

Liverpool Making WAVES

**Witness and Victim
Encouragement and Support**

Introduction

Significant steps have been made across England in recent years to improve the level of support provided to victims and witnesses of crime. In particular, attention has focused on tackling witness and victim intimidation by perpetrators of crime and their associates. This has been recognised to have major detrimental effects on the physical, emotional and social well being of victims and their families, and to act as a significant barrier to the reporting of crime. In Liverpool, the Making WAVES initiative was developed in 2007 to provide a tailored service to support victims and witnesses of crime, particularly those experiencing intimidation, and to encourage them to proceed through the criminal justice system. Following a successful pilot¹, Making WAVES has now been implemented in five areas of Liverpool that have faced particular issues with witness intimidation, crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) (see Box 1). This document describes the Liverpool Making WAVES programmes, highlighting the practicalities of their implementation; their impact on victims, witnesses and local communities; and key successes and lessons learnt.

What is Making WAVES?

The overall aim of Making WAVES is to encourage victims and witnesses to report crimes and access support, regardless of whether they wish to report the crime directly to the police or not. The key objectives are to:

- Facilitate the cohesion of local services in identifying and supporting victims and witnesses;
- Provide a single point of contact for victims and witnesses to gain support and access the criminal justice system if they choose to do so;
- Provide tailored support for victims and witnesses based on individual needs through all relevant agencies;
- Increase reporting of crime and witness intimidation, with the aim of preventing such incidents from occurring; and,
- In the long term, increase the proportion of victims and witnesses that enter and proceed through the criminal justice system.

Making WAVES is a multi-agency initiative involving a range of partners who can identify and support victims

Box 1: Liverpool Making WAVES projects

City and North: Established in July 2007 as the pilot project, covering the Everton area and based within the Breckfield and North Everton Neighbourhood Council (BNENC) Centre.

Alt Valley: Established in September 2008, covering the Fazakerley, Croxteth and Norris Green areas and based within Cobalt Housing.

South Liverpool: Established in July 2009, covering the Speke and Garston areas and based within South Liverpool Housing.

South Central: Established in July 2009, covering the Toxteth area and based within Riverside Housing.

Liverpool East: Established in January 2010, covering the Anfield area and based within Arena Housing.

and witnesses of crime. The programme has a number of core components that support its implementation (see Box 2). The essential part, however, is the employment of a local co-ordinator who provides a case management service for victims and witnesses and coordinates the implementation of the service.

The Making WAVES co-ordinator acts as a single point of contact for victims and witnesses to report crimes and access support, providing reassurance, help and advice. Victims and witnesses can self-refer to the programme or be referred by a third party (e.g. partner agency). Upon engagement with Making WAVES, case details are discussed and where necessary, information and advice are provided on accessing additional support, reporting the crime, and proceeding through the criminal justice process (Figure 1: The Making WAVES process). An assessment of the risk of witness intimidation is also made to inform the type of support the victim or witness may need.² With the agreement of the client, the co-ordinator refers individuals to relevant agencies for specific support, whilst staying in regular contact with them to provide feedback on case progress and ongoing support until their case is resolved.

¹ Anderson et al. Evaluation of the Breckfield Making WAVES pilot project. Liverpool, Centre for Public Health, Liverpool John Moores University, 2008.

² Office for Criminal Justice Reform. Working with intimidated witnesses. A manual for police and practitioners responsible for identifying and supporting intimidated witnesses. London, Office for Criminal Justice Reform, 2006.

Box 2: Key steps in establishing a Making WAVES programme

1. Identifying key issues in the local area and available support services

To tailor the programme to local needs, a good understanding is needed of issues including: levels of crime and intimidation in the local community; residents' perceptions of police and other authorities; barriers that prevent victims and witnesses from engaging with the criminal justice system and seeking support; and existing services and interventions available to local people. This can be achieved through a scoping exercise, community surveys and consultation with members of the community.

2. Employing a local co-ordinator

The local co-ordinator is critical in the success of the programme. They should be independent from the criminal justice system, yet have good knowledge of its processes, the type of support required by victims and witnesses, and how to access such support. Experience of case management and problem solving is also important, as is the ability to communicate with a range of people, from local residents to partner agency leads. The co-ordinator must be able to gain the trust and confidence of the local community and be seen as a dependable source of support.

3. Establishing a neutral base for the programme within the local community

The local co-ordinator should be based in a location that is easily accessible to local people and not directly linked to the criminal justice system. Residents must feel confident that they can engage with the programme and report crime confidentially. Locations such as community centres and housing agencies can be accessed by local residents for a variety of reasons, and basing Making WAVES in such locations allows victims and witnesses to access the service without this being obvious to the wider community.

4. Developing a strong multi-agency partnership

The Making WAVES programme depends on strong cooperation and commitment from a range of partners, including: the police, local authority, community safety partnership, Victim Support, Fire and Rescue Service, local housing associations, Her Majesty's Court Service, and other relevant support services. Establishing a programme steering group with representatives from key partners facilitates the engagement of all relevant agencies.

5. Developing a programme action plan and protocols

A programme action plan should be developed in partnership with all key stakeholders that clearly sets out the aims and target outcomes of the programme and how these are to be achieved. The development of programme procedures and protocols, including information sharing protocols and defined referral pathways, ensures all partners understand their role in the process and can embed it into their practice.

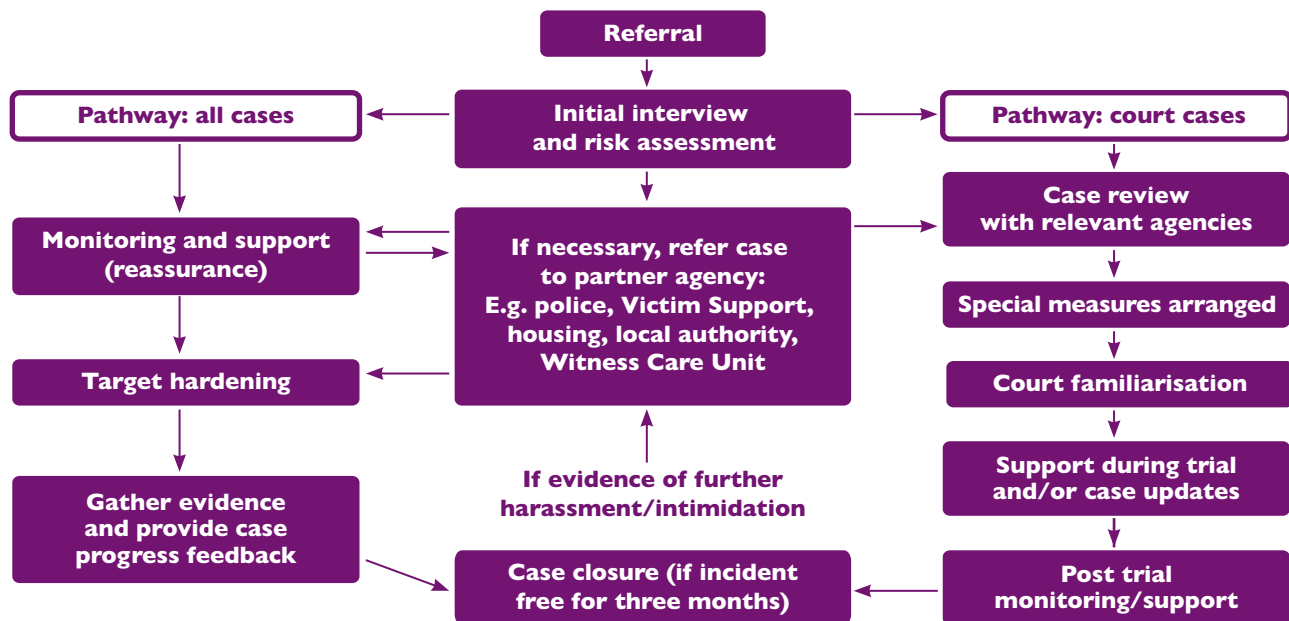
6. Community engagement

The co-ordinator needs to explore how best to inform the community of the programme and fully engage with them. This may be through community meetings, newsletters, door-to-door visits, promotion via well established agencies and promotional events.

7. Training local partners

Staff in partner agencies should be provided with training to ensure they are fully aware of the programme and their role in its implementation. A dedicated training programme has been established that covers: how to identify intimidated witnesses and their support needs; the type of support provided by different agencies and referral pathways; and, the Making WAVES programme and what it can provide.

Figure 1: The Making WAVES process



Making WAVES activity and impact

1. Victims and witnesses

Since 2007, Making WAVES has supported over 1,000 cases, some of which have involved multiple victims and witnesses. Clients have received a wide range of support based on their individual needs. This has included: advice and reassurance; target hardening measures (e.g. window locks); additional police patrols in problem areas; counselling; assistance with rehousing; and support through court and beyond. This support has led to a range of outcomes, from victims and witnesses feeling safer in their homes and local community, to perpetrators being arrested and prosecuted for the crime. Examples of cases that have been supported by Making WAVES are provided in Boxes 3 to 6, showing the agencies involved in each case, the types of support provided and key outcomes. A telephone survey with a sample (n=73) of victims and witnesses supported by Making WAVES has shown:

- The majority were satisfied or very satisfied with the Making WAVES service overall (91.5%) and believed that they were supported very well throughout their engagement with the programme (91.5%);
- Over seven in ten (72.2%) felt safer after engaging with Making WAVES than they did beforehand; 4.2% felt less safe; and,
- Over nine in ten (94.4%) would contact Making WAVES again if they needed to and would recommend the service to someone they knew.

“With WAVES you feel like you’ve got a team who know you, you’re not a number, you feel like you’re actually being looked after” Project user.

“I would not have gone to court without [Making WAVES]” Project user.

2. Community

Evaluations of the Making WAVES programmes have suggested that it can lead to important benefits for local communities that appear to be strongest when the programme is fully embedded within partner agencies. Community household surveys show that in some Making WAVES programme areas there have been increases in perceptions of safety in the local neighbourhood and in the proportion of people reporting crimes to the police. There have also been some decreases in the proportion of victims and witnesses reporting that they were intimidated following a crime. Further, perceptions of some local partners have improved, with, for example, more people agreeing that the police are trustworthy and doing a good job, and that the police and council are dealing with local problems in a number of Making WAVES areas.

3. Partner agencies

Evaluations of Making WAVES programmes suggest that they have led to stronger partnership working and better awareness of witness intimidation, working practices and available support amongst partner agencies. This has led to improvements in the level and accessibility of support available to victims and witnesses of crime.

“We knew what an intimidated witness was before but Making WAVES has given us tools to be able to help that person more than we would have been able to do without it” Partner agency.

“You see the same faces – it makes you more proactive as a team. It keeps the continuity as well, that’s very important for the client” Partner agency.

Box 3: Hate crime case study

Case description: The victim’s family were opposed to their recent change of religion (the victim converted to their partner’s religion upon marrying). The victim’s relatives began harassing them and their family, which included young children, with threats of petrol bombing the house and physical violence. The case was referred to Making WAVES from the fire service after the victim contacted them due to the intimidation and threats of petrol bombing.

Key actions taken: The victim received target hardening consisting of: CCTV cameras with lights, a fire-proof letter box bag, and fire alarms. The

Benefits and achievements

Evaluations of the Making WAVES programmes suggest that, when implemented effectively, they have led to:

- More witnesses and victims coming forward to report crime and witness intimidation;
- Improved public confidence in the police and local support agencies;
- Numerous arrests and prosecutions of perpetrators, including key gang crime leaders;
- Greater communication and partnership working between agencies; and,
- Improved support and referral mechanisms for victims and witnesses of crime, ASB and intimidation.

These achievements have been recognised through several national awards. For example, the pilot project won the outstanding contribution to engaging communities category at the Justice Awards 2007 and the South Liverpool Making WAVES programme came first in the creating safer communities category at the UK Housing Awards 2010. Critically, across Liverpool, the benefits of Making WAVES have been recognised at a senior level across key partner agencies including the local authority, Crown Prosecution Service and police.

co-ordinator supported the victim through court, arranged special measures for them to provide evidence and attended court with them to provide reassurance. After the court case the co-ordinator kept in contact via telephone calls.

Agencies involved: Fire and Rescue Service, local authority, community safety partnership, Witness Care Unit, police.

Outcomes: The victim felt safer living in their home and local community. The offender was convicted at court.

“I still found [giving evidence] hard, but I don’t think I could have done it without that screen being there [in court]” Case victim.

Box 4: Domestic violence case study

Case description: The victim was referred to Making WAVES from a domestic violence support agency. The victim had been suffering domestic violence including sexual assault from an ex-partner. The offender's relatives had also been intimidating the victim. At the time of referral the offender was on bail pending trial.

Key actions taken: Making WAVES provided the victim with target hardening (door cameras fitted to keep surveillance of callers to the property and various fire safety equipment). The co-ordinator provided support through court including arranging special measures and regular reassurance visits and telephone calls. Liaison was made with another Making WAVES

programme to facilitate re-housing for the victim out of the area. The co-ordinator is still in contact with the victim to offer reassurance.

Agencies involved: Fire and Rescue Service, another Making WAVES programme, housing associations, domestic violence support service, Witness Care Unit, Victim Support.

Outcomes: The victim was re-housed out of the area and the perpetrator was convicted of a related incident.

"It's not like you're a name or number, you're a person with them. You're a person and that's what makes it important, you're not just a file" Case victim.

"The Crown Prosecution Service is committed to working in partnership with all those involved in Making WAVES to ensure its continued development and success. Through a collective commitment to this project we can greatly increase the protection and support offered to the most vulnerable victims and witnesses"
Chief Crown Prosecutor.

"Due to the support of Making WAVES, witnesses who would normally not become involved have done so, and due to their invaluable evidence and intelligence it has made it possible to take proactive action against those individuals who are responsible for making life at times unbearable for a number of communities across Liverpool"
Anti-social Behaviour Unit lead.

Key success factors and lessons learnt

Throughout the development of the five Making WAVES initiatives in Liverpool a number of key success factors have been identified by partners. These include:

- Developing strong partnership working and programme ownership between all key partners at all levels;
- Ensuring there is a clear and concise programme of what Making WAVES aims to achieve at a local level and the expected contributions from partners;
- The employment of an appropriately-qualified Making WAVES co-ordinator who has experience of the criminal justice process and available support services, and is an effective problem solver;
- Adapting the programme and its implementation

based on local needs and existing partnership working arrangements whilst maintaining its core principles;

- Acknowledging the different working practices of partner agencies and the potential impact this may have on the service and victim and witness support;
- Ensuring the necessary resources are in place before commencing the project;
- Marketing the service slowly to ensure project resources can meet demand and victims and witnesses' anonymity can be maintained; and,
- Taking a long term approach to implementing and embedding the service across partner agencies.

Box 5: Anti-social behaviour case study

Case description: A lone parent self-referred to Making WAVES because they were a victim of ASB. They were being subjected to criminal damage towards their property and threats of violence. The victim felt generally intimidated by the offenders (a gang of youths) and was under a lot of anxiety and stress.

Key actions taken: The victim was provided with both personal safety devices and property target hardening, including: a personal attack alarm, window and door alarms, and a CCTV camera with lights. They were also provided with the contact details of the local police neighbourhood inspector and sergeant. Prior to engaging with Making WAVES the victim felt

that they had received a poor response from local agencies. Thus, the co-ordinator facilitated a liaison between the victim and local agencies leading to the victim receiving reassurance visits, a dedicated case officer (police) and ASB support worker.

Agencies involved: Police, community justice court, local Anti-social Behaviour Unit, housing association.

Outcomes: The victim felt safe enough to provide a statement to the police and become involved in the local residents' association. The police increased patrols in the immediate neighbourhood. The housing association employed a warden for the neighbourhood and the court distributed leaflets to households with details of available support services.

Summary

Making WAVES has made, and continues to make, a valuable contribution to enhancing the level and accessibility of support available to victims and witnesses of crime across Liverpool, particularly those experiencing intimidation. In 2009, the Sara Payne report *Redefining Justice*³ made a number of recommendations for improving services for victims and witnesses of crime, highlighting the need to consider the broad impact of the crime on victims and witnesses, their individual needs arising from

this, and the requirement for joined up working and support. These are fundamental elements of Making WAVES. The level of support and case management provided through Making WAVES plays a major role in ensuring vulnerable victims and witnesses of crime come forward to report crime and access necessary support. The project is helping break down barriers to crime reporting and to reduce levels of witness intimidation in Liverpool.

Box 6: Multi-agency response to tackling gang-related crime case study

Case description: A resident self-referred themselves to Making WAVES after witnessing a gang-related crime; they were reluctant to report it directly to the police because of the high risk of reprisal attacks and intimidation. The victim lived in an area that was well known for serious drug dealing and gang-related crime; shootings had also been known to happen in the area. The local community had a distrust of the police as they believed the offenders were aware of who had been reporting crimes.

Key actions taken: The Making WAVES co-ordinator assured the witness of the confidentiality regarding their identity and provided them with a secure environment in which to talk. The co-ordinator, with permission from the witness, passed on intelligence regarding criminal activity occurring in the neighbourhood. The co-ordinator contacted agencies in the community to facilitate a multi-agency response to the case.

Agencies involved: Police, housing association, local authority, community justice court, Fire and Rescue Service, Victim Support.

Outcomes: The police organised an undercover operation acting upon the intelligence brought forward leading to a senior gang member being arrested and charged. A multi-agency 'walkabout' was implemented on the estate, allowing residents to report issues of concern and enable environmental problems (e.g. litter and graffiti) to be addressed. The housing association began holding resident and tenant surgeries (meetings) allowing the local community to pass on information or raise issues of concern.

"We knew someone was doing something, because we did not know where to go for information or anything [before]" Case witness.

³ Payne S. *Redefining justice. Addressing the individual needs of victims and witnesses.* London, Crown Copyright, 2009.

Making Waves

Witness and Victim Encouragement and Support

Evaluation reports for individual Making WAVES programmes are available online at: www.cph.org.uk

For further information about Making WAVES please contact Citysafe at: citysafe@liverpool.gov.uk

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