



# Victim Support Scotland

Surviving crime by making people stronger

ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

**Supporting people affected by  
crime and keeping them at the  
heart of justice in Scotland**

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**“VSS were incredible, they give me such amazing support. They saved my life. I wouldn’t be here without them and will be grateful for the rest of my life.”**

Kyle, affected by assault

## Chair Foreword

**As the new chair of the Board of Trustees, I am delighted to present the work and impact of Victim Support Scotland from the last year in this report.**

During the challenges we all currently face, it is vital that we continue to stand up for people affected by crime and work towards positive and meaningful improvements to our services, as well as a justice system which puts the needs of victims and witnesses first.

Caring for people has always been at the heart of the organisation and once again this year I have been amazed by the dedication of our specialist staff teams, supported by a huge number of volunteers, whose work changes the lives of people they talk to every single day.

This year, we welcomed new Board members, bringing important skills to the organisation. We remain committed as a Board to supporting Kate Wallace, our Chief Executive, and her team as they work to deliver a flexible and reactive organisation. I want to recognise our outgoing Acting Chair, Liz Taylor, who brought a deep understanding of the needs of people affected by crime, the role of volunteers and the evolving challenges facing the organisation. We are thankful for her huge contribution to the Board and the organisation over many years.

The past year has seen significant changes in the organisation, as part of our three-year strategic plan, and we have made huge strides toward our longer-term goals. I am delighted with the way that the organisation has developed, keeping people at the heart of our work.

As we look to the future, it is right that we recognise the challenges ahead: how to best support people in a world which is fundamentally changing both in terms of the types of crime we are seeing and now, more recently, the impact of the COVID-19 virus. However, the energy and passion to help and support others demonstrated by people across this organisation gives me great confidence that when people need us most, we will always be there.

**Jon Turner**  
Chair





## CEO Foreword

**“I call them angels – I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for my VSS support. It is not just me, thousands of people out there have been helped.”**

Angela, VSS service user

The quote above, from someone who we have supported through a bereavement by crime, is a reminder to us all about Victim Support Scotland at its best – providing critical, personalised and long-lasting support to some of Scotland’s most vulnerable people, when they need it most.

At the time of writing, Scotland is in lockdown due to the Coronavirus. We are all living in strange and difficult times. However, I cannot let the moment go without giving recognition to the VSS workforce – our staff, volunteers and trustees – who have demonstrated resilience, flexibility and, at times, good humour to get us all through this.

Over the last year, we have worked hard to transform the organisation so that we are better equipped to support victims and witnesses in ways that suit their needs within today’s ever-changing Scotland.

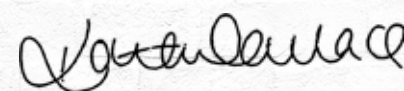
Achievements have included:

- Fully implementing our **workforce restructure**, allowing us to provide professionalised services in a responsive way to meet the needs of victims
- Launching our new national **Support for Families Bereaved by Crime** service

- Revamping our **National Support Centre** including our national helpline and webchat service
- Welcoming the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Humza Yousaf, at the **VSS National Conference**
- Supporting the development of the **Victims’ Taskforce**, as a new group aiming to improve support, advice and information for victims of crime
- The creation of the **Victims’ Reference Group** consisting of family members who have experienced some of the most serious crimes, as a championing voice for improvements to our justice system
- Bringing victim and witness rights to the forefront as part of our successful **Victims Awareness Week** campaign
- **Strengthening our relationships** with key partners and stakeholders in the government, criminal justice and third sectors

2020 marks 35 years since VSS was created. Much has changed since the 1980s and VSS has moved with the times by embracing new ways of engaging and supporting victims affected by all crime types.

Thank you all for your support towards VSS and its mission, helping us to make Scotland a better place for everyone impacted by crime.



**Kate Wallace**  
Chief Executive officer

**“Over the last year, we have worked hard to transform the organisation so that we are better equipped to support victims and witnesses in ways that suit their needs within today’s ever-changing Scotland.”**





A photograph of an older man in a dark blue sweater and a woman in a red blazer walking through a modern, brightly lit hallway with large windows and stone walls. The woman is looking at the man as they walk.

**Our court-based witness services had 38,190 interactions with people at court**

## Who we are

**Victim Support Scotland (VSS) is the leading charity dedicated to helping people affected by crime across Scotland. Our employees and volunteers provide emotional and practical support, information, and guidance through the criminal justice system, empowering people to move forward after a crime.**

We support people and their family members, from all backgrounds, at court and in the community. We are also responsive to the changing nature of crimes.

Our services are available in ways that meet the needs of those affected by crime, from courts and our offices throughout Scotland and increasingly online.

Our service users have experienced a wide variety of crime, from house break-ins to sexual assault. We want to empower everyone who has been affected by crime to find a way of coping with the aftermath, and to live the most fulfilling life that they can.

VSS represents the voice of people affected by crime. We influence key national policy decision-making by championing victim and witness rights and making improvements to support services.

Working alongside our partners in the key criminal justice agencies, the third sector and local organisations, we advocate for positive improvements to legislation that will ultimately improve Scotland's criminal justice system.

**“I am very grateful to Laura from VSS, we’re in a better place thanks to her. We talk as friends would and she treats my kids as individuals. She’s been supportive, kind, and doesn’t judge me. She showed me that what the kids and I were feeling was completely normal following abuse.”**

Tracy, affected by domestic violence



## Looking ahead

We have completed the first two years of our three-year strategy (2018-2021). Next year, we will continue to be guided by the following aims:

**DELIVER** high quality support for anyone affected by crime that needs it.

**BUILD** partnerships and alliances with other organisations so that we can work together on putting victims and witnesses first.

**CHAMPION** the rights of victims and witnesses.

**DEVELOP** VSS so that we provide excellent services that meet the needs of victims and witnesses

Looking ahead to the coming year, VSS has incorporated the following strands into its business plan for 2020/21:

### ► TRANSFORMING SERVICES

With our new staff and volunteer structures in place, combined with our enhanced resources in IT and digital, VSS is now able to provide quality and professional services in more personalised and effective ways. We will also be able to take a step back and analyse what is happening in terms of the people we support, the communities we engage, and current crime trends, as well as identifying where there are gaps. This will allow us to see the bigger picture and to make informed decisions about how we shape our services for the future.

### ► TRANSFORMING TEAMS

VSS will continue to develop and evolve its learning and development programme so our workforce is equipped to meet the changing needs of victims and witnesses.

### ► TRANSFORMING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM FOR VICTIMS

VSS has never been in a better position to have a profound influence over the criminal justice sector in Scotland. We will push for the big changes required to support everyone affected by crime, based on what we hear and learn from our service users. We want to put the voices and experience of crime victims at the centre of our criminal justice system.

### ► TRANSFORMING OUR SUSTAINABILITY

VSS has developed an interim fundraising strategy adapted to the current Covid-19 services that will be implemented from July/August.

Our relationships with key stakeholders remain critical to our success. We already have some of these in place and the next stage of our strategy is about formalising some of these partnerships, as well as developing new ones, allowing us to reach a more diverse range of people and community groups.

There is a huge opportunity with the run up to the Scottish Election in May 2021 for VSS to, collectively with our third sector partners, advocate for positive legislative changes that put victims first. Having this impact on the new incoming government will be paving the way for a brighter future for some of Scotland's most vulnerable witnesses.





## From our President, HRH, The Princess Royal

**Crime evolves constantly, and its impact varies hugely from one individual to the next. The effects are felt not only by the immediate victim or witness, but often family, friends, and the wider community.**

For the last 35 years, Victim Support Scotland's volunteers and employees have provided essential support to victims and witnesses across Scotland, empowering them to move forward after a crime. They provide bespoke services to people who are often traumatised by a crime and find themselves overwhelmed by the criminal justice system.

Victim Support Scotland also serves as a champion of people affected by crime. I applaud them for their successful Victims Awareness Week campaign, 'Your Rights, Your Code', promoting the victim and witness rights to which everyone in Scotland is entitled. Their partnership collaborations during the campaign allowed key messages to reach a wider audience and highlighted their mission to help people access their rights across the criminal justice sector.

I am heartened to see their work to encourage more people affected by crime to contribute their views and experiences. This vital feedback informs the improvement and development of Victim Support Scotland's services and policy influencing work. It enables them to amplify real experiences of the criminal justice system in multi-agency collaborations such as the Scottish Government Victims' Taskforce. Through listening to the voices of victims and witnesses, Victim Support Scotland and partners in the criminal justice system can develop support services that build a truly victim-centred approach.

As President I congratulate all volunteers and employees on their many achievements last year and offer them my best wishes as they continue their vital work.



## Outcomes in 2019/20

Victim Support Scotland's work is guided by four key outcomes that all staff and volunteers work towards in all that they do.

1. People affected by crime feel have improved health and well-being
2. Those affected by crime feel safer and more secure
3. Victims and witnesses are more informed
4. VSS is a more effective organisation that makes a lasting difference

Victim Support Scotland's work contributes directly to the Scottish Government's Justice Strategy for Scotland (2017 – 2020), a plan for a just, safe and resilient Scotland.

## Achievements and Performance

### DELIVER: Supporting victims and witnesses

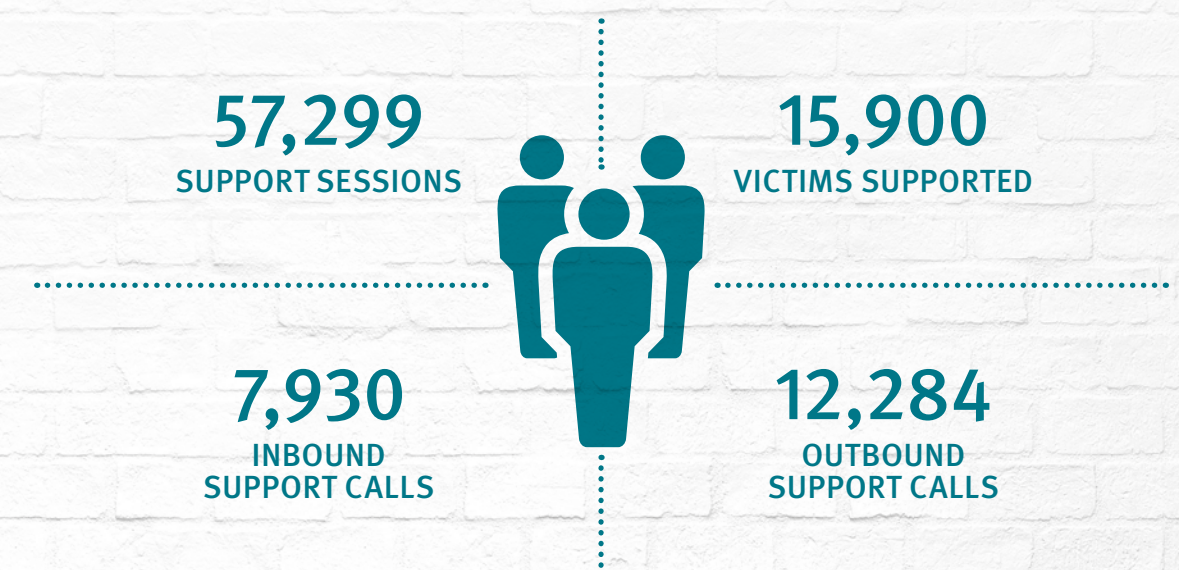
#### Our local support

VSS has supported **15,900** people across Scotland in 2019/20. We provided specialist support to families affected by murder, and people affected by domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault, violent crime, hate crime and antisocial behaviour.

Our local services helped people affected by crime to access information, feel safer, navigate through the criminal justice system and cope better in the aftermath of a crime. We made personal contact with victims on **57,299** occasions. We contacted victims of crime an average of 1.56 days after receiving a referral, within the two-day target we have set ourselves.

We operate a national helpline service which is available to support anyone affected by crime and is open Monday to Friday between 8am-8pm. During the year we assisted **7,930** callers who contacted us through the helpline and made **12,284** proactive telephone calls offering initial help and access to further support from our local services. Our free national helpline continues to provide accessible support to many of our service users. To improve accessibility to our services, we launched a webchat service in May 2019, which allows people to contact us confidentially and anonymously.

### Victim Services 2019/20





## The impact of domestic abuse

Harry was physically and emotionally abused by his ex-partner. While investigating the crime, Police Scotland realised that Harry was traumatised, isolated and needed support. They referred him to the local VSS service.

Harry was ashamed that he hadn't done more to protect his children from witnessing his abuse and feeling so much fear. His children were traumatised, frightened to leave the house, had nightmares and couldn't sleep.

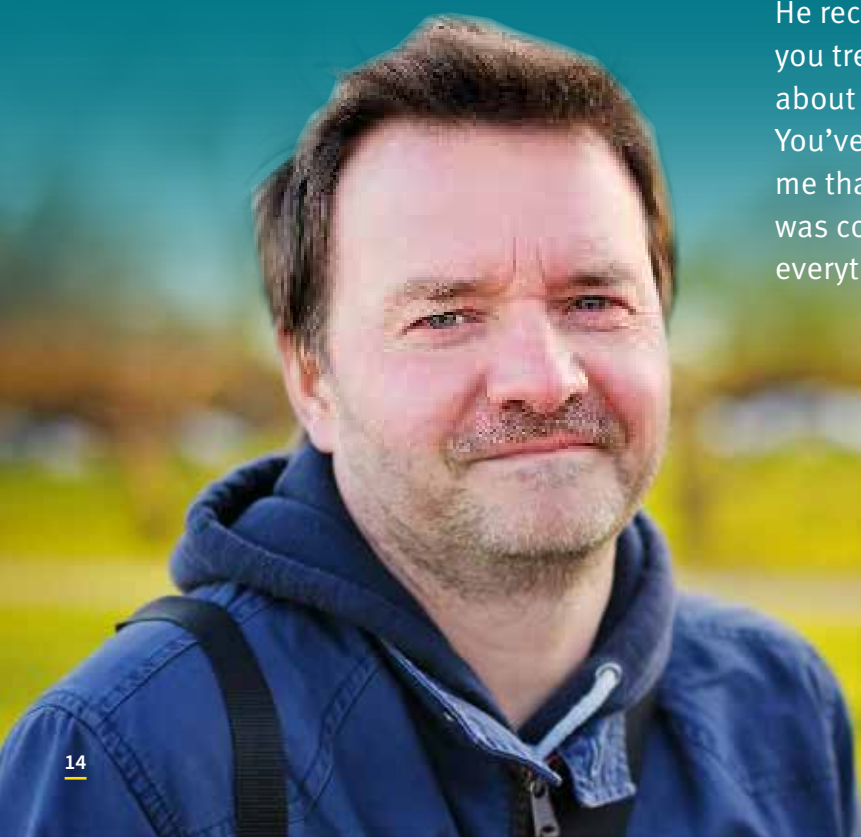
Harry's VSS support worker met him every week, giving him a safe space to talk about his fear, anxiety, depression and shame. Together, they worked on self-forgiveness and achieving a more positive and constructive frame of mind.

His VSS support worker gave Harry and his children resources to help them improve their mental health and to move forward after all the trauma. She also found out details about the upcoming court case, talked through the court process, and ensured Harry knew his rights as a victim and witness.

She helped Harry to apply to the VSS Victims' Fund to pay for the installation of a security system, which made a great difference to the children's sense of security. They now feel safe enough to play and are sleeping through the night.

Harry is much more confident now and his mental health has significantly improved. He feels safer, knows about his rights and the available support, and sees a way forward.

He recently said "You don't judge me and you treat all my kids as individuals, caring about each one's health and happiness. You've been really supportive and showed me that what the kids and I were feeling was completely normal. Thank you for everything you've done for us."



### Support for Families Bereaved by Crime service

The VSS Support for Families Bereaved by Crime (SFBC) service launched in April 2019, with a special event involving the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Humza Yousaf. As the first service of its kind in Scotland, it is providing a nationally consistent, reliable service for all families bereaved by crime, allowing them to access practical guides, financial assistance, and emotional support wherever they live in Scotland. This has given them the support and strength to continue to move forward throughout the most life changing and difficult circumstances.

We have provided support to 117 people in our first year, providing a dedicated service with consistent response during the criminal justice process and beyond. We have supported families during

**"I can talk to my support person freely, I've told her more than I ever though I would. I don't know what I would have done without Susan from VSS."**

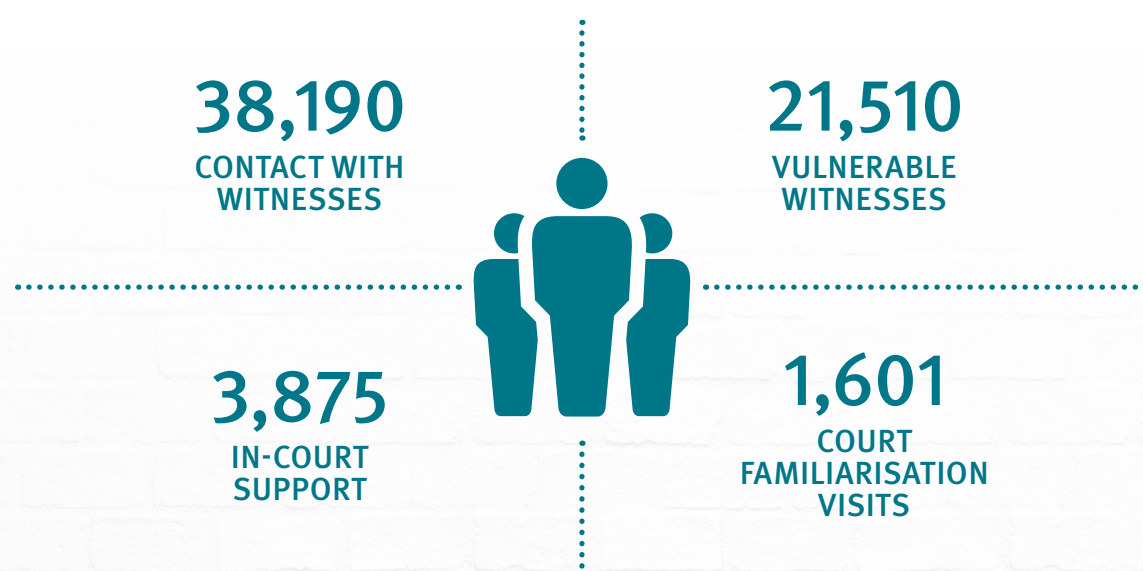
Lisa, bereaved by crime

sentencing and parole hearings, some of the most challenging aspects of the criminal justice process following a bereavement by crime.

We deliver roadshows to Police Family Liaison Officers from all over Scotland, as a way of raising the profile of the SFBC service. Positive collaborative working with Police Scotland and Victim Information and Advice Office (VIA) teams in each court has increased families' confidence in the service, reduced the need for them to retell their story, and improved their experience of the criminal justice system.



## Witness Services 2019/20



### Our support in the court

Attending court and giving evidence can be worrying, stressful and traumatic. VSS employees and volunteers work within the Scottish Courts, supporting people during trials and hosting court familiarisation visits – which our service users inform us are invaluable in terms of reducing feelings of anxiety and stress about giving evidence at court. Our court-based service had **38,190** interactions with people at court in 2019/20.

We supported over **21,510** vulnerable witnesses, including children and victims of sexual assault, domestic abuse, and stalking, helping them to give their best evidence at court.

We provided **3,875** vulnerable witnesses with a supporter whilst giving their evidence in court, helping with their confidence to enable them to give the best evidence possible.

We organised **1,601** court familiarisation visits for witnesses providing them with the opportunity to visit the court in advance of the trial.

**“That energy the volunteer that supported me in court has, it makes such a difference in that waiting room. It’s like having relative with you. She never left my side and reassured me I was doing okay.”**

Dawn, affected by domestic violence



### Digital service delivery

The development of VSS’ resources and support services through digital channels are both key priorities in our 2018-2021 strategic plan. We have made major developments in our vision to develop our digital support services and provide new audiences with accessible and personalised ways to engage with us.

#### ■ New website

We want to provide fast, accessible information and support to those in need after a crime, which is why we launched our new website in 2019. It provides up-to-date information about our services and the criminal justice system. The site includes a range of contact methods, enabling people to access local support quickly, through webchat and self-referral or agency referral forms.

#### ■ Webchat

We have provided an invaluable lifeline to people in unsafe situations or facing other challenges where phone or face-to-face methods would provide a barrier to obtaining support, by introducing our new webchat service.

We successfully offered accessible support, information, and practical guidance to over 600 victims and witnesses across Scotland. Webchat conversations are untraceable, offering people affected by crime a discrete, secure, and intuitive way to access instant support. The service allows us to be responsive in a more accessible and flexible way, extending our hours according to need.

#### ■ CRM

Throughout 2019/20 Victim Support Scotland continued work on the introduction of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, Microsoft Dynamics 365. This new CRM will allow us to better manage service user data, leading to higher quality of support and reducing the need for a victim or witness to retell crime details and experiences. It will allow for self-referrals and automated police and court referrals, meaning referrals will be processed instantly, all of which ensures better service delivery to people affected by crime. We launched the new CRM in June 2020.



## Victim-centred approach

Victim Support Scotland's mission is: 'Victims and witness of crime are at the heart of justice in Scotland', and we are committed to continuous evaluation of our own practice to incorporate a victim-centred approach in everything we do.

Former Solicitor General, Dr Lesley Thomson QC introduced the concept of a multi-organisation, coordinated approach to justice systems in the *Review of Victim Care in the Justice Sector in Scotland* in 2017. Dr Thomson argues for a 'victim-centred' approach, when describing the multi-agency victim care models across the world, that reduces retraumatising victims and limits the retelling of their stories.

As part of our strategy to deliver supportive services to those that need our help, VSS has an integral role in the creation of a victim-centred integrated model in Scotland, and we have made some progress in the following ways:

- The launch and delivery of our Support for Families Bereaved by Crime, as mentioned above.
- Our engagement in the Scottish Government's Victims' Taskforce, which includes leading the Victim-Centred Approach Workstream, a programme of systemic improvement with an aim to positively shape the experiences of victims and witnesses. Within this workstream, VSS chairs the Governance Group and established an Operational Group to take forward delivery.
- The publication of a victim-centred approach report in July 2019,

summarising our work to create innovative services and build collaborative partnerships towards the development of a victim-centred approach.

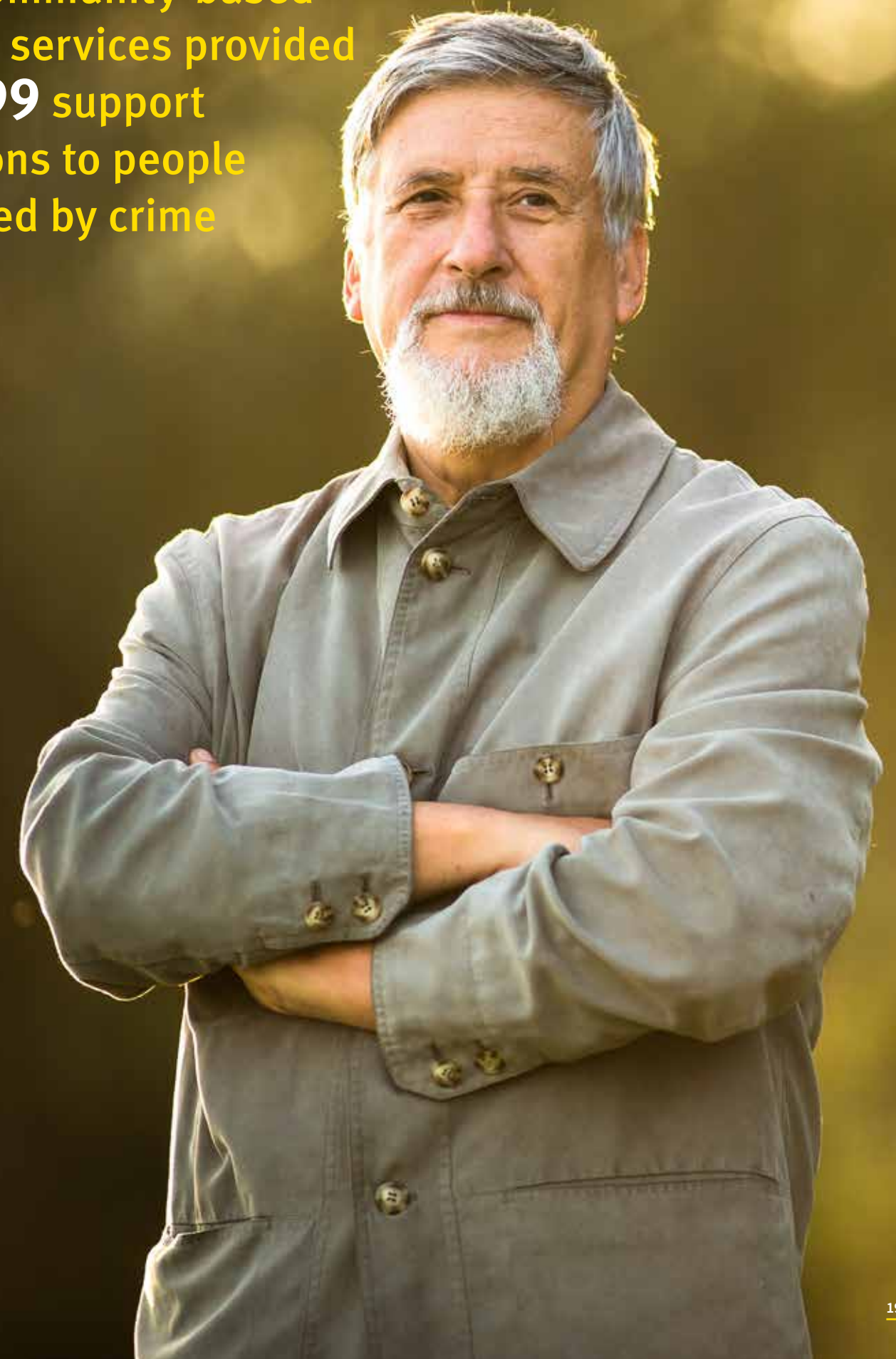
- VSS along with Scottish Government and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) jointly commissioned a project, 'Transforming the Criminal Justice System' to provide a blueprint for improving victims' experiences of the criminal justice system. The final report from this project is due to be completed in June 2020.

## Monitoring and evaluation

VSS adopts a robust approach to monitoring and evaluation. In 2019 we updated our 'Outcomes Form', the tool staff and volunteers use to assess the needs and aspirations of people we are supporting, allowing us to track their ongoing journey through the justice system. We also include feedback from service users about the impact of the support that they have received.

Digital innovation has also transformed how we report and analyse data to support continuous organisational learning. Our data-led approach has been pivotal to the future business planning of services and the development of new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) across the organisation. Monitoring and evaluation have informed the development of new partnerships with external organisations through highlighting crime trends, identifying key service user needs, and evidencing emerging issues encountered by victims and witnesses.

Our community-based victim services provided **57,299** support sessions to people affected by crime





We trained around **1,100** police probationers in 2019/20. New police recruits now have a comprehensive understanding of Victim Support Scotland and our services.



## BUILD: Strategic and partnership working

### Police Scotland

Over the last year, VSS has continued to build on and strengthen its relationship with Police Scotland at both a national and local level. Our contacts at the police are critical to our work and act as a route to reaching out to all victims in the aftermath of a crime.

We speak with our colleagues at Police Scotland on a weekly basis to analyse the origin of referrals, and to understand any barriers. Further to this, we established a joint-project using innovation and service design methodology and a small team of Police Scotland staff along with VSS staff are conducting research with both organisations and victims themselves in order to inform improvements in both organisations. In addition, we assess crime trends to make sure that our services are prepared to support victims of all crime types.

Victim Support Scotland regularly attends the Police Scotland college at Tulliallan, and trained over 1,100 police probationers this year, focussing on the impact of crime on victims and where our services can help.

At a local level, we supported Police Scotland's Staying Safe campaign during the Edinburgh Festival. Staff and volunteers worked with police at pop-up police stations in Princess Gardens and the Royal Mile. Local members of the public and tourists visited the stations to speak with police and VSS with regards to staying safe throughout the festival period.

**“It’s a relief to tell someone about what’s going on and to be taken seriously. You listened to me without judgment and helped me find solutions. I’m really grateful to the police for putting me in touch with you.”**

Derek, affected by antisocial behaviour





## Children 1st

Throughout the year, we have developed a strong operational partnership with Children 1st and their Parentline service. This partnership has resulted in the sharing of experience and expertise between teams and organisations, as well as paving the way for a longer-term agreement whereby both organisations will benefit from new developments in service delivery, training and ongoing support.

In partnership with Children 1st, we are involved with a programme of work to improve the experience of children and young people who are victims and witnesses of crime in Scotland. Much of this work connects with the innovative Barnahus concept. Put simply, this concept involves the creation of a child-friendly, interdisciplinary and multi-agency centre for child victims and witnesses where children can be interviewed and

medically examined for forensic purposes, comprehensively assessed and receive all relevant therapeutic services from appropriate professionals.

Our greatest achievement to date is our joint bid with Children 1st, Children England and the University of Edinburgh, to build a bespoke house for child victims and witnesses of crime, the Child's House for Healing, based on the Barnahus model. The People's Postcode Lottery has recently awarded its largest Dream Fund grant of £1.5 million for this ground-breaking collaboration which will enable children to receive medical care, get support and take part in decisions about their protection 'all under one roof'. The project has the potential to transform the justice, health, care and protection systems to better keep child victims and witnesses safe from further harm and to ensure they receive justice and are supported to heal.

## Victims' Taskforce

The Scottish Government established the Victims' Taskforce with the goal to improve support, advice and information for victims of crime.

VSS has a pivotal role in the Victims' Taskforce as a lead of the 'Victim-Centred Approach' workstream. This workstream oversees an ambitious programme of systemic improvement that has already begun to shape the experiences of victims and witnesses in Scotland. It addresses topics as diverse as: the role of victims and witnesses within the criminal justice process, the quality of information produced by agencies, the drive for collaboration between parts of the system, advocacy support requirements, and agency standards of service.

VSS is strongly involved in the 'Victim Engagement' element of the Taskforce, including the feedback from the Victims' Reference Group, which consists of victims and families affected by some of the most serious crimes.

Within one-to-one and group meetings, these individuals have generously contributed a wealth of information and feedback drawing on their direct experience with the criminal justice system. The group provides the Cabinet Secretary and Lord Advocate with valuable insight into the issues faced by victims of crime. VSS has ensured that personal accounts of victims' experiences are a standing item of the Victims' Taskforce agenda.

## Victims Organisations Collaboration Forum Scotland

Critical to our partnership working is our involvement in the Victims Organisations Collaboration Forum Scotland (VOCFS). The Forum is a collective of key victims' groups who want to provide a catalyst for change within Scotland's justice system.

VSS has been instrumental in the development of this group, who meet on a quarterly basis to discuss forthcoming policy consultations and where the members have a common interest to respond jointly.

The Forum's achievements include providing a response to the recent victim impact statements consultation, the development of Barnahus standards for child victim and witnesses and providing feedback on the Standards of Service for various criminal justice agencies. VOCFS members produced and shared a range of content for our 'Your Rights, Your Code' campaign during Victims Awareness Week in February 2020.



## Partnerships

In 2019/20, Victim Support Scotland built strong local partnerships across the country. Working together with other support agencies increases engagement with the local communities in which we work. Partners in the sector better understand who we are and about the support we provide, so those affected by crime are referred to us to receive the specialist support they need. For example, we are working with the Simon Community, based in Glasgow, that supports homeless women who are often subjected to assault, rape, robbery and human trafficking. The Simon Community refers women to us for emotional and practical support, as they can access our services without reporting the crime to the police.

Building new relationships has allowed us to expand into areas of unmet need and provide opportunities for future projects and co-location working. Working closely with local community groups helps us to

better understand the needs of victims and witnesses and adapt our services accordingly. We are working with 6VT Youth Café which supports young people from a wide mix of backgrounds who find themselves in a vulnerable position. They guide us on how we can adapt our services for young people's needs and provide the use of their premises to both facilitate support meetings and promote our specialist services.

We are working hard to build networks with local community groups who provide specialist support to marginalised and vulnerable groups, so that we can continually evolve our services to be more inclusive. We have partnered with Glasgow City Council's Hate Crime Unit, which targets areas with repeat incidents of hate crime. We are working with the council to monitor hate crime incidents within these highlighted areas and ensure support is visible and accessible to victims and witnesses.

## Working in partnership to tackle hate crime

Scotland is seeing a rise in hate crime. People affected by hate crime often experience the impact more profoundly and longer lasting than that of other crimes as an aspect of their core identity is targeted in the attack. We work with partners across the country to raise awareness of the impact of hate crime and support our partners' service users as well as our own.

In Glasgow, VSS has formed a close relationship with a number of housing associations and their antisocial behaviour teams. Hate crime is a key component of a lot of antisocial behaviour, with many victims living in constant fear of their neighbour. We highlight how an individual's mental health can be affected and work with housing associations to find bespoke support and solutions for their tenants. We provide Third Party Reporting centres where people can report hate crimes in comfortable setting and provide outreach support in partner's venues.

We sit on Glasgow City Council's Hate Crime Working Group and work with their Hate Crime Unit, which targets areas with repeat incidents of hate crime, by informing them of changing trends within these highlighted areas. We are involved in their community work to change attitudes, help them increase awareness of hate crime impact and provide support to victims and witnesses. We also work in partnership with the Council's Community Relations Team to help people affected by hate-related antisocial behaviour.

As a result of our partnership work and our joint approach to hate crime, we have seen effective mitigation work changing communities. Crucially, more people are coming forward to report hate crime and have increased confidence that the justice system, local authority and support organisations can help them end hate crime in their communities.



## CHAMPION: Victim and witness rights

### Improving rights

Improving the rights of people affected by crime remains the focus of our policy and influencing work. Through our consultation responses and presentation of evidence to the Scottish Parliament, VSS played a pivotal role in representing the needs, interests and voices of victims and witnesses at a national level and contributed to parliamentary processes to ensure victims' rights were effectively represented and embedded in future legislation.

In 2019/20 we contributed to consultations on a variety of topics including: proposals to incorporate the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC); presumption against short sentencing of 12 months' imprisonment or less; and submitted evidence to the Health and Sport Committee on the Forensic Medical Services Bill. The Bill advocated the inclusion of a statutory requirement for health boards to provide information on victim support services to those self-referring for examination. We also worked with partners in the third sector to highlight issues raised by victims regarding proposals to widen the scope of the Victim Impact Statement scheme. This gives victims a greater opportunity to convey the physical, emotional and financial impact of a serious crime to the court.

### Victims Awareness Week

Victims Awareness Week is Victim Support Scotland's foremost campaign of the year, providing an opportunity to highlight issues affecting victims and witnesses.

This year, we launched the 'Your rights, your code' campaign to increase awareness across Scotland of people's rights under the Victims' Code for Scotland. The social media campaign promoted accessing rights and empowering people to find out what they are entitled to following a crime.

The highlight of the week was Victim Support Scotland's first parliamentary reception at the Scottish Parliament. The evening featured a special reading from Matthew McVarish, a survivor of childhood abuse who is using his experiences to campaign for the rights of child victims.

We premiered our new film 'Whoever you are, Whatever the crime, We're here to help' to inform MSPs and guests about the services we provide and the lasting impact of our work for people affected by crime. The impact of the week was felt across our sector and a number of MSPs immediately requested meetings to find out more about what we do.



Scottish Parliamentary reception, February 2020



# Victims Awareness Week 2020

As part of our Victims Awareness Week activity, our **'Your rights, your code'** campaign aimed to raise awareness of victim and witness rights under the Victim's Code for Scotland. A series of distinctive infographics highlighted and explained the seven rights set out in the Code. We embarked on an active social media campaign, using the hashtag **#kenyourcode** and working with partners to spread key messages. We invited our

partners criminal justice agencies, such as COPFS and Police Scotland, to get involved further by contributing blog posts and articles.

The week saw a substantial increase in social media activity and website traffic, resulting in our most successful awareness raising campaign to date with a significant number of people finding out more about their rights as a victim or witness.



**Your rights, your code**

**#kenyourcode**

Affected by crime?  
Know your rights under the  
Victims' Code for Scotland.



## Victim Impact Statements

In November 2019, we provided evidence to the Scottish Government supporting proposals to widen the scope of the Victim Impact Statement scheme, offering victims of the most serious crime the opportunity to get across the impact the crime has had on them.

We used feedback from our service users to call for improvements to the scheme. This included allowing supporting documents, such as photos and drawings, to be provided and for submissions to be made digitally, with options to provide statements as audio and video recordings. VSS believes that these measures would make the Victim Impact Statement process more accessible and increase the numbers of victims providing statements. It would also encourage judges and sheriffs to give more consideration to the impact of crime on individuals when sentencing a perpetrator.

## Transforming parole

In March 2020, VSS responded to the government consultation on how to give victims and their families a greater voice in the parole process in Scotland. We believe that the role of victims should be strengthened in the parole process so that they can more directly inform the Parole Board's considerations. We also called for parole decision reasoning to be explained clearly, so victims have greater understanding on parole outcomes.

Victims and their families should be entitled to attend parole hearings, although we recognise that attending in person will not be appropriate for every victim. VSS recommended that a clear protocol be established where victims are provided with information around general and specialist support organisations very early in the process so that victims can be supported before, during and after attending parole hearings. VSS was invited to be a member of the Transforming Parole Implementation Group in order to ensure an action-plan was taken forward to drive improvements.

## Victim Surcharge Fund

We provided written evidence to the Scottish Parliament Justice Committee on the draft Victim Surcharge Fund to establish guidance for how it should operate. Drawing on our experience of managing our own Victims' Fund, we advised on how the surcharge funds should be used in order to deliver the most appropriate financial support for people affected by crime through the organisations which assist them.

**"The support provided in court was a godsend. They gave advice and leaflets, and connected me to the Victim Support service after the trial. They arranged for special measures for my daughter. Everything I needed was done."**

Jade, affected by stalking and harassment



“It is vital that we continue to stand up for people affected by crime and work towards positive and meaningful improvements to our services, as well as a justice system which puts the needs of victims and witnesses first.”

Jon Turner, Chair



## DEVELOP

### Strengthening our workforce

To improve our services, we introduced our new organisational structure from September 2019, which has enabled the right people to be in the right roles.

Our new structure has enabled our National Support Centre, which provides our National Helpline and webchat function, to be more responsive to the changing needs of victims of crime. We have also introduced three Heads of Service Delivery (North, East/Central and West) who have overall responsibility within their region to ensure the delivery of high-quality support for victims and witnesses of crime, reporting to our Executive Leadership Team.

Our new organisational structure has empowered our workforce to take on new and innovative projects that support people affected by crime nationally.

### Investing in our volunteers

Our volunteers are the backbone of the organisation. We are led by a volunteer Board of Trustees and our workforce is comprised of over 500 volunteers, contributing their time and effort, without remuneration, to support people affected by crime directly and indirectly.

Volunteers across the country work locally and in the courts to provide critical services to people traumatised by crime, offering bespoke support until it is no longer needed. We have volunteers who work on our helpline and webchat services, often outside normal office hours, making sure our support is available and accessible to anyone who needs it.

Throughout 2019/20 we continued to work to the national Investing in Volunteers (IiV) standard, accreditation we gained early in 2019. Our Volunteer Engagement Officer, a new post created in 2019, provided national coordination of our volunteer work, and we established a cross-organisation Learning Improvement Group (LIG), to review every step in the volunteer pathway, from recruitment to retirement.



### VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

545

Active  
volunteers

88,000

Volunteer  
hours

219

Volunteers  
recruited

148

Volunteers  
trained

227

Volunteers who  
have taken  
advanced level  
courses



## Volunteers – the heart of our work

Lauren has volunteered with the Witness Service in Hamilton for seven years. She was inspired to volunteer with VSS when the Witness Service helped her friend at court years ago.

*“I love the work I do as a volunteer – I can support, listen and guide victims and witnesses who, because of circumstances, need our service at that particular time. It is so inspiring to be told I have made a difference to someone by listening, not judging them and offering ongoing support if they need it.”*

*“Lots of witnesses, no matter their gender or background, are actually terrified of going to court and think they will be alone the whole time. They are often elated to find out that we can support them from when they arrive in the court to after they have given their evidence.”*

*“Sometimes, I get a real sense that the call I have just made has taken a load off a witness’ shoulders, even if I’m only telling them procedures. I explain what will happen when they come to court, both the different processes and the assistance available, such as court familiarisation visits, an in-court supporter and a screen to block their view of the accused while giving evidence.”*

*“During the Coronavirus lockdown, the situation has been challenging, and even unbearable, for many witnesses. They feel completely helpless waiting for trials to start up again and dread giving evidence. As a volunteer, it’s good to know I can make a huge difference to someone’s experience and hopefully make their time dealing with the trial a little easier. Even a simple phone call can be extremely reassuring for them, just to know that they are not forgotten and that somebody actually cares.”*

## Learning and Development

This year, we have invested substantially in learning and development support for our employees and volunteers, increasing the quantity and improving the quality of provision. We adapted existing courses and created new digital learning resources.

As well as essential training courses on General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), safeguarding, and health and safety, we offered courses on subjects such as: hate crime; victims’ and witnesses’ rights; victims of sexual crime; mental health awareness; domestic abuse; and supporting children and young people.

## Cultural Development

Throughout the last year, VSS has continued to build an organisational culture that is positive, forward looking, and willing to learn.

The VSS National Conference in November 2019, was the first time that colleagues had come together in their entirety since the organisational restructure. The conference provided professional and personal development opportunities for colleagues, and delegates fed back that they felt re-energised with our mission and aims and were looking forward to the year ahead.

Recognising that leadership exists in every part of our organisation, we have established Learning and Improvement Groups (LIGs) which provide the opportunity for employees and volunteers to be involved in the design, development and delivery of our services. The purpose of the LIGs is to ensure consistency of our working practices and the production of resources and processes that assist the organisation to achieve its aims.



## Equality and Diversity

The VSS Equalities Forum has developed over the last year, with the aim of recognising the wide-ranging and diverse needs of victims, and to increase our organisational understanding of the issues faced by these groups. The Forum has developed a working plan, which includes introducing training opportunities and resources for VSS employees and volunteers regarding equalities.

VSS has commenced work towards achieving LGBT Chartership, supported by the charity LGBT Youth Scotland, which is encouraging us to provide greater accessibility, visibility, and inclusivity across all areas of the organisation.

Equality and Diversity was a key strand in our National Conference in November 2019, welcoming input from colleagues from Police Scotland and LGBT Youth Scotland around hate crime.

VSS continues to feed into hate crime support discussions and policy responses with our partners, including responding to the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill.

We understand that some people may prefer to report a crime to a member of the community, rather than the police, so we operate third-party reporting centres across the country. This year we have worked with Police Scotland around tackling prejudice and hate crime, as well as promoting and increasing the uptake of third-party reporting.

## Safeguarding

VSS is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all who use our services and all individuals that work for the organisation. We have produced a three-level safeguarding training programme, meaning all employees and volunteers can identify a safeguarding issue and report it directly. We have established a reporting process, including a bespoke email account and a dedicated telephone number, to enable central recording for analysis. Safeguarding is a standing agenda item on all Board and senior management meetings.

**“I was sexually assaulted and, as a trans man, could not find any support available to me in my area. VSS helped me to find in-depth therapy and supported me throughout the trial. The court case took ages, so it was really good to have someone to talk to every week because I didn’t want to discuss it with friends or even my family.”**

Jamie, VSS service user



**We supported 14,806 people affected by violent crime**



## Impact of COVID-19 on VSS

**COVID-19 and the public health control measures put in place have had a significant impact on VSS and the service it delivers to people affected by crime.**

### Need for VSS services

During lockdown we are witnessing different crime type trends. We have seen a rise in domestic abuse, breaches of non-harassment orders, antisocial behaviour, theft and cybercrime, including an increase in young people being coerced with sexual images. The closure of all the courts means witnesses, many of whom are victims, are having to wait an unknown period of time to give potentially traumatic evidence, hear about sentencing decisions, or gain closure following a crime.

VSS has moved quickly to expand the digital services we provide and to transfer from face-to-face support to telephone and online support during the pandemic.

The COVID-19 outbreak and resulting lockdown is negatively impacting the financial situation of many victims of crime during the restrictions. VSS applied for and received an additional £70k to increase our Victims' Fund in order to meet the immediate needs of a greater number of victims as a result of crime. VSS dispersed more funds in April 2020 alone than in all of 2019/20.

For a variety of reasons, around three quarters of our volunteers are choosing not to volunteer with VSS during lockdown. This means VSS has had to adapt our delivery model with employees as well as volunteers providing direct support to people affected by crime.

Providing telephone support from homes rather than VSS offices has been difficult as volunteers and employees are bringing trauma into their place of safety. VSS has developed and rolled out a programme of health and well-being for employees and volunteers to minimise the impact of vicarious trauma.

### Governance

All trustee meetings are now being delivered via video conference or conference calls. These capabilities were in place before but only the conference call facility was previously used. The trustees can conduct their governance duties remotely. It is anticipated that trustee meetings via video conference will continue for some future meetings after restrictions are completely lifted.

### Finances

VSS is in the fortunate position that our main funder, the Scottish Government, confirmed continued funding for 2020/21 in March 2020. As a result, the trustees consider it appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis. In addition, in April and May 2020 VSS sourced additional funds totalling £133k to cover additional costs required due to COVID-19.

There has been a negative impact on our unfunded pension liability due to the deterioration of financial markets. The impact is not material to the accounts.

### Wider network

VSS was invited to join the Justice Board COVID-19 sub-group, a collaboration forum comprised of Scottish Government representatives, third sector support organisations and criminal justice agencies. The group discusses challenges and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

VSS has been linking in more closely with other victims' organisations during the coronavirus pandemic. It has sourced additional funding for the financial needs of victims during this time and rolled out a programme, the Victims' Fund, allowing other victim support organisations to also access these funds.

**"At a time when people are feeling isolated and unsure about what will happen with COVID-19, the support we provide to people is extremely worthwhile. The people I support know that there is someone at the end of the phone who is interested and truly cares."**

Nancy, volunteer



# Structure, governance and management

On 1st April 2019 Victim Support Scotland became a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) and is registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). The SCIO is governed by its constitution that was revised as part of the transition to a SCIO. The charitable purposes were updated in this new constitution. Our trustees are no longer directors of the company, but members of the organisation.

## Appointment of trustees

Trustees are appointed for an initial term of three years and may thereafter be re-elected for an additional three-year period. The constitution states that the maximum number of trustees is 12. VSS currently has 11 trustees, with five trustees reaching the end of their first term at our AGM in 2020. At last year's AGM in October, our Vice-Chair Liz Taylor stepped down at the end of the possible maximum length of service as a trustee and Kirsten Gilbert and Alex Gauld did not stand again after serving a three-year term. Details of changes to trustees during the year are listed on page 40.

## Trustees' recruitment, induction, training and development

Throughout the 2019/20, trustees committed to personal and collective development opportunities achieved through self-learning, two facilitated board development days and attendance at professional seminars.

## Key management personnel remuneration

The board of trustees, the CEO and senior management team comprise the key management personnel of the charity in charge of managing the charity on a day-to-day basis. The trustees are volunteers and do not receive remuneration. Details of trustees' reimbursed expenses are disclosed in Note 7 in the accounts.

All staff roles (including senior roles) are evaluated using a bespoke job evaluation tool and set within job and pay grades benchmarked against the median point of the Croner Charity Rewards survey, which is recognised as the main provider of UK charities' salary data. A 2% cost of living award was made to staff in 2019/20.

## Committee structure

The board of trustees provides strategic leadership, governance, direction and overall accountability. The board decides the organisation's strategic direction, mission and priorities. It ensures that VSS complies with its governing documents, charity law and other relevant legislation. In addition, the board scrutinises, evaluates and accounts for the organisation's performance, ensuring that there is an effective risk management system in operation to safeguard sustainability, finances and otherwise to protect its assets and reputation and always act in the interests of the organisation. During 2019/20 the board met every two months.

The finance and audit committee provides a strategic overview of VSS' financial and fiscal position to ensure that all the financial resources necessary are secured and managed effectively to deliver the objectives in the organisation's corporate plan, to ensure the long-term sustainability and viability of the organisation, and to ensure the effective management of the financial risks which may threaten the organisation. This committee met quarterly in 2019/20.

The governance committee provides an overview of VSS' governance to ensure that the board fulfils its legal, ethical, and functional responsibilities, and ensures that adequate governance policy development, recruitment strategies, training programmes, board activity monitoring, and evaluation of board members' performance is in place. This committee met once during the 2019/20 financial year.

All governance documents were reviewed and updated in 2018/19 to consider the change of legal entity to a SCIO. During 2019/20 a nominations committee was established in line with the SCIO constitution requirements. The nominations committee will periodically, make recommendations to the board of appropriate individuals for appointment as trustees, seek applications from a range of appropriate sources, have regard for the general principles of equality and diversity in considering applicants for appointment, consider all expressions of interest and maintain a register of suitable candidates for future reference ensuring GDPR compliance.



# Reference and administrative details

**President**

HRH, The Princess Royal

**Trustees**

The trustees of the charity are also the members of the SCIO. The directors serving during the period are as follows:

David Alexander

Alex Gauld (resigned 24.10.19)

Kirsten Gilbert (resigned 24.10.19)

Flora Henderson (appointed 24.10.19)

Ashok Khindra

Paul Main (appointed 24.10.19)

Helen Roxburgh (appointed 23.4.20)

Lynne Staples-Scott

Liz Taylor (resigned on 24.10.19)

Jon Turner (appointed Chair on 10.7.19)

Laura Watkins, previously Laura Battles

George Welsh (resigned 29.06.20)

James Wilson

Fiona Young

**Key management personnel**

Kate Wallace, Chief Executive

Alison Love, Director of Operations & New Business

Jane Sturgeon, Director of Finance & Business Planning

**Company details**

**Company Registration Number**  
SC110185

**Scottish Charity Number**  
SC002138

**Registered Office**  
15-23 Hardwell Close, Edinburgh, EH8 9RX

**Our advisors**

**Auditors**

MHA Henderson Loggie,  
11-15 Thistle Street, Edinburgh, EH2 1DF

**Bankers**

The Royal Bank of Scotland plc.,  
2 Blenheim Place, Edinburgh, EH7 5JH

**Solicitors**

Turcan Connell, Princes Square,  
1 Earl Grey Street, Edinburgh, EH3 8UL  
Burness Paull, 50 Lothian Road, Edinburgh, EH3 9WJ  
MacRoberts, Capella, 60 York street, Glasgow, G2 8JX

**Insurance advisor**

Keegan & Pennykidd, 50 Queen Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3NS

**Capacity Building**

Wren & Greyhound Ltd,  
10 Milburn Road, Westfield, EH48 3BT

**Organisational Design**

Dorothy McKinney Ltd,  
Scott House, 10 S. St Andrews Square, Edinburgh, EH2 2AZ





## Financial Review

### Income

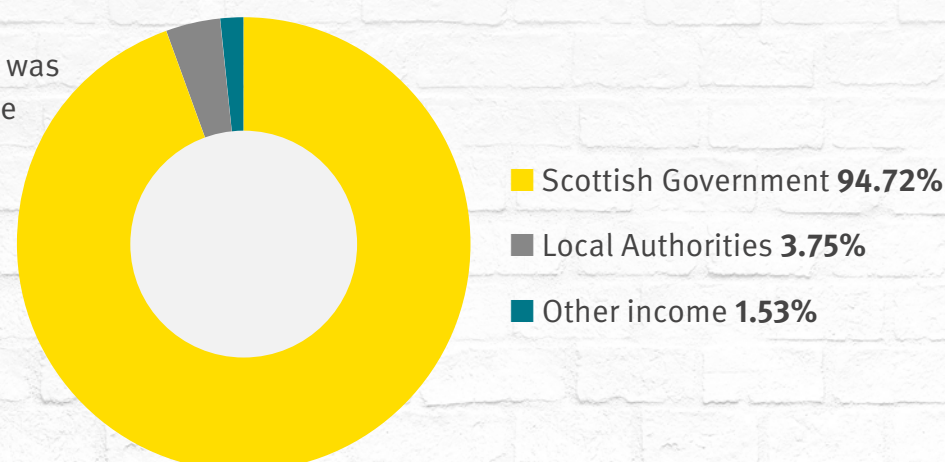
Our total income for the year was £4.9m (2019: £5.05m) a decrease of £144k from the previous year. Income from local authorities continues to drop with a £127k decrease in income from this source in this year. VSS received £11k of additional fundraising for the Victims' task force in this year.

### Expenditure

Our total expenditure for the year was £4.8m (2019: £4.9m) – a decrease of £119k. Our net income for the year was £112k (2019: £136k). Overall, there was a negative movement of £9k with respect to movement on the pension reserves. This led to a positive net movement in funds for the year of £103k (2019: £134k).

### Principal Funding Sources

The principal funding sources for the organisation are grants from the Scottish Government and local authorities and VSS appreciates their continuing support. In 2018/19 we secured a three-year funding agreement with Scottish Government for 2018-2021.



### Lothian Pension Fund

In 2017/18 VSS successfully negotiated an exit from Lothian Pension Fund (LPF) with an agreed repayment schedule over a 20-year period. VSS have now made three annual repayments to LPF. The actuarial valuation of VSS' liability was determined as £1.463m at 31 August 2018 and the agreed total level of repayments was settled at £676k. Under certain conditions, LPF may claim additional repayments but these conditions were not met in 2019/20. VSS pay compensatory additional years for two ex-employees. These unfunded pension liabilities are recorded separately on the balance sheet.

### Principal Financial Risks

The principal financial risks facing us are: the fact that 95% of our funding is from one source, the Scottish Government; continuing reductions in funding from local authorities; the level of unrestricted reserves; and the LPF withdrawal debt that is repayable over 20 years.

### Balance Sheet

The pension liability continued to have a significant impact on the balance sheet. However, the agreed exit debt from LPF brings more stability to the balance sheet as this element will not vary with actuarial fluctuations.

### Reserves Policy

The trustees recognise the need for unrestricted reserves to be maintained at an appropriate level. Our reserves policy is to maintain a sufficient level of reserves to enable operating activities to

be maintained, taking account of potential risks and contingencies that may arise from time to time. The policy is reviewed annually by the trustees.

The policy identifies the estimated amounts required to meet financial risk associated with potential contingencies and uncertainties relating to the charity's operating activities. These include:

- the provision for an orderly winding-down of operations in the event of a significant adverse event that is outside the control of the charity
- the funding of unforeseen major projects that have not been provided for in the normal financial planning process

Elements of the target figure will include the costs for redundancy and contractual liabilities for such items as rent of offices. The trustees are working towards having three months' running costs in reserves.

### Reserves Position at 31 March 2020

The total balance of unrestricted reserves held as at 31 March 2020 is (£29k) (2019: (£126k)). The balance held on restricted reserves as at 31 March 2020 is £352k (2019: £346k). Total funds have increased by £103k to £323k in the financial year.

The pension liability continues to have a significant impact on reserves. There are two components to the pension liability; negotiated exit debt from LPF of (£428k) at 31 March 2020 (2019: (£446k)); and unfunded pension debt of (£148k) at 31 March 2020 (2019: (£139k)). The overall pension reserves at 31 March 2020 are (£576k) (2019: (£585k)). The unfunded



pension debt was affected negatively by market fluctuations at the year-end due to COVID-19. Overall, the unfunded deficit increased by £9k.

Discounting the impact of the pension liability the position on unrestricted reserves improved from £457k to £547k in the year. In 2019/20 trustees set a target of £54k for the increase in unrestricted reserves. The trustees recognised that this is a modest target but a realistic one given that there is currently no dedicated fundraising resource in place. The actual increase in unrestricted reserves in 2019/20 was £90k.

### Going Concern

The board considers it appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. In reaching this view, we have looked at the budgets prepared for the one-year period 2020-2021. The charity's key source of income is the grant from the Scottish Government and funding has been confirmed for this period, with 2020-21 being the final year of a three-year agreement. The trustees recognise the need to supplement this with other sources of income for specific projects, and believe the organisation is well placed to manage its operating risks successfully despite the current uncertain economic outlook as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Investment Policy

The organisation has an instant access bank account where funds not required for day to day activity are held on deposit.

Transfers are made as required to cover expenditure in the current account. The trustees are in the process of developing a new investment strategy and policy that will be finalised in 2020/21.

### The Victims' Fund

We established a new Victims' Fund specifically to manage and administer funds anticipated from the provisions of the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014. The Fund has been designed to continue to offer help and support to victims and persons affected by crime who find themselves in immediate need of assistance. In 2017/2018 the Scottish Government decided to disburse these funds directly and so the purpose of the two entities that were set up to manage the funds generated from the Victims' Surcharge Fund no longer exists. As a result, the board of trustees decided to dissolve the Victims' Fund (Trustee) Ltd and Victims' Fund Charitable Trust. The Victims' Fund Charitable Trust was removed from the charity register on 19th September 2018. An application to wind up Victims' Fund (Trustee) Ltd was made in March 2019 and this company was removed from Companies House register on 25 June 2019. This now concludes the disbanding of these entities.

### Victim Support Enterprise Ltd

During 2013/2014 Victim Support Enterprise Ltd suspended trading but has maintained its company status. There has been no activity in 2019/20. The company will play a role as part of our future income generation strategy.



## Risk Management

It is the responsibility of the board of trustees to ensure that there are effective and adequate risk management and internal controls systems in place. The board reviews all strategic risks and issues at each meeting.

We recognise that effective risk and issue management relies on sound systems and an understanding of risk management throughout all levels of the organisation. A risk and issue management strategy is in place, as well as the following processes and controls:

- Three levels of risk registers and issues logs in place – strategic, executive leadership and corporate leadership
- Escalation process in place between registers so key risks are reviewed
- Risk and issue management is core to the agenda of the board, executive leadership and corporate leadership meetings
- Annual risk workshops carried out by the board and senior management



The board of trustees ensures that all appropriate steps are taken to mitigate and manage the risks and issues facing us. The principal risks faced by the charity and mitigation factors in place are as follows:

Description of risk	Plans and strategies to manage risk
<b>Overly reliant on one funder with annual funding awards making financial planning difficult</b>	<p>A three-year funding agreement for 2018-2021 in place with the Scottish Government, which was the source of 95% of our funding in 2019/20.</p> <p>An interim fundraising strategy that takes account of COVID-19 circumstances is to be rolled out in 2020/21.</p>
<b>People affected by crime are not accessing our service due to drop in referrals</b>	<p>We continue to work with Police Scotland and other stakeholders on a range of national and local approaches to ensure that their officers are aware of the support and information the VSS provides.</p> <p>VSS trains all police probationers on the services VSS can provide to victims of crime.</p> <p>Our community-based services are carrying out more outreach work and increasing visibility in the community.</p>
<b>That compliance requirements are not met</b>	<p>All staff and volunteers complete annual mandatory, bespoke training on GDPR, Health &amp; Safety and Safeguarding.</p> <p>Internal Data Protection Officer in place from March 2019. Health &amp; Safety forum and action plan in place to focus on this matter.</p> <p>Board agenda has a standing item on compliance matters.</p> <p>Clear management reporting on compliance matters.</p>

Description of risk	Plans and strategies to manage risk
<b>That legal action will be brought against VSS with respect to services provided</b>	<p>We took legal advice on the best approach to handle an historic issue leading to this risk. VSS stopped delivering a compensation claim service in Dec 2017.</p> <p>In October 2019 we retained professional indemnity insurance with our insurance provider at an increased premium with an excess of £2,500.</p> <p>There is one potential case outstanding relating to the historic issue mentioned above. Lawyers, appointed by our insurers, review all claims that are lodged.</p>
<b>VSS' delivery model cannot meet the needs of victims and witnesses during COVID-19 pandemic</b>	<p>VSS established a Coronavirus Action Team to co-ordinate the required work to continue to deliver support safely to victims and witnesses, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce equipped to work from home</li> <li>• Telephone support put in place as an alternative to face to face support</li> <li>• Web chat service enhanced</li> <li>• Digital service delivery methods expanded</li> <li>• Recovery action plan developed</li> </ul>



## Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees of Victim Support Scotland are responsible for preparing a trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in Scotland requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and the application of resources, of the charity for that period.

In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities and Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charity Accounts Regulations (Scotland) 2006 (as amended). They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and the integrity of the charity and financial information on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

### Statement as to disclosure of information to auditors

In so far as the trustees are aware, at the time of approving the trustees' annual report:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditors are unaware; and
- The trustees have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditors are aware of that information.

Signed by order of the trustees  
2020

"It is valuable to have someone 'neutral' to talk to, as to go to pals is hard. You don't know what to do because you've not been in that kind of situation before, but Alan really helped me."

Gary, affected by assault



# Staying in touch

Call our free helpline on **0800 160 1985** (8am – 8pm, Mon – Fri)

**[www.victimsupport.scot](http://www.victimsupport.scot)**

**[info@victimsupportsco.org.uk](mailto:info@victimsupportsco.org.uk)**

 **Webchat**

 **@vsscotland**

 **Victim Support Scotland**

Victim Support Scotland is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation,  
registered in Scotland SC002138

**Surviving crime by making people stronger**