

Work stream 1 – Victim Centred Approach		Taskforce Lead – Victim Support Scotland		
<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> – The Victim Centred Approach Governance Group met for the second time on 14 November. The main item on the agenda was to revisit the actions in the work plan for the work stream. It was agreed that the Group should devise a clear brief for the VCA Operational Group, including key principles, with the initial output from the Operational Group being to present a range of options for the delivery of a victim-centred approach to the Governance Group. Members agreed Terms of Reference for the Governance Group and Operational Group.</p> <p>The Group also received an update on the Transforming Services for Victims and Witnesses project and discussed how this will complement, and contribute to, the VCA work stream. Members of the Group, and wider Taskforce, were invited to partake in a stakeholder workshop led by the contracted service design agency, Thrive, on 4 December.</p> <p><i>Please note that the actions below were revised for the November meeting of the Governance Group but will be subject to further refinement.</i></p>				
Reference	Action	Timescale (S/M/L)	Engagement with Victims	Action Owner(s)
1a	<p>Develop an options paper for how a victim centred approach could be implemented with recommendations/ costed options – using information gathered through the following sub-actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of recommendations in the ‘Review of Victim Care in the Justice System in Scotland’ by</li> </ul>		To be agreed	VCA Operational Group

Timescale: short term (<1 year), medium term (1-3 years) and long term (> 3 years)

**Victims Taskforce – WORK PLAN**

	<p>Lesley Thomson QC to determine what has been achieved, what is left to do and who should be the action owner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map existing service provision, across the criminal justice agencies, other statutory services and the third sector, including advocacy services - with a particular focus on new and emerging models such as the Service for Families Bereaved by Crime, Justice Centres and Barnahus, and on identifying gaps in provision (specialism and geographical) and existing and future resource requirements</li> <li>• Keep abreast of developments in the Transforming Services for Victims and Witnesses project and how the work can feed into a victim centred approach</li> <li>• Consider the potential role for digital solutions, including portals currently being developed by SPS and COPFS</li> </ul>			
<p><b>1b</b></p>	<p>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:</p>	<p>S</p>	<p>To be agreed - Rape Crisis Scotland and Victim Support Scotland are considering victim engagement mechanisms.</p>	<p>SG / SCTS / COPFS / SPS / PBS/ VSOs</p>

Timescale: short term (<1 year), medium term (1-3 years) and long term (> 3 years)

## Victims Taskforce – WORK PLAN

	victim-centred; consistent; up-to-date; and use clear and compassionate language.			
<b>1c</b>	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.	S	Review of standards of service to be informed by engagement with VSO and victims and witnesses.	SG and relevant CJAs
<b>1d</b>	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.	M		SG
<b>1e</b>	Improve how victims experience interactions with the Scottish Prison Service and the Parole Board for Scotland on temporary release, release and parole, to ensure victims are treated with dignity and respect, receive timely and targeted information and are part of decisions that affect them, where appropriate.		To be agreed	SPS/ PBS/ VSS
<b>1f</b>	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	M		RCS

Timescale: short term (<1 year), medium term (1-3 years) and long term (> 3 years)

## Victims Taskforce – WORK PLAN

	<p>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>			
<b>1g</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

## Victims Taskforce – WORK PLAN

Work stream 2 – Training / Trauma-informed Workforce	Taskforce Lead – Community Justice Scotland
<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> – The Trauma Informed Workforce Working Group met for the first time on 26 November. The main items on the agenda were a discussion on the role and remit of the Group and the draft action plan, and consideration of a proposed exercise to map current trauma informed training and responses in the justice sector. Dr Caroline Bruce from NHS Education Scotland updated the Group on the development of the National Trauma Training Framework and roll out of the Trauma Training Plan. The co-leads and Secretariat were tasked with revising the action plan, with a focus on outcomes, and the mapping exercise in advance of the next meeting of the Working Group in February.</p> <p>Further information on this work stream will be provided at item 6 on the agenda. The Working Group agreed that the action plan requires further refinement.</p>	

**Victims Taskforce – WORK PLAN**

Reference	Action	Timescale (S/M/L)	Engagement with Victims	Action Owner(s)
2a	<p><u>Provision of training</u></p> <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>	S/M	To be agreed - Views and perspective could be gained from the proposed victim and survivor groups convened by RCS and VSS on what a trauma – informed workforce should be like.	CJS – working with SG NES and specific members representing the legal profession/ justice organisations (Police Scotland, SCTS, Law Society of Scotland) and SWA (related to training for domestic abuse legislation)

Timescale: short term (<1 year), medium term (1-3 years) and long term (> 3 years)

## Victims Taskforce – WORK PLAN

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 are appointed to lead the Gendered Based Violence work stream. Following recent discussion, the work stream leads are agreed that a traditional static working group would not effectively service the diverse needs of victims who experienced gender based violence in the criminal or civil justice system. A flexible response is required which may include roundtables, workshops, huddles or individual off-table discussion/consultation dependent on the action within the work plan.</p> <p>The work plan is currently being revised to reflect these discussions and will be shared with members of the Taskforce in the new year.</p> <p>The leadership are also agreed that progress made under the Lord Justice Clerk’s Review to improve the management of sexual offence cases will have an impact on the nature of the work taken forward under this work stream. As such an action within the work plan is provided as a marker until the position of the Judicially Led Review becomes clear.</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	M		RCS / SG / SCTS

Timescale: short term (<1 year), medium term (1-3 years) and long term (> 3 years)

## Victims Taskforce – WORK PLAN

	informed and sequenced with the outcomes of the ongoing research on juries which is due to report in Autumn 2019.			
<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

Timescale: short term (<1 year), medium term (1-3 years) and long term (> 3 years)

## Victims Taskforce – WORK PLAN

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> – SCCJR published a report in September 2019, <i>Taking Stock of Violence</i>, commissioned by the Scottish Government <a href="https://www.sccjr.ac.uk/publications/taking-stock-of-violence-in-scotland/">https://www.sccjr.ac.uk/publications/taking-stock-of-violence-in-scotland/</a>.</p> <p>The Scottish Government has also commissioned SCCJR researchers (Dr Susan Batchelor and Dr Caitlin Gormley) to carry out a study on Repeat Violent Victimization. This is a qualitative study over a 16 month period.</p> <p>The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) has awarded over £2 million to a team led by the University of Stirling and comprising researchers from the universities of Edinburgh, Central Lancashire, Northampton, and East London. Focusing on children and young people who experience domestic abuse, the four-year project will evaluate innovative interventions in social care, criminal justice, and voluntary sector settings, to establish how new developments can improve services and outcomes for children, young people, and their families.</p> <p>One of the fellows (Dr Emma Forbes) from the Justice Fellows programme funded by the Scottish Government, will be presenting her work as part of the 16 Days of Violence to Shine a Light on Violence against Women, with her Glass Walls project.</p> <p>SG Justice Analytical Services are finalising the grant call process, which some Taskforce members helped to shape, and plan to issue it in the New Year.</p>	

## Victims Taskforce – WORK PLAN

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	<p>Developing and conducting research on victimisation</p> <p>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.</p>	M		Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services in collaboration with SCCJR
4c	<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

Timescale: short term (<1 year), medium term (1-3 years) and long term (> 3 years)

## Victims Taskforce – WORK PLAN

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 of the Taskforce. The SG is giving further consideration to the issue and has asked victims organisations to seek feedback from their counterparts in England and Wales on the role of the Victims Commissioner in their jurisdiction.</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

Timescale: short term (<1 year), medium term (1-3 years) and long term (> 3 years)

**Victims Taskforce – WORK PLAN**

	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.			
--	---	--	--	--

Timescale: short term (<1 year), medium term (1-3 years) and long term (> 3 years)