



COMMUNITY JUSTICE SCOTLAND – LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT & INNOVATION STRATEGY RELATING TO VICTIMS

1. Victim Support Scotland (VSS) is the largest organisation in Scotland supporting people affected by crime. We provide practical help, emotional support and essential information to victims, witnesses and others affected by crime within each local authority and every Sheriff and High Court in Scotland. The service is free, confidential and is provided by volunteers. VSS welcomes the opportunity to contribute to any future structural arrangements for the delivery of community justice training.
2. We agree that a successful community justice system is one which delivers positive outcomes for victims, for offenders and their families and for communities. Our primary interest in considering the best approach to community justice is to identify ways in which community justice arrangements can be most effective in delivering positive outcomes for victims and to ensure their interests are not lost in any discussions and practical arrangements for Community Justice.
3. What is important in the sense of community justice is the relationship between victim and the person who has caused harm, especially when we consider many victims know the person as either a partner, spouse, family member, friend, acquaintance, or otherwise. The consequences of the crime/incident will significantly impact the recovery process for many victims.
4. The ripples of crime spread and affect people who may have been close to the victim or who were present at the scene of the incident and the reaction differs depending on the individual. The response does not necessarily correlate to the severity or seriousness of what has taken place. As professionals we need to offer support to anyone who has been a victim or refer them to an appropriate organisation that can provide that vital source of support.
5. Victims' needs are wide ranging in the aftermath of crime. They may be affected physically, emotionally, socially or financially and often require practical assistance. We support all victims of crime to improve health and well-being, increase safety, reduce isolation and assist victims and their families with information on the criminal justice process.

6. Professionals and organisations who work in community justice should treat victims sensitively and with respect. Safety and protection needs must be taken seriously regardless of who is responsible for causing harm. Information should be provided in a way that is easy to understand. Victims, and their families, should be kept informed at every stage in the process and be supported to participate at all available opportunities and this should be reflected in Community Justice Scotland training initiatives. This acknowledges harm that has been caused irrespective of the sentence and validates the victim as part of the process.
7. We believe that public confidence in community justice is linked to the visibility of justice and to how the community justice system informs and engages with the public and with victims. Victims should be a visible and central part of the process. It is important that victims are acknowledged, respected, informed, supported and protected, and that they have their voices 'heard' by any structural arrangements for delivering justice in the community.
8. In relation to the rehabilitation of offenders, VSS considers the community justice landscape to be an important forum in which to represent the impact of crime on victims. Consideration should be given, where appropriate, to incorporating an element of victim impact awareness (e.g. within community payback orders), whereby the offender is made aware of the general effects of offending behaviour on victims of crime.
9. All those involved in the delivery of community justice services, particularly those in direct contact with victims, should receive standardised training on victims' issues and on how to treat victims' appropriately.

Training for organisations

VSS is a member of the CPD Certification Service, providing recognised independent CPD accreditation compatible with global CPD principles. The Learning & Development Team designs and delivers tailored CPD training courses to help organisations and professional to better meet the needs of people affected by crime.

We can deliver a short introduction session or presentation, a half-day course or a full-day course, based on particular needs. We have worked with a number of organisations to design and deliver bespoke training courses in the following areas:

- Awareness Raising of the impact of crime on the individual, family and wider community
- Communicating appropriately and considering how best to respond to needs of people affected by crime within your job remit
- The journey of a victim through the criminal justice system, looking at each stage of the journey and the effects it can have on victims and witnesses
- The key provisions of the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014 and other relevant legislation
- Crime type specific training such as Domestic Abuse, Victims of Sexual Crimes or Hate Crime

Our training is interactive, using practical scenarios and situations. We aim to provide participants with information and best practice on how to respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of victims and witnesses of crime.

We would be happy to extend the offer of training to members of Community Justice Scotland in order to make your training as comprehensive and robust on victim issues as it should be.

Main Contact:

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Our focus is to enhance and improve direct services to people affected by crime in Scotland. Courses include: Impact of Crime, Domestic Abuse, Victims of Sexual Crime, Hate Crime, and Children's Rights & the UNCRC.

Our Brochure VSS NEW FULL External Training 2018 provides details for what our training covers.

ENDS

The training courses that are provided by Victim Support Scotland are of a very high standard, and relevant to anybody that is likely to come into contact with the criminal justice system.

The combination of serious, emotional, humorous, and at times shocking material ensures that the whole sessions are engaging throughout.

Learning about how to support victims of crime, their needs and available services that assist them is an important consideration for everybody; after all, we do not know when we might encounter such a victim, and it would be wise to be prepared.

Dr. Allan T. Moore
Programme Leader for BA (Hons) Criminal Justice
University of the West of Scotland



This course provided a powerful insight into the impact of crime on victims and communities, even for a group of very experienced Criminal Justice Social Workers.

I would highly recommend the course for any professionals working in the criminal justice field and beyond, and feel it should be mandatory training for newly-qualified social workers working in the area of criminal justice.

Rania Hamad
Senior Practitioner – Criminal Justice Social Work

