

**Victims Taskforce**  
11 December 2019  
Norton Park Conference Centre Edinburgh  
**Minute of Meeting**

**Attendees**

Cabinet Secretary of Justice, Humza Yousaf (Chair)  
Sandy Brindley, Rape Crisis Scotland  
Linda Brown, Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority  
Caroline Bruce, NHS Education for Scotland  
Lynn Burns, Victims Representative  
Mike Callaghan, COSLA  
Michael Chalmers, Scottish Government: Children and Families  
Steven Coyle, Scottish Prison Service  
Bill Fitzpatrick, Community Justice Scotland  
Ann Galbraith, Action Against Stalking  
David Harvie, COPFS  
Stuart Houston, Police Scotland  
Lorna Jack, Law Society of Scotland  
Kathryn Lindsay, Social Work Scotland  
Margaret Malloch, Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research  
Rose McConnachie, Community Justice Scotland  
Eric McQueen, SCTS  
Pauline Proudfoot, SCRA  
Neil Rennick, Scottish Government: Justice  
Marsha Scott, Scottish Women's Aid  
Tirion Seymour, Victim Support Scotland  
Kate Wallace, Victims Support Scotland  
John Watt, Parole Board  
Amy Wilson, Scottish Government: Justice Analytical Services

**Apologies**

Lord Advocate, James Wolffe QC (Co-Chair)  
Dorothy Bain QC, Faculty of Advocates  
Mary Glasgow, Children 1<sup>st</sup>  
Mhairi McGowan, Independent Adviser

**Secretariat – Scottish Government/COPFS**

Rebecca Aitken  
Katharine Cook  
Anna Donald  
Anne Marie Hicks  
Lynsay Ross  
Zak Tuck  
John Wallace

## 1. Welcome from the Cabinet Secretary

The Cabinet Secretary welcomed attendees to the fifth meeting of the Victims Taskforce, and noted apologies from members and his co-chair, the Lord Advocate.

## 2. Victims' Voices and update on victim engagement

Victim Support Scotland (VSS) and Lynn Burns, the Taskforce's Victims Representative, presented quotes from victims and survivors about their experience of the justice system. The quotes were gathered by VSS and other third sector organisations, and reflected a broad range of victim experiences. Scottish Women's Aid (SWA) also provided a powerful contribution from a survivor.

Members then received an update on VSS' work on facilitating engagement between victims and the taskforce.

The Cabinet Secretary thanked the organisations for their work engaging with victims, and Taskforce members discussed the importance of regular victim engagement. It was noted that there is value in including victims' voices in training across the justice system, and that this has relevance to the Taskforce's Trauma Informed Workforce work stream. It was also noted that a number of the issues raised can equally apply to victims' experience of the civil justice system and of other public sector services, such as applications for housing and referrals to social work services.

## 3. Minutes and matters arising

Members agreed the minutes of the meeting of 11 September 2019, with the secretariat to add Lorna Jack, from the Law Society of Scotland, to the list of apologies for the September meeting.

**ACTION: Secretariat to add Lorna Jack to the apologies in the minute of the September meeting.**

The Cabinet Secretary noted that the table of actions in the minutes and invited comments from members.

Lorna Jack indicated that the Law Society is keen to get involved in the work around Barnahus. Neil Rennick (Scottish Government) agreed to discuss this further with Lorna.

**ACTION: Neil Rennick and Lorna Jack to discuss how the Law Society of Scotland can get involved in the work around Barnahus.**

Michael Chalmers, the Scottish Government's Director of Children and Families, provided an update on Scottish Government work relating to child victims. He shared updates on a number of relevant initiatives including the Youth Justice Strategy, the

Children's Hearing System and the Expert Group on Preventing Sexual Offending Involving Children and Young People. Members asked to be advised when the Expert Group report is published.

**ACTION: Secretariat to share the publication date of the report of the Expert Group on Preventing Sexual Offending Involving Children and Young People with Taskforce Members.**

It was emphasised that the taskforce should be mindful of interactions between children's experiences and other aspects of the justice system.

#### **4. Update on work plan**

*[It was agreed that the update on Work Stream 3 would be taken first.]*

- **Work Stream 3 - Gender Based Violence - update provided by Rape Crisis Scotland and Scottish Women's Aid**

Sandy Brindley from Rape Crisis Scotland explained that the co-leads were moving away from developing a traditional work stream approach with a Working Group, instead focusing on specific areas and inviting relevant experts to contribute when appropriate. This will allow the co-leads to prioritise areas that the Taskforce can make a difference in and prevent duplication of work taking place outwith the taskforce. Key areas in the work plan will include privacy, legal representation, advocacy and research.

Marsha Scott from Scottish Women's Aid added that this will allow for flexibility, which is necessary as the work stream covers a wide remit and partners have limited capacity given other ongoing work.

Members then discussed the best way for the Taskforce to consider children's issues. It was agreed that another work stream would not be the most effective way to move forward, but it was emphasised that the group should take care to ensure work stream structures allow children to have a place in Taskforce discussions.

Members agreed that children's issues should be more of a priority, and considered avenues for engaging with child victims in the future. It was also noted that the Taskforce should be mindful of children and victims of children, as the victim's experience may differ dependent on whether the case progresses through the criminal justice system or the children's hearings system.

All members agreed that a deep dive item on children's issues and Barnahus at the March 2020 meeting would be helpful.

- **Work Stream 1 – Victim Centred Approach - update provided by Victim Support Scotland**

Kate Wallace from Victim Support Scotland advised that the Victim Centred Approach Governance Group has met twice and is currently revising its work plan. An Operational Group has been established and will progress the work plan.

The work currently being undertaken as part of the Transforming Services for Victims and Witnesses project will be of particular relevance to this work stream, and the Governance Group and Operational Group will meet with the Transforming Services project team in the new year.

- **Work Stream 2 – Trauma Informed Workforce - update provided by Community Justice Scotland**

Bill Fitzpatrick from Community Justice Scotland advised that the Trauma Informed Workforce Working Group first met in November, at which meeting members agreed to revisit the remit and work plan for the group. The group was joined by Caroline Bruce who shared relevant resources from NHS Education Scotland about trauma informed training. Community Justice Scotland offered to provide secretariat support to the Working Group.

Victim Support Scotland offered to facilitate engagement between the Trauma Informed Workforce Working Group and the Victim Reference Group to discuss what trauma informed training looks like from their perspective.

**ACTION: Victim Support Scotland and Community Justice Scotland/ Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service to discuss engagement between the Victims Reference Group and the Trauma Informed Workforce Working Group**

- **Work Stream 4 – Research - update provided by the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research and the Scottish Government’s Justice Analytical Services**

Margaret Malloch from the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research shared relevant research that has been published recently - Justice Journeys and Taking Stock of Violence in Scotland.

The work stream leads are keen to work with the other work streams to identify knowledge gaps whilst avoiding duplication in research, and to ensure findings are used appropriately by the work streams.

Amy Wilson from Justice Analytical Services provided an update on the call for grant proposals that Taskforce members previously commented on. Amy welcomed the assistance from members to date and advised that there would be an opportunity for them to feed into the second stage of the evaluation process.

- **Work Stream 5 – Special Projects - update provided by Scottish Government officials and Victim Support Scotland**

Anna Donald from the Scottish Government provided an update, welcoming views from Taskforce members regarding the proposal to invite a victims' commissioner to present to a taskforce meeting – namely which commissioner it would be best to invite (for example, the Commissioner for England and Wales or for London) and to what meeting. Anna also noted that the Scottish Government would welcome feedback from victim support organisations regarding their counterparts experience of the Commissioner in England and Wales.

**ACTION: Taskforce members to provide comments to the Secretariat regarding the proposal to invite a victims commissioner to present to the Taskforce.**

Kate Wallace noted that Victim Support Scotland had received feedback from victims of traffic offences on their negative experience of the justice system. For example, victims had been sent collision reports with no advance notice or explanation, and not all victims are supported by a Family Liaison Officer. It has also been suggested that the Service for Families Bereaved by Crime should include families affected by road deaths within its remit. Scottish Government officials agreed to take this up with Victim Support Scotland and revisit the action in the work plan.

**ACTION: The Victims and Witnesses Unit and Victim Support Scotland to discuss the issues around road fatalities and revise action in work plan accordingly.**

## 5. Review: Year one of the Victims Taskforce

The Cabinet Secretary noted that the one year anniversary of the formation of the Taskforce provided a fitting opportunity to reflect on progress to date and look ahead to year two of the Taskforce. The paper produced by the Secretariat was intended to encourage members to acknowledge what has been achieved but also focus on the vision and priorities for 2020.

The Cabinet Secretary invited members to share their thoughts and reflections on the work of the Taskforce so far. Members acknowledged that getting together on a regular basis allowed for effective communication and increased collaboration across member organisations.

Members agreed that this was a good opportunity to consider what's next, what the taskforce is trying to achieve and evaluate its progress alongside that goal. Victim Support Scotland encouraged members to look beyond the 'quick wins' and consider what the justice system might look like in ten years, if we were to implement a victim centred approach.

There was also discussion around the need to be impatient for change and not be wedded to tradition.

Victim Support Scotland and Scottish Government officials suggested that it may be beneficial to hold a workshop in April or May, outwith the normal meeting schedule, to allow for Taskforce members to consider both what is realistically deliverable within year two of the Taskforce and identify the longer term/stretch aims for the justice system. Members, including the Chair, agreed that this would be a useful event.

**ACTION: Secretariat to organise a workshop of Taskforce members in April or May.**

## **6. Deep dive – Work stream 2: Trauma Informed Workforce**

The deep dive began with a presentation by Caroline Bruce from NHS Education for Scotland about their National Trauma Framework.

The presentation defined a trauma-informed justice system, explained NES' different levels of trauma training and how they should be implemented across the justice system and shared a progress update in work taking place in justice settings.

During the presentation, Caroline touched upon the challenges involved in implementing trauma informed training across a complex multi-agency system, and specifically noted that leaders have a key role to play in facilitating a trauma informed workforce.

The presentation also shared quotes from victims and witnesses, support workers and trauma experts about victims' experiences, and different barriers that can prevent victims from engaging in the justice system at all.

Caroline then invited taskforce members to share their reflections, and consider how the taskforce can work alongside NES to facilitate trauma informed practice.

The group noted different challenges associated with a trauma informed workforce, such as resource limitations and expressed interest in participating in trauma informed training (Scottish Trauma-Informed Leaders Training) themselves.

## **7. AOB**

No other business was raised.

**8. Summary of actions**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Secretariat to add Lorna Jack to the apologies in the minute of the September meeting.	SG	Completed
Neil Rennick and Lorna Jack to discuss how the Law Society of Scotland can get involved in the work around Barnabus	SG	In progress
Secretariat to share the publication date of the report of the Expert Group on Preventing Sexual Offending Involving Children and Young People with Taskforce Members.	SG	Completed
Victim Support Scotland and Community Justice Scotland/ Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service to discuss engagement between the Victims Reference Group and the Trauma Informed Workforce Working Group	VSS/CJS/SCTS	In progress
Taskforce members to provide comments to the Secretariat regarding the proposal to invite a victims commissioner to present to the Taskforce	SG	In progress
The Victims and Witnesses Unit and Victim Support Scotland to discuss the issues around road fatalities and revise action in work plan accordingly.	SG/VSS	In progress
Secretariat and Victim Support Scotland to organise a workshop of Taskforce members in April or May.	SG/VSS	In progress

**9. Date of Next Meeting**

18 March 2020