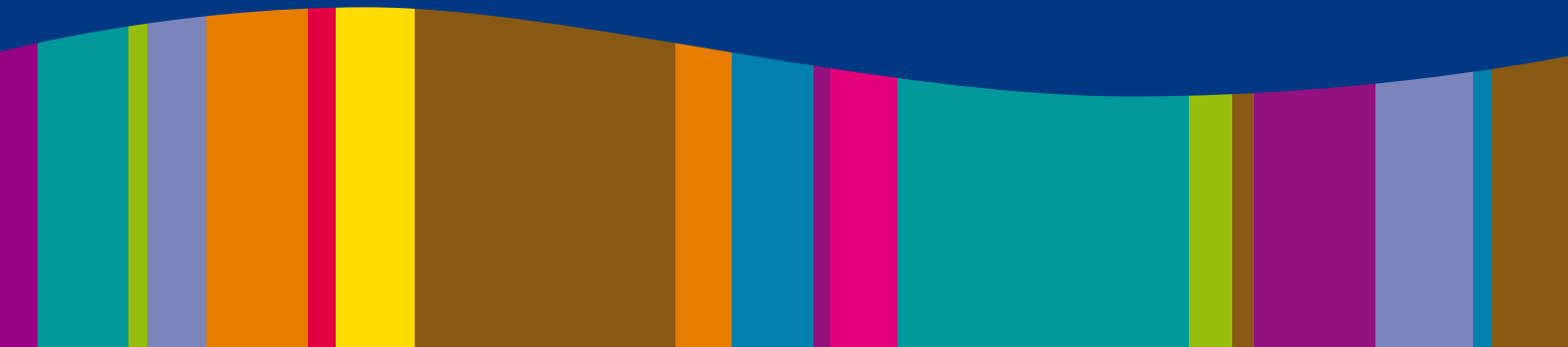




A STRATEGIC VISION FOR VICTIMS AND WITNESSES

2007-2012 AND BEYOND



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FOREWORD

The period of this strategic document will see major developments throughout Victim Support in Scotland. Key challenges will include ensuring that quality is fully embedded in services to people affected by crime, provided by all agencies. Our support to victims of serious crime will be enhanced and new training developed. Overall there will be an improved assessment of the needs of service users and a strengthened approach to diversity. New and improved information technology and communications systems will be of major importance in meeting these challenges.

The changes to the summary justice system and the ongoing implementation of the Vulnerable Witnesses Act will necessitate further consideration of our work in supporting witnesses. We will support and contribute to a safer Scotland and the work of the new Community Justice Authorities. We are committed to maintaining our roots in the community. Our core values remain. We will strengthen our commitment to volunteering and the role of volunteers in service delivery.

Listening to the voices of victims and others affected by crime continues to be a central aspect of our growth and development. We will listen to, and take account of what they tell us about the services that we deliver.

The next five years will be just as exciting as the last. Together we will succeed for those affected by crime in Scotland.

David McKenna

Chief Executive

CONTEXT

Victim Support is the largest service provider and leading voluntary organisation in Scotland helping people affected by crime. We provide practical help, emotional support and information to victims, witnesses and others affected by crime in the local community and in the courts, offering a high standard of service to all users.

Victim Support has campaigned for, and demonstrated that in the aftermath of a crime, or when called as a witness, individuals have specific needs that in the past went unmet. This Strategic Plan is developed within the context of the most radical changes and reforms to the justice system in Scotland for a generation, including developments such as:

- A Safer Scotland
- Improvements in the operation of the High Court
- A national strategy for the Management of Offenders
- The establishment of Community Justice Authorities
- Smarter Justice, Safer Communities – Reform of Summary Justice
- Publications of the Sentencing Commission for Scotland
- The Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2004
- A Scottish Strategy for Victims
- National Standards for Victims of Crime

Changes and improvements have been delivered in the care and support of victims. Reforms within the judicial system have improved arrangements for witnesses. However, more needs to be done. Victim Support continues to support a long-term policy to put victims' needs at the heart of the criminal justice system and to improve their care, support and treatment.

INTRODUCTION

Our vision for Scotland is one which places the needs of victims and witnesses at the centre of the justice system and instils a greater degree of awareness across other sectors and society as a whole. Our three-year Corporate Plan will describe in detail how we set about achieving the outcomes we envisage: making the vision a reality.

We are part of a wider national strategy for a safer Scotland, with vibrant local communities and active citizenship. We will continue to discuss and debate with others, who share our values, how the needs of victims and witnesses might be recognised and addressed.

Victim Support is developing and changing its governance structure, moving to a single national charity. The organisation will move into the second decade of the 21st century with a structure that is fit for its purpose: to improve the well being of people in Scotland affected by crime.

Our continued success depends on the diverse backgrounds, knowledge, skill, creativity and motivation of our volunteers and staff. We are prepared to review and change the way we work: doing things better. As always, with finite resources, we need to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and added value in all that we do; with hard choices and priorities, coupled with a strong sense of social responsibility.

We will continue to develop and promote our services and support positive changes and improvements within the criminal justice system. We will look to support and promote a safer Scotland through education; the development of safer communities; and raising awareness of victim issues in the health sector, to employers and other public services. An understanding of victim issues in all social services and early intervention will:

- Minimise the overall demand on services and scarce resources
- Maximise the potential for a victim to return to as normal a life as possible after a crime
- Reduce the potential for re-victimisation
- Provide a belief in, and create safer communities.

We have strong links with, and will continue to be representative of the communities we serve. We are supportive of the Scottish Executive's Vision for the voluntary sector and the Manifesto for Volunteering in Europe. We know the value that 1.4 million volunteers provide to the economy and quality of life in Scotland; delivering public services, bringing communities together; improving services and providing a local voice. We are committed to the continued support and development of our volunteers.

This strategy has been developed through a process of internal debate and discussion and our experience in developing our three-year Corporate Plan 2006-2009. Our strategic vision builds on the strength of our relationship with our volunteers and staff; our funders both local and national; and all who have contributed.

OUR VISION

“A Scotland where the needs of all people affected by crime are at the centre of the justice systems.”

We will contribute to a safer Scotland where:

- ▶ People affected by crime have access to services which will reduce the impact of crime and assist them in their recovery
- ▶ Social and justice services do not directly or indirectly re-victimise people affected by crime
- ▶ There is increased understanding, awareness, education and research regarding the impact of crime on the people of Scotland
- ▶ The interests of victims and others affected by crime are represented fully
- ▶ There are positive initiatives aimed at reducing crime, the fear of crime and at reducing offending.

OUR MISSION

“To improve the well being of people in Scotland who are affected by crime by providing the best possible service.”

To achieve this we have agreed five strategic outcomes:

1. People affected by crime feel supported and assisted by Victim Support
2. People affected by crime can access other appropriate services through Victim Support
3. Victim Support’s services assist victims and witnesses to participate in the criminal justice process
4. Criminal justice and social policy development addresses the needs of people affected by crime
5. Staff and volunteers have the skills, competencies and resources to support people affected by crime; deliver services cost effectively; and meet Government national skills targets.

OUR VALUES

Victim Support Scotland is proud to be an organisation that is:

A VOLUNTARY organisation

INDEPENDENT of government and other agencies

REFLECTING the diversity of our communities

FREE AND AVAILABLE to all affected by crime

ACCESSIBLE throughout Scotland

CONFIDENTIAL in nature and private to the individual

PROFESSIONAL, reliable and consistent

CUSTOMER focussed, valuing their views

A CENTRE OF EXPERTISE on victim issues

A CAMPAIGNING VOICE for the needs of victims and witnesses

We undertake to:

- Act with integrity
- Value everyone, listening to, and respecting their views
- Actively promote inclusiveness
- Celebrate success
- Use our resources efficiently and effectively, providing value for money
- Be transparent and accountable to our stakeholders
- Develop and match the skills and competencies of staff and volunteers to organisational needs and the needs of people affected by crime
- Continually review what we do and how we do it to provide the highest quality service
- Communicate effectively
- Focus on the needs of our service users.

STRATEGIC FOCUS

OUR CORPORATE ROLE

It is central to the success of the organisation's mission that there is a high level of public awareness of the work of Victim Support and of the needs of victims and witnesses.

Raising Public Awareness

We will:

- Raise awareness of Victim Support to the general public
- Continue to have a strong profile within the justice sector, contributing to policy development
- Raise awareness of victim issues in, for example, health, education, social policy and other sectors
- Promote our services to local communities, responding to their needs and taking an active part in Community Justice Authorities and other relevant groups
- Continue to represent the needs of victims and witnesses to government, to statutory agencies and to the public
- Contribute to the development of a safer working environment
- Actively develop and promote Victim Support as a centre of expertise on victim issues.

SERVICE PROVISION

We are committed to maintaining and expanding our knowledge and understanding of issues affecting victims and witnesses and the diverse needs of the communities that we serve. Improved knowledge about the nature of victimisation and re-victimisation can be used to support individuals.

Improving Service Delivery

We will:

- Use the information gained to inform ongoing changes to our service delivery
- Anticipate and identify improvements aimed at enhancing our current services and developing new services that add value
- Be responsive to, and engage with services offered by other agencies
- Undertake or commission work of direct relevance to service user needs and expectations and to the development of best practice
- Continue to review existing and ongoing research
- Consider ways in which individual characteristics, such as gender, age, etc impact on the effect of crime
- Where possible link with other agencies and higher education to develop new research initiatives
- Continue to contribute to the development of Europe-wide initiatives.

ACCESS TO SERVICES

Victim Support has good relationships and working protocols across the justice system. Reforms to courts and the introduction of special measures will greatly improve the position of victims and witnesses. We will continue to take note of changes to the summary justice process in Scotland and consider the ways in which the Witness Service might be developed to take account of these. Such developments would be dependent on discussions with stakeholders, the necessary resources being available and would form part of our Corporate Plan.

We welcome a shared vision and awareness of victims issues. Victim Support is well placed to work with agencies within the justice sector and with other sectors such as community services, health, education, security, retail organisations, to raise awareness, develop joint approaches and share best practice.

Partnership Working

We will:

- ▶ Continue to develop the ways in which we assess victims' and witnesses' needs to provide the most effective interventions
- ▶ Improve our data collection, research and analysis to develop a greater awareness of need and the factors that impact on, and influence that need
- ▶ Establish robust data collection that allows for the sharing of information between agencies to improve the quality of service provided by all
- ▶ Build external partnerships, networks and alliances to deliver the right services to the communities, family and individuals we serve
- ▶ Maximise the benefits from our partnerships and other resources
- ▶ Promote victim awareness and share best practice in victim issues
- ▶ Be creative in determining which services can be delivered by Victim Support alone and which are best delivered in partnership.

A LEARNING ORGANISATION

We recognise that society and its institutions are in a continuous state of transformation. The service that we offer must be of the highest possible standard to meet changing needs. All individuals, staff and volunteers, need to have an understanding of the ways in which their role contributes to the service provided.

A Quality Service

We will:

- Provide effective leadership
- Provide confident, competent people to deliver our services
- Refine and develop our policies, practice and learning
- Promote and share information and best practice
- Make tangible positive differences to the people we support
- Manage and continually improve processes to generate increasing value for the organisation's users and other stakeholders
- Support and promote the Scottish Executive's National Standards for Victims of Crime
- Contribute to the continued development and use of the national occupational standards for work with victims, witnesses and survivors as determined by Skills for Justice.

A VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION

Victim Support, with its strong ethos of volunteer management and service delivery using volunteers, contributes to the development of a strong and active citizenship within communities in Scotland. We share the Government's stated belief in the importance of the sector and the contribution that Victim Support's volunteers make, to the organisation and to the quality of life in Scotland.

Active Citizenship

We will:

- › Plan for continued effective governance and leadership
- › Recognise and support the diversity of the communities we serve
- › Provide continued opportunities for volunteering
- › Enhance the support that we provide to volunteers
- › Provide opportunities for development, boosting skills and confidence
- › Benchmark our volunteering policies and practices against Scottish and European norms.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Victim Support is establishing a process of governance that is fit for its purpose as we move forward under the requirements of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. We are conscious of the need to function in a socially responsible and ethical way, taking account of our impact on, and contribution to Scottish society.

An Ethical Organisation

We will:

- ▮ Act with integrity, measuring the impact of, and reporting on our policies, activities and performance
- ▮ Welcome innovation, being open to ideas and ways of working, willing to challenge others
- ▮ Develop policies and processes that value and support the diversity of victims, witnesses, our volunteers and staff
- ▮ Manage our information and knowledge in a way that supports our overall strategy and allows for sharing of information as appropriate with partners
- ▮ Manage our assets and use our resources in an environmentally sound way
- ▮ Continue to seek new ways of funding our activities.

THE FUTURE

We continue to work towards a positive change in Scotland for people affected by crime and a justice system that has the needs of the victim at its centre. Our work over the past twenty-two years has had a major influence on the sector, on public opinion and successive government policy. We recognise the need for, and the strengths inherent in partnership working. We are committed to continuing to inform and influence opinion in justice, health, education and other social policy areas that can produce a better outcome for individuals affected by crime.

We are committed to the strategic focus outlined in this document. Our three-year corporate planning cycle will identify and prioritise the activities identified, allocating resources, setting objectives and timescales, monitoring and reporting on our achievements.

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