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On the creation of Operation LENTISK it became necessary to develop a comprehensive system of victim/witness care and support, that was progressed by the SIO with two Victim Liaison Officers. A stand-alone database proved essential for recording and monitoring all details and contact with the hundreds of victims and witnesses. A full network of support was created, that also provided help to families/partners of victims, utilising Social Services, Counsellors, CPN's, Psychologists, GP's, Prison Liaison etc. Since April 2001, the Victim Support Co-ordinator arranged a free NSPCC 24-hour telephone helpline, funded by Social Services, details of which were given to all victims, providing them with a point of contact outside normal office hours. The role of the VLO's was essential during the various trials where some victims were very traumatically affected by their disclosures/court appearance etc. A direct result of this was the acknowledgement that a high professional standard of counselling was required and following consultation by the SIO with the Social Services Manager, a minimum qualification for counsellors assisting this or any similar Operation was agreed. Counsellors would be qualified to diploma level and be a member of the British Association of Counsellors or a member of the UK Council for Psychotherapy.

STATEMENT READERS

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