

Terms of Reference

Victim/Survivor Advisory Board to the Victims Taskforce

Purpose

1. The purpose of the Victim/Survivor Advisory Board to the Victims Taskforce is to ensure that the voices of victims/survivors are at the heart of the work of the Victims Taskforce. The Advisory Board will provide a platform for victim/survivors' feedback to be shared and discussed, and for these experiences to inform the Victims Taskforce's work in delivering practical, system-wide improvements.
2. The name 'Victim/Survivor Advisory Board to the Victims Taskforce' is intended to reflect the key role played by the group in supporting the Victims Taskforce.

Membership and Attendees

3. Victim/Survivor Advisory Board members will include:
 - Victims/survivors with lived experience of crime and abuse ('lived experience representatives');
 - Victim Support Organisation (VSO) representatives.
4. Although the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs and the Lord Advocate will not be members of the Advisory Board, they will actively support its work.
5. The Advisory Board may choose to invite the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs, the Lord Advocate, and other organisations and members of the Victims Taskforce to attend meetings, depending on the particular topic or theme for discussion. This will provide organisations the opportunity to hear directly from victims and survivors of crime and their families.
6. Lynn Burns, the current representative of victims' voices on the Victims Taskforce, will be a member of the Advisory Board.
7. Lived experience representatives will be nominated by the VSOs and may change between Advisory Board meetings to reflect the availability, experience and interest of the representatives involved. Lived experience representatives should have sight of the draft terms of reference in advance of the first meeting and conversations are encouraged between VSOs and lived experience representatives about what their participation would involve, with reference to the Terms of Reference document.
8. The intention is to identify up to four further lived experience representatives through specialist organisations working with groups who are multiply-disadvantaged

or marginalised by the justice system . This is to ensure that the Advisory Board hears views and perspectives from as wide a range of lived experience representatives as possible. Identifying these representatives may take time so they may not be present for the first few meetings of the Advisory Board.

9. VSOs will each provide a staff member to support the lived experience representatives during meetings.

10. Lived experience representatives will be over 18. Engaging well with children and young people often requires a different approach to engagement with adults. A separate approach will be developed to ensure that the voices of child victims and survivors can be heard by the Victims Taskforce.

11. Lived experience representatives will be remunerated by the Scottish Government, via their respective victim support organisation, for any expenses, as well as for the time spent to enable them to participate. These expenses could include travel costs, childcare costs, and data costs for online meetings.

Meeting Frequency

12. The Advisory Board will meet at least every six months, usually 3 months before Taskforce meetings. The Advisory Board may agree to meet more frequently, especially within the initial year of formation.

Meeting Format, Chairing, Facilitation, and Secretariat

13. The format of meetings will be key to ensuring the Advisory Board can contribute to the creation of a person-centred and trauma-informed justice system. It may take time for trust to build between the Advisory Board members, and to create a space where people feel safe, supported, and empowered to share their views. Meeting format may evolve over time as members work together to create that space. An initial proposed format is set out in this section.

14. Advisory Board members will agree the time and duration of meetings, taking account of practical considerations (such as caring responsibilities) to best enable full participation.

15. Lived experience representatives will meet together, supported by VSO staff. Ministers and any invited justice organisations will only attend for sections of the meeting, if requested by the Advisory Board.

16. It is proposed that the Advisory Board explores chairing options which allow the lived experience representatives to best express their viewpoints. This could include independent facilitation.

17. Meetings may be in-person, fully online, or hybrid to allow members to join remotely. This will be arranged in discussion with the Advisory Board.

18. VSOs will arrange venues and facilitation and provide any secretariat required for the first part of the meeting (i.e. in the absence of Scottish Ministers and justice

organisations). Scottish Government (SG) officials from the Victims and Witnesses Policy Team will provide support for elements of the meeting involving the Scottish Ministers.

Meeting Content

19. The Advisory Board will determine what it wishes to focus on. This will include issues in response to requests from the Victims Taskforce, which would relate to matters within that group's role and remit. The diagram at **Annex A**, sets out key areas relating to the Victims Taskforce remit.

20. The Advisory Board may also consider and provide feedback to the Victims' Taskforce on wider issues within the justice system where victims have an interest.

21. The Advisory Board may decide to focus on particular themes or specific issues, and may submit issues to the Victims Taskforce for that group's consideration.

Conduct and Wellbeing Support

22. By participating in the Victims Taskforce Advisory Board, members agree to:

- be respectful of the opinions of others;
- allow others to speak and not interrupt when they are speaking;
- only share experiences if they feel comfortable doing so;
- respect confidentiality;
- inform the facilitator or a Victim Support Organisation staff member if they need support or have any other concerns.

23. Some topics of discussion might have emotional or distressing connections and it is vital that individuals are not re-traumatised as a result of participation in the Advisory Board. Discussions will be facilitated by appropriately trained facilitators and VSO staff will be present to support lived experience representatives in meetings. If further practical or emotional support is required by participants, the VSO staff member(s) present will give details of appropriate support services.

24. VSOs will provide the opportunity for the lived experience representatives to connect with the expertise of victims/survivors, in order to support the representatives to bring collective expertise to the discussion at hand.

Feedback with Taskforce

25. There will be a feedback mechanism between the Advisory Board and Victims Taskforce, which will be fundamental to the success of the relationship between the Advisory Board and the Victims Taskforce. It will enable lived experience representatives to be heard by the Victims Taskforce, and to see the action that is being taken by the Victims Taskforce as a result of their contributions. It will foster co-production of solutions to improve the operation of the Victims Taskforce by developing solutions which, it is hoped, will make a real difference to victims and survivors of crime.

26. An initial proposed approach to the feedback mechanism is at **Annex B**.

Privacy and Confidentiality

27. The Advisory Board needs to be a space where individuals can feel safe and comfortable raising issues related to their own experience. Advisory Board members must respect the confidentiality of other participants and must not discuss the personal details or experiences of others with people outside the group.

28. When lived experience representatives attend meetings virtually, they need not have their cameras or microphones on unless they feel comfortable doing so. The chat function of online meetings will be available as an additional way that individuals might contribute to discussions.

29. Contact details of all lived experience representatives will be kept private and will not be shared with other participants.

30. The SG will hold records of meetings in its internal storage software. This software is not publicly accessible and access will be restricted to specific members of the SG Victims and Witnesses Unit. Further information on how the Scottish Government holds and handles data is available on the Scottish Government webpage on [Privacy](#).

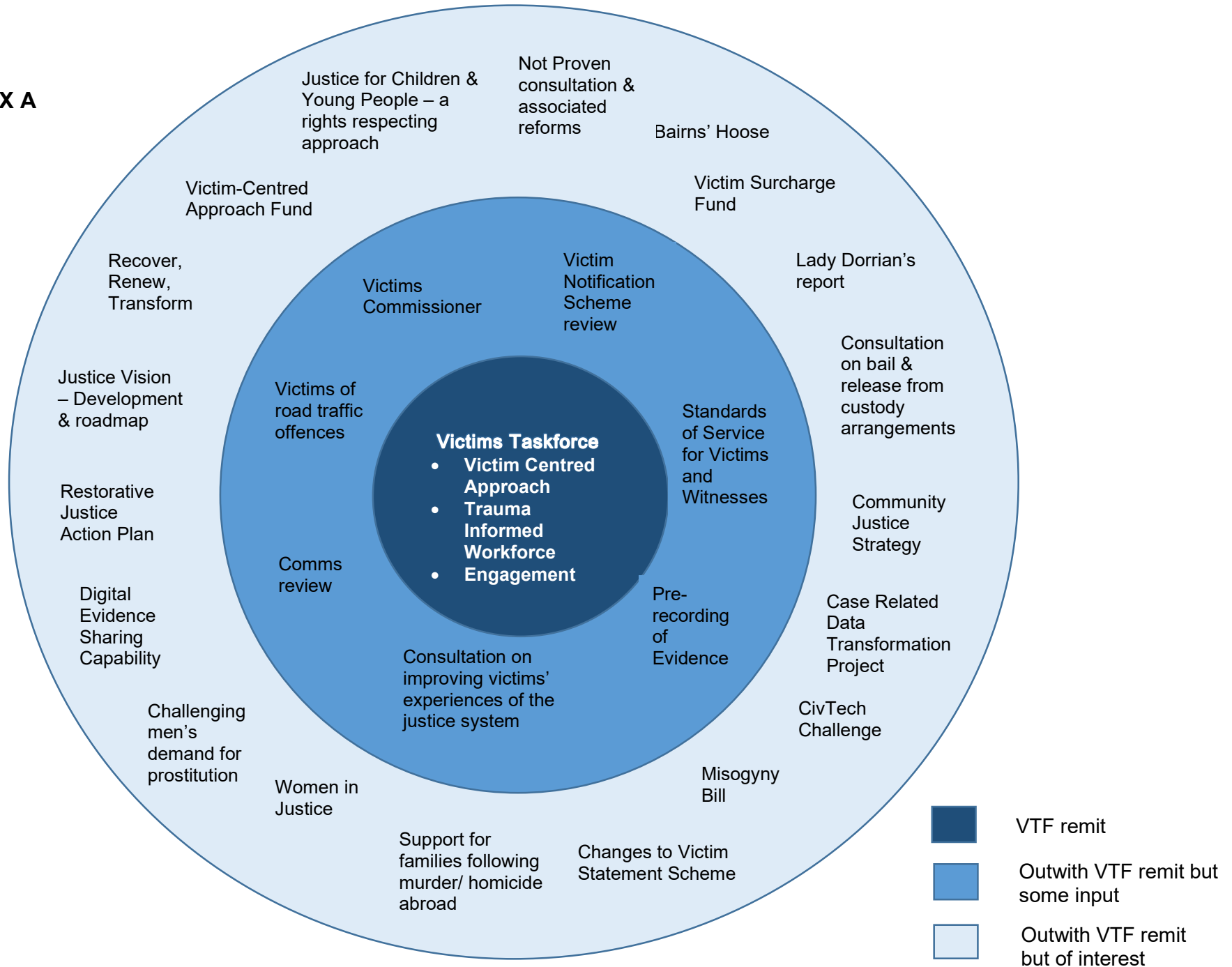
31. Any subsequent policy and communication work may use anonymised quotes and themes that emerge from individual meetings. If any member does not want particular quotes or experiences to be included within the evidence gathered, they should notify the SG Secretariat or the VSO supporting them. Participation in the Advisory Board is done on this basis.

32. **The above provisions about privacy and confidentiality should be explained at each meeting.**

33. Lived experience representatives will sign a participation consent form within their first Advisory Board meeting. This form will be co-signed by a staff member of the respective VSO. An example consent form, to be reviewed and approved by the Advisory Board in the first meeting, is available in **Annex C**.

34. By attending, participants agree to comply with the terms of consent laid out within this document.

ANNEX A



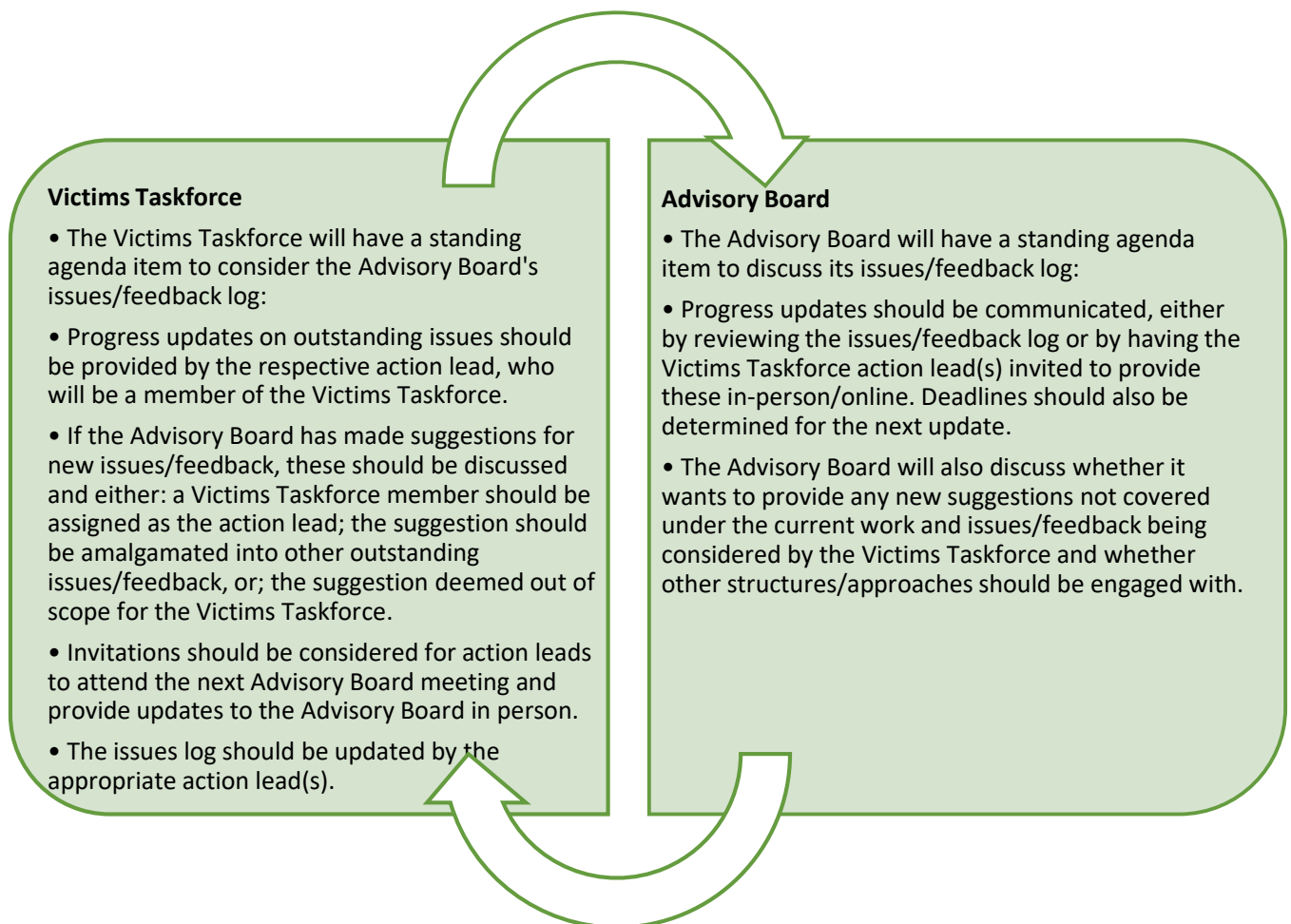
ANNEX B – Potential Feedback Mechanism

A 'feedback' agenda item could be included at each Victims Taskforce and Advisory Board meeting. For example, each Victims Taskforce meeting could begin with an update provided from the previous Advisory Board meeting, with Victims Taskforce members invited to take responsibility for investigating issues raised.

Victims Taskforce members would also be invited to report back on the changes they were taking forward as a result of feedback from victim/survivors. This information would be fed back at the following Advisory Board meeting, with Victims Taskforce members potentially invited to attend Advisory Board meetings to provide updates on actions which they are leading on.

It is proposed that an issues/feedback log be implemented which contains information on: the particular topic or theme under discussion; feedback from the Advisory Board; a Victims Taskforce action lead(s); actions being undertaken, and; progress made in a RAG (Red Amber Green) format. This log could be a standing item on both the Advisory Board and Victims Taskforce agendas.

A diagram summarising the proposed feedback process is provided below:



ANNEX C

Victims Taskforce Advisory Board

Consent Form

Taking Part: Please tick Yes or No	Yes	No
I have had the Advisory Board’s Terms of Reference shared with me and explained to me.		
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the Advisory Board.		
I understand that my taking part is voluntary; I can withdraw my involvement at any time by using the contact details of the VSO staff member for my respective organisation. I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part.		
I understand that my personal details such as phone number and address will not be revealed to people outside the Advisory Board.		
I understand that stories or quotes provided may be quoted anonymously in publications, reports, web pages, and other other Scottish Government/Victims Taskforce outputs unless I have specified for these not to be used or specified I wish for them to be provided without anonymity.		

Please choose one of the following two options:

1) **I would like** my real name to be used in any publications, reports, web pages, and other Scottish Government (please note that this is not always possible).

2) **I would not like** my real name to be used in any publications, reports, web pages, and other VSS outputs.

Please sign below to show that you have understood the above and are happy for the Scottish Government to use your data as specified:

_____	_____	_____
Name of representative [printed]	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of VSO member [printed]	Signature	Date