



Item 7

28th August 2025

Glasgow Community Planning Partnership

Safe Glasgow Partnership

Report by Chief Superintendent Emma Croft

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Victim Support Scotland update

Purpose of Report:

To provide members with an update on the ongoing work with Victim Support Scotland.

Recommendations:

The Safe Glasgow Partnership are asked to note the contents of this report.



VSS Greater Glasgow Q1 2025 Update

Victim Support Scotland

Victim Support Scotland is Scotland's largest victim oriented charitable organisation. A key partner with both Police Scotland and the Scottish Executive, VSS is integral to how we support victims and witnesses of crime.

The charity manages the Victims' Fund which can provide people in Scotland who are in financial hardship because of crime, with up to £3,000 for a wide range of goods and services where they have no other access to funds.

VSS also runs the Support for Families Bereaved by Crime service which provides a nationally consistent, reliable service for all families affected by murder or culpable homicide, allowing them to access practical guides, financial assistance, and emotional support wherever they live in Scotland.

The VSS process is entirely voluntary for victims with every victim or witness of any crime within Police Scotland offered a referral to VSS based on an informed consent process. This process has been in place since May 2017 following ensuring we meet our legislative requirements to protect personal information along with ethical data processing referral mechanisms under GDPR. Prior to this a system of automatic referral was in place which was not compliant with GDPR requirements.

Referrals

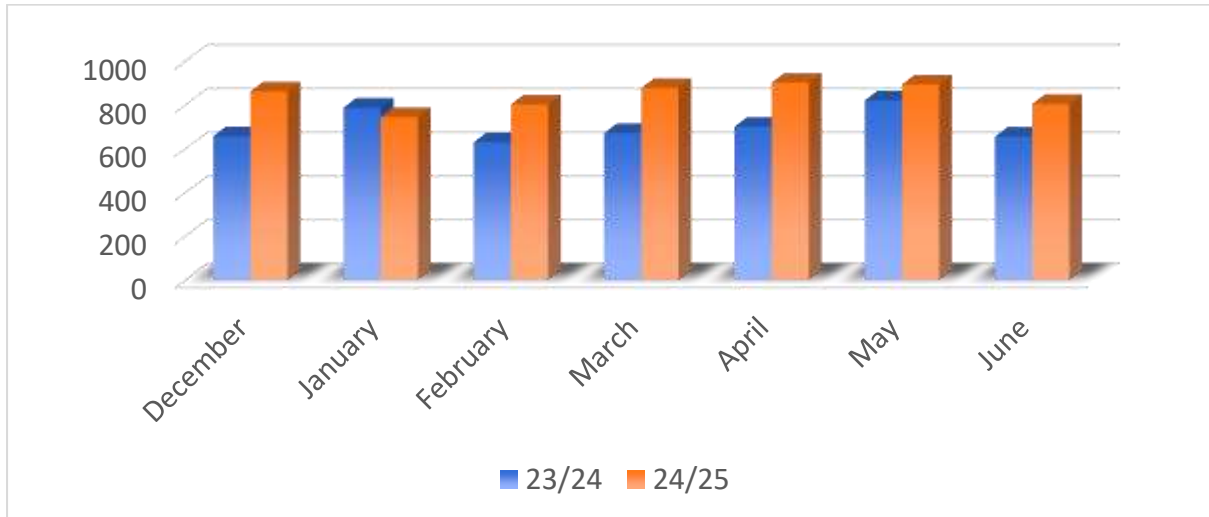
Upgraded systems at both VSS and the Police Scotland national crime system have been a positive improvement. This has removed the requirement for local policing divisions to co-ordinate referrals through legacy arrangements and provides a single point of contact for VSS through the national Victims and Witnesses team.

Daily, all national referrals are extracted from the crime system and sent through automated data transfer to VSS. Recent updates to the system include an email acknowledgment to confirm data transfer and the additional of retrospective referrals i.e. referrals made some time after the initial recording of the crime. This has made the process more efficient with less demand on officer and staff time at both organisations.

Figures

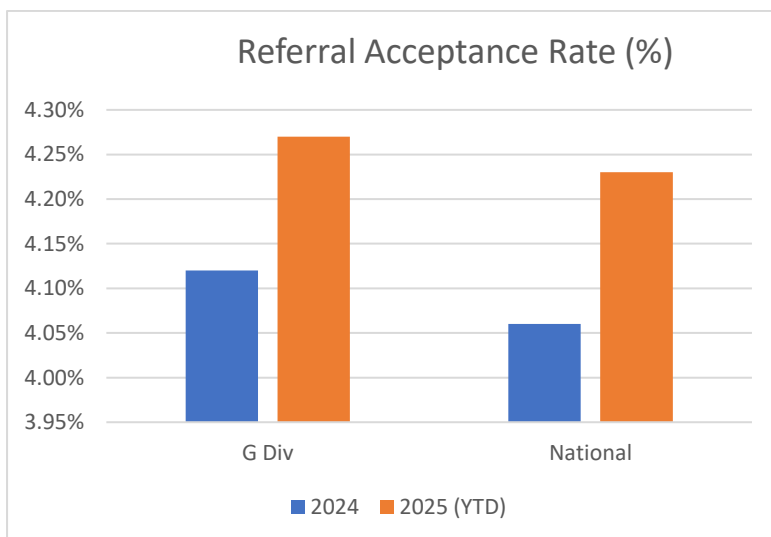
○ National

The graph below indicates national referral numbers to VSS since December 2024 compared to the equivalent month of the previous year. This shows an overall increase with a 16% uplift in Q1 2025 compared to Q1 2024 and a 18% increase in Q2 2025 compared to Q2 2024.



○ Greater Glasgow referrals

Referral acceptance rate for G Division has seen an increase in 2025 to date, when compared to 2024. In both cases that has been above the national average for all local policing divisions across Scotland.



Greater Glasgow Q1 2025	
VSS Accepted %	4.36%
VSS Declined	96.30%

The above figures illustrate Victim Support Scotland engagement with victims and witnesses of crimes within Greater Glasgow for Q1 2025 April to June at YTD 2025.

Greater Glasgow VSS Partnership

In Greater Glasgow Division, work extensively with VSS with an integrated VSS champion officer embedded within every operational policing department across the division. These officers are experts in VSS referrals supporting colleagues and the public. This has been coupled with internal training of staff around the benefits of VSS to assist in conveying this message to the public.

Our preventions and intervention team support the delivery of the VSS victim support fund, assisting with crime prevention surveying and direct victim support. Our trained crime prevention officers provided expertise in the deployment of the VSS victim funds ensuring provision of the most suitable crime prevention technology.

Working in partnership with VSS we have delivered joint training with VSS to ensure cross-agency sharing of expertise and knowledge, to ensure that victims are supported to a high level. We have established new partnership relationships with VSS and other third sector agencies including Cycling UK for access to free bicycles for victims, Age Scotland and Good Morning Scotland to discuss referral pathways between the organisations for older persons.

GDPR considerations

The introduction of the opt-in model in 2017 (in anticipation of the introduction of the GDPR legislation in 2018) saw the number of referrals from PS to VSS decrease immediately.

In 2020, PS and VSS worked together on a joint project to better understand the wider referral process. The data highlighted that a large majority of these referrals pre 2017 were from people who did not want support and were classed as “inappropriate referrals”. This concluded that the main impact of the change from opt-out to opt-in was a reduction in these “inappropriate referrals.”

There was acknowledgement however that there was also a steady decline in referrals since the 2017 change and wide-ranging recommendations were developed to support officers in supporting victims and witnesses of crime. Over the last few years several positive changes have been made including:

- Creation of a ‘quick link’ to the victims and witnesses intranet information on police officers’ hand-held devices.
- Creation of a Power BI tool to measure referral numbers and care card distribution numbers the national crime system
- Rights reminder information included on the witness statement form to prompt officers to offer support at point of taking statement.
- Refreshed Victim Care Card (now Your Care Card) and electronic option of delivery which has information about VSS.
- Updated Victim and Witness intranet for ease of officer use and opportunity to make electronic referrals.
- Improvements to Power BI tool and VSS referral recording including measurement of retrospective referrals.
- Ongoing engagement and awareness including improvements to PS internet/intranet pages, VSS inputs throughout the organisation and recent collaboration during Victim Awareness Week 2025 when Kate Wallace, CEO VSS sent [message of thanks](#) to all officers and staff.

- G division have an identified single point of contact (SPOC) with the Preventions and Interventions Team who attends the quarterly national VSS SPOC meetings for updates and to share good practice.

Conclusion

Police Scotland have a national commitment to VSS, with work continually ongoing with our National Victim and Witness Department, Policing Together to support this partnership. PS continue to work with VSS at a local and national level to raise awareness, improve the referral process and ensure people that need practical and emotional support during the criminal justice process have the opportunity to receive this in a way that meets their needs. VSS is in operation across all areas of Policing in Scotland.