

Victims Taskforce

Fourth Meeting – 11th September 2019

Work stream 1 update - Victim-centred approach

Introduction

1. This paper summarises progress within work stream 1 of the Victims Taskforce which focusses on developing a Victim-Centred approach.

Background

2. The Victims Taskforce was set up in recognition that existing models of information, advice and support for victims of crime do not fully meet their needs. This issue was explored by Dr Lesley Thomson, QC in her 'Review of Victim Care in the Justice Sector in Scotland'. The main recommendations of this report have been summarised for the Taskforce previously. In summary Dr Thomson concludes that:
 - a. *There is considerable scope in Scotland to improve the victim's experience by adopting a more integrated model, informed by some of the approaches described above. Not only would this provide what it is victims say they want, it could yield significant business efficiencies. It is important that any new way of working is crafted for the Scottish system making full use of the high level experience and expertise which exists across both the public and third sectors in Scotland. We have identified two important features which would merit further examination in the Scottish context:*
 - b. *-A service which assists a victim throughout the entirety of his or her journey through the justice system. By this, I anticipate that the same body should assist the victim from the point of reporting to the police, through any prosecution, and after the conclusion of a prosecution.*
 - c. *-A single service which provides the full range of services which a victim needs (one front door).*

(Thomson 2017: 53)

3. A specific workstream dedicated to the development of a Victim-Centred approach for Scotland was established as part of the Taskforce and its role is to develop a model of victim care that vastly improves the experiences of victims with a goal to achieving the vision outlined by Dr Thomson.
4. Victim Support Scotland has produced a short report summarising developments since the publication of the Thomson report as there have been developments within individual organisations, this report can be found at Paper 9 along with a scoping paper that was used to help focus discussion within the workstream (see Paper 10).

Summary of actions to-date

5. Leaders of key criminal justice agencies have been invited to join a governance group to do three things: gain high level organisational commitment to developing a victim centred approach and agree the mechanism for operational delivery; to set strategic direction for this workstream; and to oversee progress. The first meeting of this group was held on the 9th September, a further verbal update can be provided to Taskforce member at the 11th September meeting.

Discussions focussed on:

- a. Agreeing terms of reference (Paper 11)
- b. Taking forward the specific actions outlined in the workplan for the workstream
- c. Relevant insights from victim engagement activity
- d. Developing a victim-centred approach for Scotland – discussion around models

Current members of work stream 1

6. An initial list of key criminal justice agencies was drawn up with leaders invited to join the workstream meeting. A summary of this is provided below:

- Kate Wallace, Victim Support Scotland (Chair)
- Sandy Brindley, Rape Crisis Scotland
- Linda Brown, CICA
- Lynn Burns, victim representative
- Willie Cowan, Scottish Government, Criminal Justice Division
- Anne Marie Hicks, COPFS
- Stuart Houston, Police Scotland (Paul Livingstone deputising)
- Jim O'Neill, Scottish Prison Service (deputy for Colin McConnell, CE)
- David Fraser, Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service (deputy for Eric McQueen, CE)
- Marsha Scott, Scottish Women's Aid
- Tirion Seymour, Victim Support Scotland
- Colin Spivey, Parole Board for Scotland

Discussion points for Taskforce members

- Are the correct organisations involved in the workstream group?
- Are there other organisations that should be involved but on a thematic basis?
- Are there any other points Taskforce members would like to raise?