

**Victims Taskforce – WORK PLAN**

<b>Work stream 1 – Victim Centred Approach</b>		<b>Taskforce Lead – Victim Support Scotland</b>		
<p><b>Description</b> – The development of a new ‘victim centred’ approach, involving collaboration between all Taskforce members and structured and targeted engagement with victims, witnesses and their families. The introduction of measures to reduce the need for victims to have to retell their story to several different organisations. Improve information resources that are available for victims. Improve the sharing of data between bodies and look at digital tools to improve the support and information provided to victims.</p>				
<p><b>Update</b> – VSS will provide an update on the Victim Centred Approach work stream at the Deep Dive item on the agenda – see also papers 8, 9, 10 and 11.</p>				
<b>Reference</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale (S/M/L)</b>	<b>Engagement with Victims</b>	<b>Action Owner(s)</b>
<b>1a</b>	Develop a plan to implement the recommendations from the ‘Review of Victim Care in the Justice System in Scotland’, undertaken by the former Solicitor General, Dr Lesley Thomson QC, in relation to a victim centred approach (‘one front door’ single point of contact model).	M	To be agreed - Rape Crisis Scotland and Victim Support Scotland are considering victim engagement mechanisms	VSS / COPFS / SG Input required from all CJ Agencies and VSOs
<b>1b</b>	A systematic review of: a) of hard copy leaflets and publications; b) online materials; c) official correspondence aimed at victims and witnesses of crime and their families to ensure they are: victim-centred; consistent; up-to-date; and use clear and compassionate language.	S	To be agreed - Rape Crisis Scotland and Victim Support Scotland are considering victim engagement mechanisms.	SG / SCTS / COPFS / SPS / PBS/ VSOs
<b>1c</b>	Take forward a user-centred, service design approach to fully understand the gaps in support for a victim or a witness’	S	To be informed by research on service user	SG / VSS

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	<p>journey through the criminal justice system.</p> <p>This work will facilitate the definition of a long- term vision for an end-to-end service for victims and witnesses.</p>		<p>experience of justice system.</p>	
<b>1d</b>	<p>A review of the process of developing and publishing the CJA's annual standards of service. Consider earlier engagement with VSOs and methods to enable victims to inform the standards themselves.</p>	S	<p>Review of standards of service to be informed by engagement with VSO and victims and witnesses.</p>	<p>SG and relevant CJAs</p>
<b>1e</b>	<p>Review information / data sharing arrangements and protocols between criminal justice agencies (CJAs) and Victim Support Organisations (VSOs) to provide victims with a more joined-up service. This will include a particular focus on GDPR issues facing VSOs.</p>	M		<p>SG</p>
<b>1f</b>	<p>Review the way victims are currently engaged with and supported through key processes in the CJ system. For example, interaction with victims by SPS, PBS and VSS in relation to the Victim Notification Scheme and the parole process, to ensure victims are treated with dignity and respect, receive timely and targeted information and are part of decisions that affect them where appropriate.</p>	M		<p>SPS / VSS / PBS</p>

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	<p>Particular aims include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parole Board Scotland to assist SPS in designing and providing parole tribunal accommodation for witnesses, victims and observers</li> <li>Extending categories of victims entitled to information and support from the Parole Board</li> </ul>			
<b>1g</b>	<p>At a local and national level consider the ways in which the advocacy support model can be embedded in the justice system, including consideration of unmet needs (barriers to accessing to support), gaps (geographical, type of victim) and identify opportunities to enhance partnership working and increase clarity and understanding about the roles of advocacy workers.</p> <p>In addition, consider the feasibility of introducing a system of legal advice for complainers.</p>	M		RCS
<b>1h</b>	<p>Consistent recording mechanisms require to be included within the build of the agreed national crime recording system to provide a central repository which facilitates more accurate review / audits on whether or not Criminal Justice partners are complying with its statutory duties under the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014.</p>	M		PS

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<b>Work stream 2 – Training / Trauma-informed Workforce</b>		<b>Taskforce Lead – Community Justice Scotland</b>		
<p><b>Description</b> – Feedback from victims strongly suggests that there is a lack of compassion in the CJ system. Victims describe how any negative experiences can become the most memorable and this impacts on other engagements with the system as a whole.</p> <p>Work in some organisations and across other policy areas is championing trauma-informed approaches in supporting people who have experienced significant trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences, such as the <a href="#">NHS Education for Scotland and SG National Trauma Training Framework</a>. This approach is already influencing training and practice in a justice context - for example, Community Justice Scotland are using their statutory training function to develop trauma-informed social workers. However, though there is valuable work ongoing across Scotland and within the justice sector, there has been limited joining up across sectors and national organisations particularly in relation to working with victims of crime.</p> <p>There is significant potential for further development of trauma-informed practice in other areas of the justice system where victims make contact, from early engagements with police, attendance at court, and beyond. This work stream would seek to build upon existing resources and approaches to identify and establish wider development of trauma training within and across justice organisations who come into contact with victims, to support the development of a trauma-informed workforce.</p>				
<p><b>Update</b> – SCTS has joined the work stream as co-lead and a formal steering group has been identified</p> <p>CJS and SCTS met with SG on 27 August to consider next steps for the work stream. The first step will be to ask members of the steering group to complete a mapping exercise to better understand current trauma training provisions/resources within organisations. It was agreed that draft templates for the mapping exercise would be shared with colleagues in NES, who are coordinating the National Trauma Training Programme. Once returns from the mapping exercise have been received and collated, the steering group will formally convene (in November).</p>				
Reference	Action	Timescale (S/M/L)	Engagement with Victims	Action Owner(s)
2a	<u>Provision of training</u>	S/M	To be agreed - Views and perspective could be gained from the proposed victim	CJS – working with SG NES and specific members representing

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify joint strategic lead for delivery of work stream</li> <li>- Seek work stream members; suggest training/learning leads from national partners as most effective in delivering outcomes for this work stream</li> <li>- Clarify outcomes and objectives/deliverables</li> <li>- Mapping exercise: current workforce trauma training and victim contact points through justice system</li> <li>- Identify the knowledge and skills required to manage the impact of exposure to trauma on staff</li> <li>- Draft outline of learning objectives required for different staff</li> </ul>		<p>and survivor groups convened by RCS and VSS on what a trauma – informed workforce should be like.</p>	<p>the legal profession/ justice organisations (Police Scotland, SCTS, Law Society of Scotland) and SWA (related to training for domestic abuse legislation)</p>
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Work stream 3 – Sexual Offences / Gender Based Violence		Taskforce Lead – Rape Crisis Scotland / Scottish Women’s Aid		
<p><b>Description</b> – The Gender Based Violence work stream will work with justice partners and victims organisations to promote a system which identifies and address gender biases and encourages women’s active participation at all levels of the criminal justice system.</p> <p><b>Update</b> – RCS and SWA have been appointed to chair the work stream. The chairs have met and wish to review the work plan in light of progress made under the Lord Justice Clerk’s <i>Review to improve the management of sexual offence cases</i> and the publication of Programme for Government. Chairs are actively considering the membership of this work stream and cross-cutting items which could support activity to improve the experience of victims of sexual offences, domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women. The chairs have noted the publication of the SCCJR research report, Justice Journeys, and the initial report of the Survivor Reference Group, both which make recommendations for improvements to the justice system. There is therefore an opportunity to take stock of the research and shape the work plan, in light of these findings.</p>				
Reference	Action	Timescale (S/M/L)	Engagement with Victims	Action Owner(s)
3a	Consider a review of the operation of s274/5 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995, with regard to restrictions on evidence relating to sexual offences and the requirement to apply to admit evidence of sensitive nature pertaining to the complainer. The records of which are held by SCTS.	S	To be agreed - Rape Crisis Scotland and Victim Support Scotland are considering victim engagement mechanisms.	SG / SCTS
3b	Consider jury attitudes and the feasibility of introducing a pre-instruction video for juries in sexual offence trials. This work should be informed and sequenced with the outcomes of the ongoing research on juries which is due to report in Autumn 2019.	M		RCS / SG / SCTS

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<b>3c</b>	<p>Look at issues around privacy, specifically the possibility of having previous sexual history or medical records being interrogated and brought up in court, which can act as a significant deterrent to reporting rape.</p> <p>Consider the feasibility of introducing legal representation for complainers where an application is made to introduce her or his sexual history or character.</p> <p>Consider the recent nobile officium case on access to sensitive records and consider whether further steps require to be taken e.g. legislation to introduce an appeals process.</p>	M		A decision on whether these are actions the Taskforce should lead on will be informed by the remit of the forthcoming judicially-led review of sexual offences.
<b>3d</b>	Addressing re-victimisation of children and their mothers in the context of court ordered contact. SWA state that this is a very significant problem, the single biggest reason that women seek legal advice and requires responses from all aspects of the justice system.	M		SWA / SG / COPFS / PS

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Work stream 4 – Research		Taskforce Lead – SCCJR / SG Justice Analytical Services		
<p><b>Description:</b> Taskforce members have expressed an interest in considering what gaps in the research exist and a possible consideration to commission further research on topics of greatest relevance/interest to the Taskforce.</p> <p>This work stream therefore should consider what existing research could be used to inform the work of the Taskforce and ensure work streams are founded on a sound evidence base. Also to identify areas where further research may be carried out. SCCJR have identified 3 priorities which begin this work.</p> <p>Over time this work stream should update members on key developments and assist members in drawing on the research base.</p>				
<p><b>Update</b> – Papers on the Justice Journeys and Measuring Justice research projects were published over the summer. The Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research presented their findings to the Taskforce at the June meeting.</p> <p>SG Justice Analytical Services have drafted a paper outlining key findings from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, in response to members' ask for further consideration to be paid to equalities and who is most likely to be a victim of crime in Scotland. This paper was circulated to members in advance of the meeting on 11 September.</p> <p>Consideration is also being given to how the Research work stream might best feed into, and inform, the other work streams.</p>				
Reference	Action	Timescale (S/M/L)	Engagement with Victims	Action Owner(s)
4a	<p>Mapping concepts, contexts and gaps in violence research.</p> <p>Academics and some practitioners widely consulted to supply information about latest research, concepts and concerns about understandings of violence</p>	S	To be agreed - where necessary and appropriate research could be informed by direct engagement with victims	Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services in collaboration with SCCJR
4b	Developing and conducting research on victimisation	M		Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services in

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	Continue to develop a coherent body of research around victimisation and its impact on individuals and communities; reflect on innovative practice and contribute to understanding and supporting societal responses.			collaboration with SCCJR
<b>4c</b>	<p>Contribute to society change in identifying and responding to victimisation</p> <p>Continue to work across academic communities, with policy makers and practitioners to disseminate research findings and engage with improved practices across organisations and communities.</p>	L		Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services in collaboration with SCCJR

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Work stream 5 – Specific Projects		Taskforce Lead – SG / Others		
<p><b>Description</b> - It is recognised that on occasion there may be projects which will require focussed attention by the Taskforce but may not require Taskforce involvement throughout the lifespan of the group. Those working on these items are likely to look at what action can be taken to drive forward, provide momentum or kick-off work in these areas, whilst ultimate responsibility for delivery sits with individual organisations. In most instances the value the Taskforce will add to these items will be its ability to work collaboratively across the sector.</p>				
<p><b>Update</b> – 5a - SG has carried out desk research into the role of Victims Commissioner in other jurisdictions. The Secretariat provided a paper on the subject to members for consideration and comment in advance of September’s meeting. It is an agenda item for Taskforce meeting of 11 September.</p> <p>5b – SG is considering this issue, which was previously raised during the passage of the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Bill in 2012.</p>				
Reference	Action	Timescale (S/M/L)	Engagement with Victims	Action Owner(s)
5a	<p>Consideration of the case for the introduction of a new Victims’ Commissioner for Scotland. This has been suggested by victims and MSPs.</p> <p>This suggestion was last considered, but not supported, by Parliament during the passage of the Victims and Witness (Scotland) Act 2014.</p> <p>The Cabinet Secretary has stated that the case for a Victims Commissioner will be reviewed by the Taskforce.</p>	S	To be agreed on a project by project basis.	SG
5b	Removal of disqualification under the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 -	M		S.C.I.D / SG / Transport Scotland

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	<p>bereaved families/victims injured not informed.                  Creation of a new opt-in system, similar to the VNS, whereby victims ask to be kept informed when a request to remove a disqualification is received by the court.</p>			
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