

# NCVPP

National Centre for  
Violence Against  
Women & Girls and  
Public Protection

## Using the Experience of Victim/Survivors to Improve Police Practice

### Appendix B – Data Collection Methods

December 2025

# B.1 Customer Service Methods

## B.1.1 Structured Methods

Method	Description
<b>Interviews and Focus Groups</b>	<p>Interviews and focus groups are commonly used methods that incorporate semi-structured or open-ended questions, allowing for in-depth responses. These can be conducted alongside or as part of larger pieces of work, such as needs assessments or externally commissioned studies.</p> <p>This approach can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allow respondents to give fuller responses and more opportunities to direct the discussion.</li><li>• Allow individuals to remain anonymous, encouraging more honest perspectives.</li></ul> <p>These methods require a certain level of resource and capability for both conducting and analysing responses, and therefore can be labour-intensive and time-consuming.</p>
<b>Feedback</b>	<p>Feedback processes often focus on positive personal feedback, criticisms or complaints.</p> <p>This approach can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be less prescriptive than other methods, such as surveys, allowing individuals to provide perspectives in their own words.</li></ul> <p>However, these processes are often guided by specific eligibility criteria and guidelines about what can be addressed, such as issues related to policing standards, the service received, or how police are using resources.</p>
<b>Mixed Methods</b>	<p>Mixed methods combine quantitative and qualitative approaches within a single practice, such as surveys and interviews. This entails gathering numerical data from a larger sample with in-depth insight from a smaller number of people.</p> <p>This approach can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help provide context and deeper understanding of large-scale quantitative survey results by incorporating qualitative, in-depth insights gathered from a smaller sample.</li></ul>

## B.1.2 Unstructured Methods

Method	Description
<b>Ad Hoc and Introductory Meetings</b>	<p>These methods are informal meetings where police personnel are invited to listen to victim/survivors or community members in an open conversation. These sessions are often initiated by third parties.</p> <p>This approach can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve as a starting point for engaging with minoritised groups the police sometimes have little contact with.</li> <li>• Lead to further engagement.</li> </ul>
<b>Victim Voices Through Third Parties</b>	<p>This method uses external organisations such as service providers or third-sector groups who work closely with victim/survivors to gather victim/survivor voices indirectly. Information may be gathered through research or projects carried out with victim/survivors, or more informally through service-user interactions and insights.</p> <p>This approach can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve engagement for individuals who may feel unsafe or uncomfortable interacting directly with police, such as those who are minoritised or vulnerable, or who have previous adverse experiences with police.</li> <li>• Provide an alternative safe and trusted route through which the voices of individuals can be gathered and heard.</li> </ul> <p>However, this approach limits direct collaboration between police and victim/survivors.</p>
<b>Training and Conference Presentations</b>	<p>This method involves victim/survivors delivering training to police, often alongside professionals, or presenting their experiences at conferences and events. Some victim/survivors working within third sector organisations may do this as part of their role or undertake training packages such as 'train the trainer' to help them develop the necessary skills.</p> <p>These approaches can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow victim/survivors to share unfiltered perspectives, including specific examples of how it has affected them and highlight potential missed opportunities.</li> <li>• Enable victim/survivors to share experiences in a way which can be empowering and therapeutic.</li> </ul> <p>However, it can be challenging for individuals to share difficult experiences and there is a risk that feedback in a public forum may not always be constructive. It is important to ensure clear communication, clarify the purpose of the feedback, and prepare for potentially difficult responses. Additionally, these events may be seen as tokenistic if victim/survivors are excluded from conversations about how their voices may be used in the future to inform service design. It is important strategic leaders have measures in place to avoid tokenism.</p>

## B.2 Transactional Methods

METHOD	DESCRIPTION
<b>Engagement Forums, Networks and Events</b>	<p>These forums can vary in their inclusivity, with some open to the entire community and others restricted to victim/survivors or occasionally focusing on those affected by specific types of crime. There may be certain criteria, such as those with specific protected characteristics.</p> <p>These approaches can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can create a space for victim/survivors and the police to come together to share concerns, experiences, and ideas for improvement.</li><li>• Facilitate dialogue between police and victim/survivors, enabling both groups to learn from each other.</li><li>• Enable constructive exchanges which can result in a development of mutual understanding.</li><li>• Offer victim/survivors the opportunity to share their experiences openly and influence the agenda, fostering a collaborative environment to address shared challenges.</li></ul>
<b>Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) and Other Advisory Boards</b>	<p>These methods involve victim/survivors or members of the public reviewing or consulting on police practices and providing feedback. This can include policies, communication materials, or research project design and tools. These groups can meet regularly or on ad hoc basis when a specific issue arises.</p> <p>These approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Often include individuals from vulnerable populations, such as victim/survivors of particular crimes or those with protected characteristics. This ensures a diverse range of perspectives is considered and enables members to access information that would not normally be available to them.</li></ul>
<b>Scrutiny Panels and Oversight</b>	<p>These panels are designed to scrutinise police conduct in specific areas, highlighting poor practices and identifying opportunities for improvement. Typically lasting around two hours, members are given access to information such as body-worn camera footage and are asked to provide feedback. This feedback often takes the form of a report with recommendations.</p>

## B.3 Collaborative Methods

METHOD	DESCRIPTION
<b>Co-production</b>	<p>Co-production in policing is an innovative approach where victim/survivors and professionals jointly work together to discuss their needs, perspectives, and experiences. Those with lived experience are often best placed to advise on changes to practice and services that affect victim/survivors.</p> <p>Key elements of coproduction include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Joint problem solving</li><li>• Transparency and mutual accountability</li><li>• Building trust</li><li>• Shared ownership of outcomes</li></ul> <p>This can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensures victim/survivors are empowered, helping them feel in control of their experience with the police, and can actively contribute to achieving better outcomes.</li><li>• Improve the quality and relevance of policing services to victim/survivor's specific needs.</li></ul>
<b>Expert Panels</b>	<p>Expert panels can be involved in a variety of activities, such as contributing to research, informing policy development, serving as a sounding board for new initiatives, providing valuable feedback, and reviewing outputs.</p> <p>Their involvement can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help ensure that the perspectives of those with lived experience are integrated into decision-making processes, shaping more effective and inclusive outcomes.</li></ul>

METHOD	DESCRIPTION
<b>Lived Experience Advisors</b>	<p>Lived Experience Advisors provide valuable insights and guidance based on their personal experiences with the criminal justice system to shape policies, training, and community engagement to ensure more equitable and effective policing practices.</p> <p>Collaboration with Lived Experience Advisors can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide opportunities such as attending meetings, participating in task and finish groups, or contributing to practical improvements, such as enhancing the force website.</li> <li>Ensures meaningful engagement beyond verbal or written responses.</li> </ul> <p>Considerations for Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider moving from a consultative approach to one where lived experience is embedded across the organisation. This can include involving advisors or trustees with lived experience to act as representatives on advisory groups to shape strategies and provide recommendations; or involving lived experience advisors in recruitment panels and research initiatives to ensure diverse perspectives.</li> <li>Work closely with third-sector organisations that successfully integrate lived experience into their operations, learning from their practices to strengthen collaboration and community trust.</li> </ul>
<b>Peer Research</b>	<p>This method involves members of groups and forums carrying out research with peers or members of the community with lived experience.</p> <p>This approach can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help to identify wider concerns and challenges, providing valuable context for policing practices and community engagement.</li> </ul>
<b>Youth Engagement Groups</b>	<p>Youth Engagement Groups are collaborative forums where young people with lived experience share their perspectives and experiences to help inform police policies, practices, and foster stronger relationships between police and youth.</p> <p>This approach can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen relationships between the police and young people.</li> <li>Encourage young people to take an active role in police training. For example, groups like Police Cadets can be involved in designing and delivering training packages to officers, bringing fresh perspectives and enhancing mutual understanding.</li> <li>Enable young people with lived experience to have decision making powers around the practice itself, including how it is developed, run, or how funds should be spent, often through collaboration between the police or partner agency and members of the group.</li> </ul> <p><b>These groups should only be facilitated by skilled practitioners.</b></p>

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## About the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection

We're a collaboration between the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council.

We work across law enforcement, the third sector and government to professionalise public protection and strive for a whole systems approach to prevent harm, give confidence to victims, survivors and witnesses to come forward and bring more offenders to justice.

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