

Rachel Reeves
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
Westminster
London.
SW1A 2HQ



Friday 19th September 2025

Dear Chancellor

Reform needed to fund Victim Services in Cleveland

I write to highlight disparities in the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Formula Based Core Victims Service Grant funding, which disadvantages the vital and life-saving victim support services we have operating in the Cleveland Police force area.

Just a short trip from the Treasury's offices on the Darlington Economic Campus, the Cleveland area faces extremely high levels of crime and is home to some of the most chronically deprived communities in the country.

Where there are high levels of crime, high levels of victimisation and harm inevitably follow.

In the latest ONS statistics, Cleveland recorded the highest crime rate per head of population of any force in England and Wales. During year ending March 2025, Cleveland suffered 122.1 crimes per 1,000 population – a stark contrast to the national average of 87.2.

It has the highest crime rates in England and Wales for some of the most traumatic offences, including violence, sexual offences and arson. With almost every one of these recorded crimes, there is a victim - as well as their family and the wider community.

In terms of wider vulnerabilities, two of our local authority areas - Middlesbrough and Hartlepool - are among the 10 most deprived areas in the country, according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2019). Both have the highest proportion of neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10 per cent of neighbourhoods nationally.

These neighbourhoods experience low social resilience, high levels of child poverty, poorer health outcomes, higher unemployment and lower levels of education.

Therefore, this sad picture tells us that when you live in Cleveland, you are not only more likely to become a victim of crime, you are also more likely to need extra support to navigate the justice system and recover in the aftermath of a crime.

Yet despite this clear evidence of overwhelming need, the funding currently allocated to victim services in Cleveland is simply **not enough**.

In the aftermath of crime, victim support can be a vital tool to help people affected by crime to rebuild their confidence and feelings of safety.

Trauma can present itself at any stage in the victims' journey. It may leave a person unable to leave the house, trust the people around them or cope with the emotional or physical damage inflicted on them.

And this devastation can be felt by the victims' wider family and community, creating a ripple effect of pain, suffering and humiliation that can be difficult to recover from.

Our services do a remarkable job in supporting, advising and caring for victims – but they are often doing so **despite** current levels of funding not because of them.

They provide high quality support because they care and are passionate about what they do. They pride themselves on never turning a victim away, despite the ever-increasing pressure and demand on their already stretched staff members.

Last year, our dedicated victim services worked with a total of 19,195 victims, providing specialist support and helping them get their lives back on track.

More than half of these victims – just over 10,000 – were **new victims** accessing support. This shows the high caseload volume many services are already carrying, often due to the length of time victims now need to be in their care.

As a result of significant court backlogs, cases take longer to go to court. That means victims need to access services for longer, as they face being re-traumatised by our legal system and struggling to cope with the after-effects of the court process.

Many of the victims our services work with have multiple and complex needs, meaning they require long-term, specialist care that does not rush the recovery process.

Current funding provided by the Ministry of Justice for victim support is calculated on the population of the police force area, not on crime rates or demand on victim services.

This means that a small, but high crime area like Cleveland receives about half of the victim funding allocated to the safest force area in the country – simply because it is larger in population size.

This has led to the situation where the five forces in England and Wales with the lowest crime rates receive around **£19 per crime** for victim support services. Cleveland, with the highest crime rate in the country, receives just **£7 per crime**.

Based on Cleveland receiving the same amount of victim funding as the five forces with the lowest crime rates, the area would get almost **£1m** extra per year to fund much-needed victim support services.

At the moment, I am propping up our victim support provision with funds from my wider budget, as current Government funding does not go far enough. With an additional £1m, I could cover any gaps and invest in initiatives to reduce crime in the first place.

In addition, funding for victim services has dropped by 4.2% in the past year, at a time when charities and small organisations are being adversely affected by NI increases as well as working with increased demand and cases with increased complexity.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government recently announced a major overhaul of funding for local authorities to be phased in over the next three years. Changes will mean funding will now be targeted to match the need of the area.

The Department of Health & Social Care's 10-year Health Plan for England will also see funding devolved locally, with more funding targeted towards deprived areas and community services.

However, the Government's approach to policing - and also victim support - funding has remained fundamentally unchanged since 2010, leading to massive inequalities between communities in England and Wales.

This must be rectified as soon as possible. The step taken by other Government departments to re-allocate funding has proven it can be done, and it is imperative that policing, victim support and criminal justice are next.

Today I launch my **Fairer Funding Safer Cleveland** campaign. Supported by the wonderful, dedicated and passionate people working in our victim services, I will highlight disparities between demand and funding with stakeholders and changemakers at a local, regional and national level.

Our victim champions have added their own signatures to this letter, to call for the funding they desperately need to enhance, widen and develop their current support and recovery offer.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and/or your colleagues to discuss the concept of funding reform in further detail, in the interest of every victim in Cleveland who has been harmed by crime.

Yours sincerely,



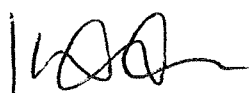
Matt Storey
Police and Crime Commissioner
for Cleveland



Catherine McLaughlin
Suzy Lamplugh Trust



Nicky Harkin
Arch Teesside



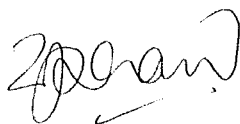
Kay Nicolson
A Way Out



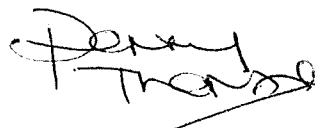
Lesley Gibson
Harbour Support Services



Lesley Storey
My Sister's Place



Yasmin Khan
The Halo Project



Penny Thomas
Cleveland Women's
Network CIC



Kayleigh Wells
EVA Women's Aid

