

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 Operational Group met for the first time on 4 February with this being a new area of work for many of the members. The main items on the agenda were the role and remit of the group, the work plan and how the Operational Group will feed into the Governance Group. The Operational Group approved the draft terms of reference, and suggested they would to revisit the actions in work stream 1 of the work plan.</p> <p>Unfortunately, due to lockdown no further meetings of the Governance or Operational groups have been able to take place. However a sub-group of organisations involved in the VCA recently met to discuss two main things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improvements that could be made to the Victim Notification Scheme</li> <li>- The gap in terms of information sharing for the purposes of victim safety planning related to prisoner release – especially in relation to short-term prisoners</li> </ul> <p>We are currently prioritising actions in the work plan that we can take forward under lockdown. For example, action 1b the publications review has already had initial scoping work done and this could be progressed.</p> <p>The Thrive project on Transforming Services for Victims and Witnesses has also been impacted by the Covid-19 outbreak. We are aiming to have a finalised report ready for sharing in June / July and suggest a more in-depth discussion on this report at the next Taskforce meeting in September.</p> <p><i>Please note that the actions below 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 Lesley Thomson QC to determine what has been achieved, what is left to do and who should be the action owner</li> <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</li> </ul>		To be agreed	VCA Operational Group

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	<p>how the work can feed into a victim centred approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the potential role for digital solutions, including portals currently being developed by SPS and COPFS</li> </ul>			
<b>1b</b>	<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: victim-centred; consistent; up-to-date; and use clear and compassionate language.</p>	S	<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>
<b>1c</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>1d</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>1e</b>	<p>Improve how victims experience interactions with the Scottish Prison Service and the Parole Board for</p>		<p>To be agreed</p>	<p>SPS/ PBS/ VSS</p>

	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.			
<b>1f</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>1g</b>	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.	M		PS

Work stream 2 – Training / Trauma-informed Workforce	Taskforce Lead – Community Justice Scotland/Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service
<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 work stream group met for the second time on 20 February. The main points on the agenda were the revised work plan and also a revised questionnaire. The questionnaire has been designed to identify training good practice and gaps within taskforce organisations. The group signed off on the revised work plan and the questionnaire. The intention is for the questionnaire to be circulated in June , with organisations being given around six weeks to complete it. We aim to provide an update to the Taskforce in September with initial findings. We will also hope to have a further meeting of the Sub-group before the September Taskforce meeting. In addition, we are working with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) with a view to funding a dedicated post, starting in October, to lead on development of a trauma informed and trauma responsive workforce in the justice system,</p>	

Reference	Action	Timescale (S/M/L)	Engagement with Victims	Action Owner(s)
2a	<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> </ul>	S/M	To be agreed - Views and perspective could potentially be gained from the victim-centred and survivor reference groups that have been convened by VSS and RCS respectively.	CJS – working with SG NES and specific members representing the legal profession/ justice organisations (Police Scotland, SCTS, Law Society of Scotland, COPFS) and SWA (related to training for domestic abuse legislation)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- establish what good practice already exists within Taskforce organisations</li> <li>- develop a skills and knowledge framework for the Justice system</li> <li>- identify training needs based on a developed framework</li> <li>- Identify the knowledge and skills required to manage the impact of exposure to trauma on staff</li> </ul>			

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	- Draft outline of learning objectives required for different staff, including leaders			
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<b>Work stream 3 – Sexual Offences / Gender Based Violence</b>	<b>Taskforce Lead – Rape Crisis Scotland / Scottish Women’s Aid</b>
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**Description** – 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 justice system.

**Update** – Most of the actions under Work Stream 3 are on hold for time being as a result of COVID-19. However, work is underway by work stream leads and the Scottish Government with regards to our response to COVID-19 and Gender Based Violence. Over the next few months this work and the progress of actions under WS 3 will be guided by Coronavirus Restrictions Regulations and the wider work on recovery planning.

\*short/ medium/ long

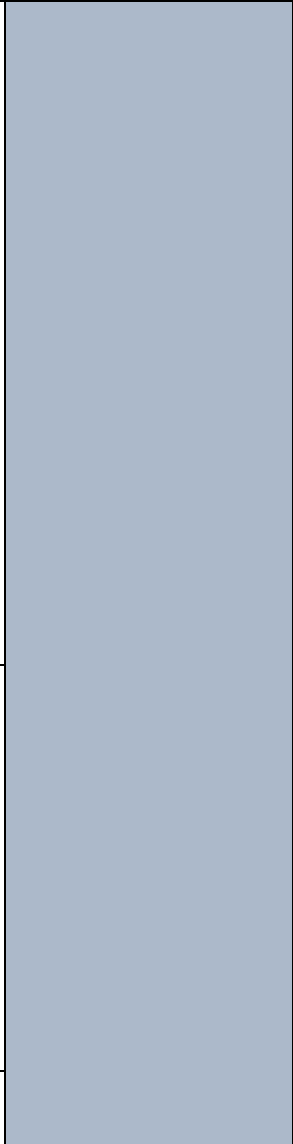
\*\* W3, W4 = workstream 3, workstream 4

Reference	Action	Rationale	S/M /L*	Engagement with Victims	Proposed activity
3a	Explore the justice system (end to end) and mechanisms available for safeguarding privacy rights for victims, where article 8 rights are engaged.  For example, sexual character and history	Improve the experience of the justice system for complainers and others as well as appropriate consideration of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.  Where authorised by the court, sexual character and history evidence can be raised in sexual	S	<i>RCS Survivor Reference Group may be consulted once issues have been explored.</i>  <i>Other victims’ groups may have an interest in these issues and</i>	1. Consideration of research report on ILR for s.275 applications (Bilateral discussions SG/ RCS).  2. Scottish Government -

	<p>and current procedures, access to medical or sensitive records including phone records and current mechanisms to ensure the individual's rights are upheld whilst balancing the right of the accused to a fair trial.</p>	<p>offence cases. The most recent research is quite dated (2007), but the Burman, Nicholson and Brooks research stated that 7 out of 10 complainers in the most serious sexual offence trials were 'virtually guaranteed' to be questioned on their sexual history and character.</p> <p>Appropriate protection of any complainer's privacy and dignity and an understanding that sexual offence complainers may be at high risk from <i>re-victimisation</i> through the criminal justice process.</p> <p>Current process may be perceived as a barrier for victims coming forward to report crimes against them.</p>	<p><i>W3** secretariat will work with the Taskforce secretariat to ascertain best way of engaging with allied survivor groups.</i></p>	<p>consideration research and recent case law.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Convene round-table to discuss findings (may include appeals process, rape complainers data capture and mobile phone contract issues, as appropriate).</li> <li>4. Work with W4** re: funding for proposal to analyse the use of private data in Scottish sexual offences proceedings.</li> <li>5. Paper shared with the Victims Taskforce at</li> </ol>
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					an appropriate time sharing progress.
<b>3b</b>	<p>Juror attitudes: This work should be informed and sequenced with the outcomes of the ongoing research on juries which reported, Oct 2019.</p> <p>This action may link to recommendations issued within the Judicially Led Review on the management of sexual offences.</p>	<p>Beliefs and attitudes that jurors might take into the deliberation room in rape cases, and whether this impacts their evaluation of evidence and determination of verdict.</p> <p>Views may be held as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lack of physical resistance may indicate consent</li> <li>• A victim of rape may 'freeze' in response to the attack</li> <li>• A lack of calling for assistance may indicate consent</li> <li>• False allegations are routine</li> <li>• A delay in reporting is indicative of a false allegation</li> </ul>			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consideration of research – engagement with Analytical Services and W4**</li> <li>2. Consider action: e.g. written directions, consideration of public awareness campaign.</li> <li>3. Discussion with partners for e.g. researchers, SCTS and Judicial Institute.</li> </ol>

<p><b>3c</b></p>	<p>Addressing re-victimisation of children and their mothers in the context of court ordered contact.</p>	<p>SWA state that the single biggest reason that women seek legal advice and requires responses from all aspects of the justice system.</p> <p>Scottish Women’s Aid are leading on a new project to provide domestic abuse-competent legal aid to survivors across Scotland.</p> <p>Funded by the <b>Legal Education Foundation and in partnership with Just Right Scotland</b>, the year-long project is building a case for a new model for victim-survivors.</p>	<p>M</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Follow progress of the <i>DA Competent Legal Aid To Survivors Project</i> and passage of Children (Scotland) Bill in Parliament.</li> <li>2. Provide update to the Victims Taskforce as required.</li> </ol>
<p><b>3d</b></p>	<p>Improve the provision of advocacy for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence within the criminal justice system.</p>	<p>Consistency of advocacy provision across Scotland continues to be variable, as highlighted by the SG commissioned scoping study. There is a need to develop policy which includes a clear definition of advocacy, integration of support within relevant pathways for victims and basic minimum requirements.</p>	<p>M</p>		<p>Hold roundtable to agree outcomes – statutory and third sector.</p>
<p><b>3e</b></p>	<p>Improve effective multi-agency working to</p>	<p>Consistency of Multi agency working (often called MARAC)</p>			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Further engagement</li> </ol>

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	support high risk victims of domestic abuse.	continues to be variable, and there are no centrally defined expectations of what constitutes best practice in terms of MARAC, risk assessment and information sharing.			following publication of MARAC consultation by end 2019. 2. Roundtable/ workshop to explore next steps.
<b>3f</b>	Judicially- led review of sexual offences – on-going participation by RCS, SWA and SG within the group.	We expect the Group to make a number of recommendations which may fall within the remit of the VTF.	M		Awaiting report - expected Spring 2020
<b>3g</b>	Meet with RCS Survivor Reference Group interim report and Justice Journey’s research authors.	Whilst work is on-going to address some of the recommendations in these reports, this action would provide an opportunity to formally feedback on activities being taken forward by W3 and consider further emerging issues since publication of each document.	M	n/a	Round table hosted by RCS Spring/ Summer 2020.

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> Since the last meeting of the taskforce, good progress has been made on work under <b>the previous</b> SG Justice Analytical Services <b>grant call on ‘understanding and taking action to improve people’s experience of justice’</b> . We have received the draft final report from SCCJR on <i>‘Measuring Justice: Defining Concepts, Developing Practice</i> which primarily reviews international research that has attempted to map and measure experiences of justice. We are planning to share this research and for the project team to present the results of the work at a future meeting of the Taskforce. The <i>Children’s Participation in Family Actions: Probing Compliance with Children’s Human Rights</i> project is now complete, and has been disseminated by the project team. Unfortunately the project looking at <i>Domestic abuse and child contact, and the interface between criminal and civil justice</i>, has had to go on hold due to the restrictions on face to face research.</p> <p>As previously reported, the Scottish Government commissioned SCCJR researchers (Dr Susan Batchelor and Dr Caitlin Gormley) to carry out a study on Repeat Violent Victimization. This is a qualitative study, initially over a 16 month period but unfortunately has had to be extended due to Covid 19 . One of the aims of the study is to help improve support for victims in Scotland, by providing evidence on the support needs and experiences of those who are victims/survivors of the most hidden and stigmatised forms of violence, and who therefore tend to be less likely to seek and access services. Full details of the study can be found here:  <a href="https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/socialpolitical/research/sociology/projects/repeatviolencevictimisation/#aboutthestudy,researchteam,usefullinks,repeatviolencevictimisation">https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/socialpolitical/research/sociology/projects/repeatviolencevictimisation/#aboutthestudy,researchteam,usefullinks,repeatviolencevictimisation</a></p> <p>A report by JAS ‘Mapping of Violence Interventions in Scotland’ will soon be published. The report and spreadsheet present a snapshot in time of 100 violence prevention interventions in Scotland, including interventions for victims of violence, operating in Scotland in 2017 and 2018. JAS are working on an accompanying ‘what works to prevent violence’ report, in collaboration with</p>	

the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit (SVRU), which will make the evidence base more accessible to internal and external stakeholders, to help inform decision making. The report will have a particular focus on VAWG and alcohol related violence, but will also consider youth violence and more general violence.

Work has begun around on developing measures and evidence on monitoring cyber education to improve people's 'cyber hygiene', which aims to prevent people from both becoming victims and equipping people with the cyber tools to work in the field and use technology wisely. Other cyber work includes involvement with the Eyes Online project which is about informing citizens of their rights around privacy and security online vs surveillance <https://sites.dundee.ac.uk/eyes-online-project/>.

**New activities have been undertaken by JAS in the context of the COVID crisis.:**

Qualitative research has been conducted with 42 Scottish statutory and third sector organisations on the **experience of individuals and families experiencing domestic abuse** which has taken place over the initial 8 weeks of lockdown. Details of the results of this work as contained in the evidence report around victims and COVID circulated with taskforce papers.

We have carried out a series of international reviews around a number of justice issues in the context of the COVID crisis, including :

- **Reported Rates of Domestic Abuse and Response to Domestic Abuse during COVID-19 Pandemic** - lessons learned from previous pandemics and emergencies.
- **Civil and family court cases** – reviewed how other jurisdictions are handling civil cases, however included a specific focus on how other countries are dealing with child contact in domestic abuse cases.
- **Criminal cases** – reviewed how other jurisdictions were prioritising criminal cases to progress in order to retain some level of access to justice for victims and the accused.
- **Jury trials** - reviewed how other jurisdictions are progressing solemn cases during the pandemic and whether they are resuming jury trials.
- Experience of Victims of Crime (a paper bringing what we know to date about experience of victims of crime)

These have been primarily internal papers, however some have also been shared with key stakeholders with an interest.

**The Chief Scientist Office, SG**, has also recently announced funding of the following projects:

- *Current and longer-term impact of social distancing and other behavioural measures on vulnerable groups* - Led by SCCJR's Professor Sarah Armstrong with co-principal investigator Dr Lucy Pickering, the project will focus on four key groups; the disabled and chronically ill; criminal justice populations; domestic abuse and sexual violence survivors; and refugees, asylum and destitution-affected

- *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of Vulnerable Children and Young People in Scotland during the Covid19 Pandemic* - Prof Jane Callaghan (PI) and team, University of Stirling

The 9 grant proposals received under **the current grant call (the call was extended to a closing date of mid February)** have completed first stage assessment. We will be sharing summaries of these proposals with the Taskforce in due course. To note that there is still a restriction on face to face research.

SG Justice Analytical Services have continued work **developing questionnaires to capture information about the 'experiences of witnesses (including witnesses who are children) at court'** in order to meet the reporting requirement at **section 14 of The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018**.

SG Justice Analytical Services have been working with SCCJR on **plans for the next stage of work under the evidence workstream**, and a paper will be circulated to the Taskforce following a verbal update at the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June.

Reference	Action	Timescale (S/M/L)	Engagement with Victims	Action Owner(s)
4a	Mapping concepts, contexts and gaps in violence research.  The workstream is continuing to connect with other academics and	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

	<p>organisations outside the VT to continue our aims of identifying ongoing relevant work and relatedly, to identify gaps.</p> <p>Scottish Government Justice Analytical Service and SCCJR would like to work with other workstreams and to consider the existing evidence base and the currently commissioned research and agree on priority evidence gaps and to develop a plan for addressing these.</p>			
<p><b>4b</b></p>	<p>Developing and conducting research on victimisation 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>	<p>M</p>		<p>Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services in collaboration with SCCJR</p>

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<p><b>4c</b></p>	<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>	<p>L</p>		<p>Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services in collaboration with SCCJR</p>
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<p><b>Work stream 5 – Specific Projects</b></p>	<p><b>Taskforce Lead – SG / Others</b></p>
<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</p>	



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. Will seek Taskforce’s approval to invite Victims Commissioner from England & Wales or London to a future meeting.

5b – SG is considering this issue, which was previously raised during the passage of the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Bill in 2012. Scottish Government officials had a helpful meeting with Scotland’s Campaign against Irresponsible Drivers (SCID) in March to discuss in more detail support for victims of road crashes and their families. A number of actions will be taken forward, including discussions with BRAKE – the road safety charity who operate the SG-funded National Road Victim Service. Unfortunately, further progress on this area of work has been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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	<p>Removal of disqualification under the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 - bereaved families/victims injured not informed.</p> <p>Creation of a new opt-in system, similar to the VNS, whereby victims</p>	M		S.C.I.D / SG / Transport Scotland

	ask to be kept informed when a request to remove a disqualification is received by the court.			
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