

Request Reference: 10372/16

Q. I am interested in learning about the guidance / training given to officers on the advice they should give victims of crime about getting therapy (i.e. psychological help) while their case is still under investigation or the subject of court proceedings.

For example, are victims advised not to get therapy during court proceedings in case it affects or is seen to affect their evidence?

Please could you provide details of any policy or guidance West Midlands Police gives its officers on what advice they should give victims of crime about getting therapy during on-going proceedings.

A. As a Force we have trained both response and supervisors the Victims Code[^], whereby as a Priority Victim all officers have to inform the victims that they can have pre-trial therapy and that they should liaise with their GP if they are not referred to a specialist organisation. As a Force we train officers from PIP1 (SOTP) through to PIP2 ICIDP, SCADIP, STO that for certain offences, there is not an automatic referral to victim support unless the victim requests this. Victim Support then has contacts with specialist organisations.

During ICIDP and STO course we train regarding specialist referrals such as Independent Sexual Violence Advisors for Sexual Offences, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors for Domestic Violence, Women's Aid, Crisis Point, Honour Based Violence specialist referral groups, depending on the offences reported.

Students on SOTP, STO and ICIDP are given a hand-out with the statutory obligations regarding the Victims Code, which has the fact of Priority Victims being informed of information on pre-trial therapy and referral to specialist organisations.

We have also had Subject Matter Experts give presentations regarding referrals to their respective organisations i.e. Honour Based Violence, etc.

[^]https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/476900/code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime.PDF