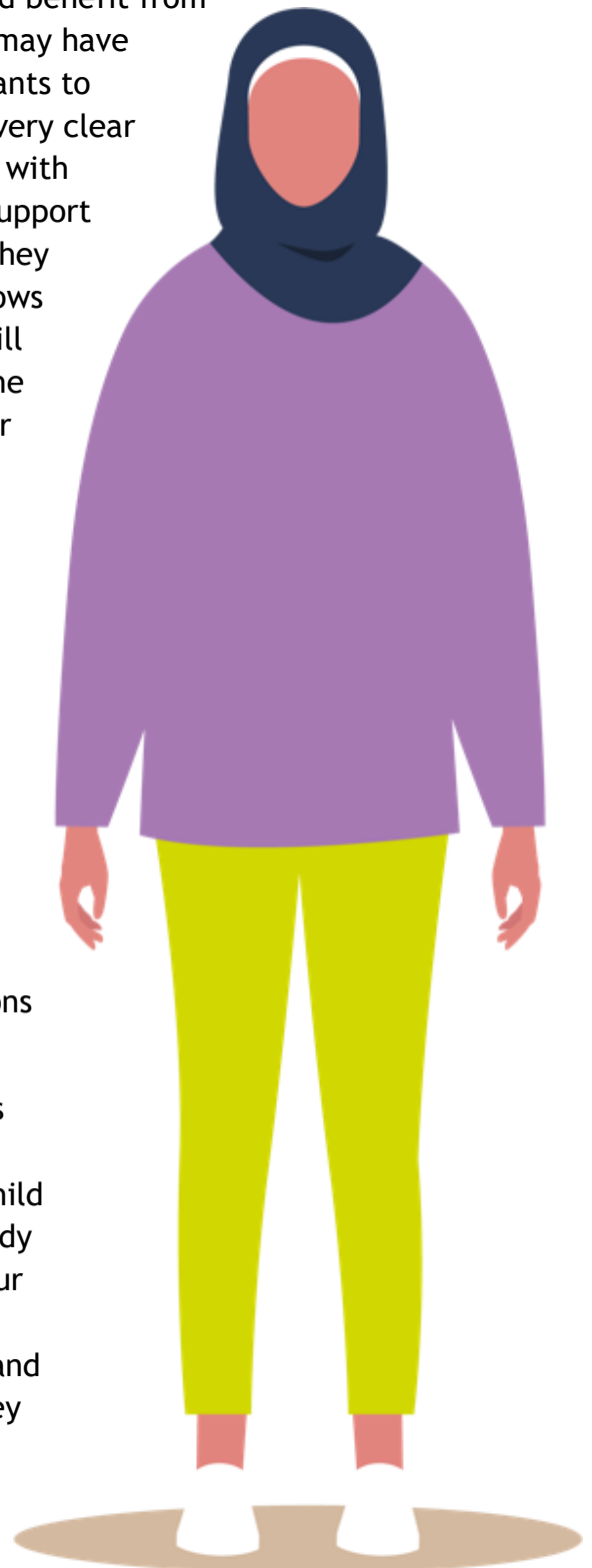
# A day in the life of Operation Provide IDVA

“I arrive at work for 8am and work beside a member of the safeguarding team. The first thing we do is to check the new cases that have come in overnight and see if any perpetrators are in custody. I check to see if they are known to Lancashire Victim Services and whether they are already being supported. For those that are not I will then speak with the Custody Processing Team to ascertain where the alleged offender is and liaise with the officer dealing with the case so that I have a full understanding of the situation.

“We then take a decision as to whether this victim would benefit from a joint visit by myself and the police. Whilst the victim may have called the police at the point of crisis, not everybody wants to make a statement and support a prosecution. I make it very clear that I am not the police, and my role is to provide them with information and to ensure that they are safe and I will support them to make their own informed decisions about how they want to proceed. My main concern is that the victim knows how to keep themselves safe and if they are willing, I will undertake a risk and needs assessment and encourage the victim to engage with our support, regardless of whether they are supporting a prosecution or not. I keep the victim updated with the police process and inform them if they are remanded, released on bail etc. Sometimes the victim might need to leave the home urgently for their own safety and I will help to find refuge or emergency housing. On occasions I have taken them with the police to refuge and helped them to complete the paperwork and get settled.”

“Another part of my role is to assist with Claire Law disclosures, these can come as a real shock to victims (particularly if they haven’t made the request for information) and I can be there to support the client to absorb what they have heard and understand their options and how to keep themselves safe.

“I really enjoy working within the police team and it has really helped with partnership working. I liaise with lots of other teams within the police station including the Child Protection Team, Liaison and Diversity team, CID, Custody Officers, OICs, MAPPA and the Diversity Team (for Honour Based Violence cases). They now have more of an appreciation and understanding of the role of the IDVA and I am able to obtain update’s for the IDVA teams that they sometimes struggle to get.”





# Sexual Abuse

**2,685** referrals received

**2,298** new clients

**1,538** risk and needs assessments completed

**969** clients supported

Sexual violence and abuse referrals have increased by **27%** this year, compared with the previous year and is the highest volume we have received since the start of the service in 2017. These are for both recent and non-recent sexual offences and include **1,161** survivors of rape.

We have seen a significant increase in the number of young victims (under 18) referred into our service and this year have received referrals for **521** young victims of sexual abuse, including **283** young victims of rape.

We ensure that all victims/survivors of sexual violence and abuse get the support they deserve, regardless of the offence and are supported by our team of nine adult Independent Sexual Violence Advisors and five Children's Independent Sexual Violence Advisors. The support we provide will depend on the individual needs of the client but will include support around the criminal justice system - helping people to understand and navigate the complexities of the investigation and justice process, advocating on their behalf and liaising with police and other agencies. We support people emotionally to help them to deal with the devastating impact of what has happened and to access pre-trial therapy and counselling where appropriate, alongside their wider needs such as sexual health interventions and mental health support.

We provide support at ABE (Achieving Best Evidence) interviews, Section 28 interviews. Awaiting and attending trial is especially hard for victims/survivors of sexual abuse, many of whom have their lives effectively "on hold" and our advocates are here to support them throughout their journey. The impact of Covid on the courts and the consequent backlog of cases awaiting trials, adjournments and re-listing of trials has been particularly challenging for both our clients and the service. Increases in referrals and delays in court have meant significant increases in the number of cases our team are managing at any one time.

Despite this we have managed to keep the waiting times for allocation and support to a minimum by making efficiencies within the service. This includes a triage process for new referrals to ensure that everyone has a timely contact and needs assessment whereby we are able to support with any urgent needs and then allocate to an ISVA based on the urgency of support as determined by the impact and risks for that individual. We provide a raft of self-help information at the outset and access to our online platform My Support Space for self-

help tools and information as well as access to Silvercloud, a CBT self-help programme that helps to deal with anxiety and depression.

Our Children and Young People's team have developed a peer support programme that we run via Zoom where young people can talk to others in the same situation around a range of topics that is facilitated and guided by our CHISVA's. These include experience of the criminal justice system; feelings and coping strategies; safe touch, keeping safe on line, feelings and emotions, anxiety and mindfulness; relationships and communication. These were developed in consultation with young people and have been really well attended with some great feedback.

*“I am more confident in myself and what I have been through, it is real, it is OK”*

*“It is good to make new friends who understand what I have been through”*



# Nest - Children and Young People's Service

**4,717** referrals received

**3,914** new clients

**2,857** needs assessments completed

**1,084** children and young people supported

We have had a **42%** increase in referrals into the service this year compared with the previous year. This is a positive for us as we had seen a significant decrease the previous year, during Covid which might have indicated that less children were being identified as victims of crime and being offered the support they need. This included **690** young victims of sexual abuse and exploitation and **420** young people affected by domestic abuse.

We received **733** referrals from schools, other agencies and young people themselves, many of whom had not reported the crime to the police but were in need of help and support.

We have a range of options for support depending on the young person's needs which is assessed at triage stage and allocated to the appropriate pathway which include information, advice and guidance, peer support and one-to-one support with one of our Nest Caseworkers.

Our NEST Caseworkers receive specialist training on our **Risk, Protective and Resilience (RPR) service delivery model**, which was co-designed with young victims, and equips them with the necessary skills to support children and young people to develop positive coping strategies, stay safe, build resilience and create aspirations for the future.

Our one-to-one support is a structured intervention, using age appropriate, interactive tools/interventions to engage with our young people and support them to develop coping strategies; understand the criminal justice and court process; safety and managing feelings and emotions. We will also advocate on their behalf with schools and other agencies to ensure that their wishes and feelings are central to the support they receive.

Our peer support pathway has been really well received and we have delivered four groups to **41** young people - covering topics such as safety, healthy relationships, feelings and behaviours, coping strategies, and learning from others experiences.

***“My Self-confidence has grown a little by listening to everyone in the group”***

***“It helps to speak to grown-ups to get things off your chest and I've learnt to ignore bullies”***



# Schools Domestic Abuse Intervention Programme

Domestic abuse can have a long lasting impact on children and young people so we were really excited to secure funding for a new service. Since the return from half-term in October we have been working within high schools across Lancashire we delivering the Recovery Toolkit for children. This is a structured evidence based programme covering topics such as healthy relationships and trust, gender roles, responsibilities and choices, keeping safe, and feelings and behaviours. In some of the schools we have also been drop-in sessions at lunch-times and one-to-one work with children identified as having higher needs.

The project is being managed by Rowan Cleet. Rowan originally joined our NEST children and young people's service as a volunteer in November 2017. As a volunteer he gained valuable experience. In particular his work with young people affected by the Manchester Evening News (MEN) Arena incident and was part of a team nominated for Volunteer Team of the Year at the Third Sector Awards, receiving a special commendation at the event. This led to Rowan securing a caseworker role with Nest in October 2018 and has since gained THE Young Person's Violence Advisor Accreditation (YPVA) with SafeLives as well as various other qualifications including counselling and mental health first aid. Rowan was ideally placed to take on the lead for this project and together with his team have made a lot of progress in a short space of time.



Since the project started in September we have been in contact with over **100** schools, initially targeting those with a higher prevalence of domestic abuse (as determined by Operation Encompass and MASH data). Despite there being a lot of interest not all schools were in a position to take up our offer so we have widened it out to other schools.

Since October we have received **222** referrals from **44** schools and have delivered **42** courses with **189** young people in **23** different schools, including pupil referral units plus one-to-one support where required.

*“As a VS Volunteer, I have just assisted with the facilitation of my first programme. I was truly amazed by the distance covered from the first to the last of these sessions. Initially, the group was quiet and subdued. Emma steadily drew out each child using a range of activities based on a weekly theme. This was done with humour and empathy. It was very evident that the children quickly came to value this time and space where they were not judged and where they clearly felt comfortable with us.*

*“Watching more than delivering, I was able to see the very real changes in body language and confidence. By the end, friendships within the group were formed, and the atmosphere was entirely different to the first few sessions with smiles and laughter becoming the norm. I know that their problems remain the same but the programme went further than I had imagined possible in helping these young people to develop coping skills.”*



**Supporting Young Victims**

# Volunteering

Volunteers are highly valued and an integral part of our team and have volunteered **2,894** hours this year and supported **225** victims of crime. They support our work performing a variety of roles from direct client work with our different specialist teams to back office roles providing vital administrative support and volunteer Ambassadors who help with community engagement.

It is important to us that our volunteers are reflective of the communities that we serve. We use lots of different platforms to recruit, such as Victim Support website, Charity Job, CVS, community groups and university fairs. By using a variety of platform we are giving opportunity to create a more diverse group of volunteers.

All new volunteers will go through a virtual recruitment process until they reach the induction stage. This approach allows more opportunity for staff members to get involved at the interviewing stage as its less time consuming and not as restrictive as doing so in person. It also allows us to check if the volunteer has the requisite IT skills.

All of our volunteers have to undertake a rigorous training programme which ensures that they are able to deliver the high standards of service we expect, in return they are able to gain vital skills and experience for their own personal development. In fact in the last 12 months we have had seven volunteers who have progressed to paid roles within Lancashire Victim Services.

All new volunteers are trained to support the Multi Crime and Domestic Abuse teams from the onset, these are the areas of business with the highest volume. On successful completion they are able to take on a further training should they wish to support other teams, such as sexual violence training, hate crime or children and young people.

Due to our extensive training package we are fortunate to have a lot of interest in volunteering with Victim Support. In order to ensure that volunteers have a meaningful experience with us it is important that we don't just openly recruit but that volunteers are recruited based on the needs of the service so that the training they do can be put to effective use. A review of our needs earlier in the year led to an expansion of volunteering opportunities which has included roles with our children and young people's service and also group facilitator roles.

Covid has forced us to adapt the way in which we deliver services and volunteers have embraced new methods of working and have found that for some victims, telephone support has been a positive and welcome experience. Volunteers feel this is down to people feeling less inhibited and self-conscious by being at ease within their own safe space.



# Victim Support volunteer experiences through Covid

Nicholas



The title to this piece is misleading, for it implies that I have had some poignant insight resulting from a particular event from which great wisdom can be disseminated. Sadly, of like most us, my activity has been curtailed somewhat over the past twelve months and so, perhaps, there has been little to have learnt or be positive about. Or has there?

My journey with Victim Support began with, in Sherlock Holmes style, the Case of the Missing Goldfish.

Whilst now is not the right time for fully recounting the story of this serious event, suffice it to say that as a result of my visit to the local Police Station, I was contacted by Victim Support. Coincidentally at the time, I was looking for something in which I could engage, both

physical - as in time, and mentally. Having been a College Lecturer and Verifier of Educational Standards in which significant travel had been involved, I was finding the transition to retirement a struggle. I had tried other volunteering roles - a mental health helpline, a look at Citizens Advice - but nothing really grabbed me. Even though a school Governor, a post which I enjoy, I needed more. I needed, indeed thrive on, something which poses a challenge. The VS operative's phone call came at the right time and whilst, as I explained, I was not feeling traumatised as a result of my reported crime, I would however, be interested to support others. And so my VS journey began.

My initial shock arrived quickly in the form of a robust recruitment process followed by the extensive induction training. This was very different from my past experience and a great relief to be part of an organisation which imbued the concept of professionalism throughout the organisation, irrespective of status or whether you were an employee or volunteer. Everyone is expected to go through the same 'hoops'. Refreshing and also challenging.

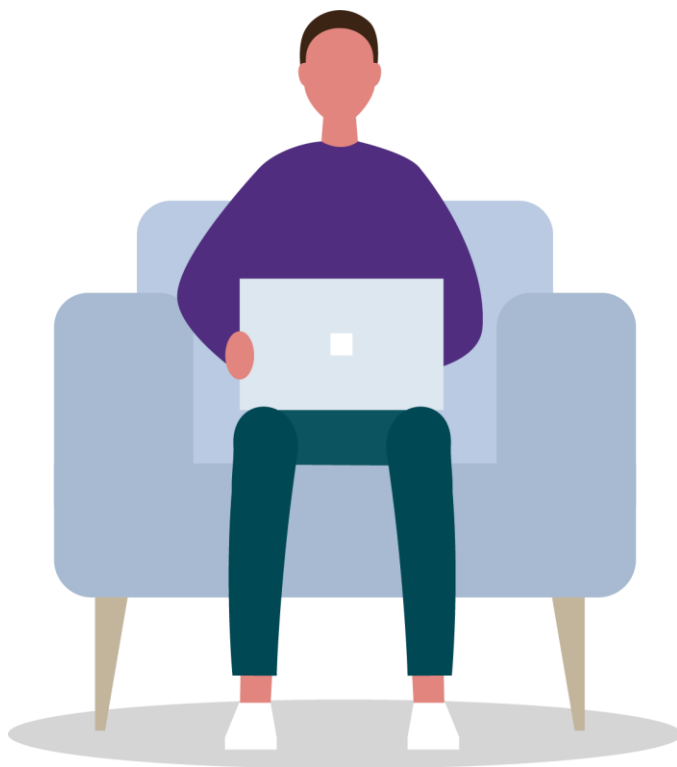
After several months, much training and several 'grilling's' by my mentor, I was ready to go. The green light was given. Somewhat nervous and certainly a little anxious, I waited for my first case to be allocated. I pictured in my head, being briefed at the VS office by my mentor, doing the research, preparation for my visit before making the first trip to see the 'client'. Good. All systems go. That is, until the lockdown was announced and the playing field moved.

From a personal perspective, my heart sank, for all the expectations of developing relationships within the VS offices, were wiped out at a stroke. Like, I suspect most, I was frustrated and felt 'cast off'. However, this is where my VS Covid experience began.

My mentor telephoned and gave me my first case. Then another. And yet another. Cases of varying types and complexity, yet still relatively easily managed given that these were telephone only contacts and I was, still am, learning the 'ropes' of SURF and other resource aids. It was good for my own mental health to be engaged, particularly as at the time my own 94 year old mother who lived nearly four hundred miles away was in increasing decline and posed other pressures which needed addressing. But it was also good to talk to the clients, who themselves were suffering, not only from the effects of the 'crime' for which we were providing support, but also their own difficulties in managing the Lockdown rules. To talk with, and listen to these clients stories whilst also trying to help them, was, for me, cathartic and hopefully for them also.

These, albeit limited VS experiences and my role as a school Governor, even in the very limited way of managing the lockdown restrictions, helped me maintain my 'mojo' throughout the past twelve months. Now that things are being gradually 'released', I am able to re-join the gym group with my pals, be able to attend the school in person and participate in simple tasks like listening to the children read and to become more involved with upcoming VS experiences.

I have been lucky. Others sadly not so and, whilst I am not a particularly 'community orientated' volunteer in the more traditional sense, I nonetheless am really appreciative of the opportunities which VS is providing me in order that I can help others. It feels right, much like being a college lecturer did. In this way I can do my 'bit' for the community whilst also benefitting from all that VS has to offer me as a volunteer. Thank you for giving me the chance to experience these opportunities. There is much to come I suspect.





## Bridget



Since returning to the North West in 2001, I've put my experience in journalism and education to a range of uses. Initially, I worked in the School of Journalism at UCLan, and then at The International Study Centre at Lancaster University. On a voluntary basis, I've taught English to refugees in both Preston and Accrington. And plenty more besides...!

However, it was during Lockdown, as the dreadful social impact of the pandemic became evident, that I went in search of a way to help out. I was thrilled to be taken on as a Volunteer by Victim Support. And, it was genuinely a privilege to be put through the pretty-intense training process. The range and depth of the courses, and the quality of the trainers was impressive.

As a Volunteer for VS, my first project has been with the hugely-welcoming NEST team. I was lucky to be paired up with Emma Robinson - who is brilliant with young people. We recently completed the Recovery Toolkit Programme at a school in East Lancashire (and very soon we start the next one). The children responded so positively to these constructive sessions set in a safe, weekly space. I believe that they all acquired useful coping strategies to help them in their daily challenges living with domestic abuse.

On a personal level, I'm trying to gain as much experience as possible. I have learnt so much over these past six months, and the more I learn, hopefully the more useful I will become.

I believe passionately that the North West is a wonderful place to live. However, there are many issues to address that would improve the quality of life for young people. The team at NEST is making such positive strides in this direction, and it's great to be playing a very small part in these efforts.



# Community engagement



The lifting of Covid restrictions has enabled us to re-invigorate our community engagement and start to get out and about again in the local community. We have worked closely with a number of partners, attending organised events and also organising our own.

In particular we've worked closely with the NHS HARRI bus, which pops up across Lancashire and provides local people with information about services, health, wellbeing, and any other questions

they might have. Together we have been all over the county and connected with lots of people in the community and some great support services. The information gathered about the wide range of services is passed to our teams so they are aware of what is available that might be beneficial for our victims of crime.





## Pride and cultural events

We were finally able to take part in the face-to-face Pride and other events that ran over the summer period of 2021. We had a presence at Morecambe Pride, Lancaster Pride, Blackpool Winter Pride, the MELA, Windrush Festival, and the very first Andy's Man Club Festival.



## 16 Days of Action

Over the 16 Days of Action Against Gender Based Violence we were out and about in different areas across the county, engaging with the communities, and raising awareness. We were even able to get the building crew next to our Preston office involved in the campaign.

We were a member of Domestic Violence panel with included refuges, lawyers, police, school safeguarding and academics to discuss the issue of violence against women and a Reclaim the Night march through Lancaster.





## North West Sexual Violence Awareness Day in Lancashire

Lancashire Victim Services led and coordinated the first ever North West Sexual Violence Awareness Week Lancashire event in November 2021, which was held at the flag market. In addition to ourselves and a number of partners doing a stalled event during the day, we also held a candle lit vigil in the evening where survivor poetry was shared. The event will be repeated again this year in November 2022 as it was such a success.



## University and college engagement

We have been involved with local colleges across the county, doing talks and presentations around pertinent topics such as hate crime, sexual and domestic abuse. As well as information stalls on open days and career days to encourage students to talk with us about any experiences they may have had and the support that is available. We've also been doing some great work with universities such as taking part in Pride events, delivering sessions to first year criminology students in Lancaster and we have worked closely with the Social Prescribing Service at UCLan.



## CYP engagement and NEST

Over the summer we supported a number of events held by the Children and Family Wellbeing Service across the county. These events ran over the school holidays and we were there providing information about both NEST and Lancashire Victim Services to parents and young people. We had tombola's, face painting and name the teddy competition to attract people to our stand and hear more about what we have to offer.



Supporting Young Victims

## Victim Friendly Organisation

The Victim Friendly Organisation framework was successfully rolled out in its new structure in September of 2021, and since then we have had over 100 attendees. Sessions have been held monthly, and are either open for anyone to attend, or provided to larger groups within one organisation. Attendees have included NHS staff, police officers, Bernardo's, Inspire, City Hearts, Release Into Victory, Hope for Justice, Ashwood Solicitors, and many more. So far the survey feedback has been **one hundred per cent positive** and we are getting to the next stage of the project, where we will be developing and rolling out bitesize sessions. Topics will include Hate Crime, Domestic Violence and Coercive Control, Sexual Violence, Equality Diversity and Inclusion, the Victims' Code of Practice, and others.

## Police training

Training of new officers and PCSOs has remained consistent over the past year, with delivery being both online and in person at Hutton. Hundreds have attended throughout the year to hear about the work that we do at LVS and also how we work together with the police force. Certain forces have also had bespoke training delivered, such as Domestic Violence sessions, or closed VFO sessions.

## Supporting partners

We've done some great work supporting partners in the past year by having a presence at a number of events, including: UCLan's Community Action Forum for Social Prescribing, the Global Race Centre for Equality (GRACE)'s event 'Race, Place and Justice', the Rural Stakeholder Event hosted by the Rural police team, and Release Into Victory's workshops for their new Taboo Project.

## Targeted work

Work has been ongoing on the Hate Crime agenda and there has been continued targeted work across the county. There has been much work done with partners to support people with disabilities, and an increased focus on supporting mosques, which included a day at Jamia Mosque Ghosia in Burnley. There has also been an increased presence in Blackburn to support the BAME community. Additionally an increased presence with pop up stalls in supermarkets and shopping centres in Blackpool and Skemersdale to reach the disadvantaged communities in those areas.



## Awareness work

We've been doing awareness work throughout the year, including with partners such as the police. During Hate Crime Awareness week for example we teamed up with the constabulary hate crime team and Disability Equality North West to hold an event in Preston Market. Where we haven't been able to do events in person we've been active in supporting online campaigns through social media, such as the CPS's campaign on Victim Impact Statement and the recent NHS SARC campaign. We've also taken part in days in the community such as Stop Smoking Day (with the NHS, Macmillan, Mind and the Quit Squad), Time to Talk Day in Blackburn, International Men's Day in Layton, and an event we coordinated for Disability History Month with the Constabulary and DENW at the bus station.



## Social media

Social media engagement and reach has been at an all-time high over the past year, with the number of people reached within the past six months via Facebook being **17,810** and Twitter **36,241**.

