# Violence Reduction Unit – Supporting victims of crime – Transcript

***How does the VRU support victims?***

**Karyn McCluskey, Director, Violence Reduction Unit**: We were approached by lots of victims' families. And to be honest that is one of the ways we started off the Violence Reduction Unit. I read a report and it was in the Daily Record, I think, and it was of a 16-year old boy who had been stabbed and he bled to death in the gutter and an elderly woman came up and cuddled him whilst he died, crying for his mum, begging her not to let him die.

And I thought: 'This is it. This is the time that people say we are not having this any more. When a 16-year old boy can bleed to death in a gutter. That's just catastrophic.'

And I waited, and I thought: 'This is it. This is our Rosa Parks moment, when people stand up and say we've had enough.' And nothing happened. And I thought: 'Oh my goodness.' And when I went out, people said: 'He was all he was ever going to be.' Really?!

And so the victim's families can have a huge effect because sometimes there are newspaper headlines for a few days, but I come into contact with them 10 or 20 years after they have lost someone, and it's like it was yesterday.

I've got a number of victims and families and in fact one of the ladies, Joyce Young, set up a charity called Families After Murder. They hold a big service every year, a celebration of life, because they don't want to celebrate the murder. They want to celebrate the person.

And they are supporting the victims - plus to give them a voice, because sometimes their voice is lost in the justice system. So it was to give them a voice and to support them. And that's a hugely important.... that's why we do it. My measure of how we have succeeded is reducing that A&E door. See if it started to get a bit slower or even stopped, wouldn't that be lovely?

 [End of transcript]