

Victims Taskforce – Work Stream 2: Trauma Informed Workforce

DISCUSSION PAPER

Background

The Taskforce felt that this work stream was necessary due to feedback from victims, and victims' organisations, suggesting that there is a lack of compassion in the criminal justice system. Victims describe how any negative experiences - no matter how seemingly minor they appear to those working in the system - can become the most memorable and this impacts on other engagements with the system as a whole.

We are aware of a number of programmes and initiatives underway to champion trauma-informed approaches. At a national cross-sector level, the Deputy First Minister announced the establishment of a three-year National Trauma Training Programme in June 2018, coordinated by NHS Education for Scotland (NES), aimed at raising awareness across the Scottish workforce of the impact of psychological trauma and improving the response.

A National Steering Group was formed in May 2019, chaired by the Deputy First Minister and with representation from over 20 senior leaders across all sectors. A number of Taskforce members, including Community Justice Scotland (CJS), Social Work Scotland, Rape Crisis Scotland, the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS), Police Scotland and the Scottish Prison Service are also members of this Steering Group.

The NES [National Trauma Training Framework and Training Plan](#) is a touchstone for this work and is already influencing training and practice in a justice context. Some of the examples of ongoing work include:

- CJS using its statutory training function to develop trauma-informed social workers.
- Training developed and delivered by NES in conjunction with the Judicial Institute, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), Police Scotland Sexual Offences Liaison Officers and Visually Recorded Interview pilot, Forensic Medical Examiners, Joint Investigative Interviewers and the Faculty of Advocates

This work stream will not duplicate that work, rather it will build upon existing resources and approaches to identify and establish the wider development of trauma training – both within and across justice organisations - to support a truly trauma-informed justice workforce.

The work stream leads are CJS and SCTS, with secretariat provided by the Scottish Government.

Meeting of the Trauma Informed Workforce Working Group, 26 November

The Working Group for this work stream met for the first time on 26 November - key discussion points included:

- Recognition of the extensive work already carried out by NES, acknowledging that the framework should apply across portfolios (though may need some adaptation for the justice sector);
- The need for leaders to drive organisational change;
- The need for a trauma informed *and* trauma responsive approach; and
- The challenges of developing such an approach where the workforce is comprised of sole practitioners (e.g. the legal profession).

It was agreed that in advance of the next Working Group meeting in February, the co-leads and Secretariat, with assistance from Working Group members, would revise the actions in work stream 2 of the Taskforce work plan. This is to enable more of a focus on outcomes, and further develop the proposed mapping exercise to identify strengths and areas for further development in trauma-informed leadership, training and practice across the justice sector.

Membership of the Working Group

Current membership of the Working Group includes representatives from CJS, Police Scotland, COPFS, SCTS, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, Scottish Women's Aid, the Faculty of Advocates, the Law Society, NES and the Scottish Government. If other members of the Taskforce would like to join the Working Group, please contact Bekki Aitken rebecca.aitken@gov.scot.

Discussion points

We would welcome input from Taskforce members on the following:

- What would a trauma informed, and responsive, justice system look like for Scotland?
- Does your organisation currently carry out trauma informed training – if so, can you share some of your learning from introducing such training and how this translates into trauma informed practice?
- What do you think the main challenges are in developing a trauma informed and responsive justice system, and how can the Taskforce work collaboratively to address these challenges?
- How do we ensure consistency of training, especially where it is not mandatory (e.g. within the legal profession)?