Victims and Witnesses First: VSS Strategy 2018-2021

May 2018
Foreword from the Chief Executive

Since joining VSS last year, I’ve been hugely impressed by the commitment and effort of our staff and volunteers to helping people affected by crime.

It is essential that we create a new future for ourselves that builds on our proud history over the last thirty years so that we remain at the heart of supporting victims and witnesses for many years to come.

Over the last few months, I’ve been speaking to staff, volunteers, board members, partner organisations, the Scottish Government and many others – including victims and witnesses – to understand where we are now, where we want to be and what we need to do to get there.

This is all captured in our new organisational strategy entitled *Victims and Witnesses First: VSS Strategy 2018-2021*. I’m delighted to say that after receiving years of annual funding we have secured our first ever three-year funding deal from the Scottish Government based on the commitments we have made.

This provides us with the stability that we need to plan ahead. However, it is really important that we do not rest or be complacent.

The following summary explains how the strategy affects everyone connected with VSS.
Foreword from the Chief Executive

What are we trying to achieve

Our mission is to ensure that those affected by crime receive high quality support that will help them to recover from their experiences. Ultimately, we want victims and witnesses to be at the heart of criminal justice in Scotland.

There are four things that we need to do to achieve that:

1. **Deliver** high quality support for anyone affected by crime who needs it.

2. **Build** partnerships and alliances with other organisations to work together on putting victims and witnesses first.

3. **Champion** the rights of victims, witnesses and those affected by crime.

4. **Develop** VSS to enable the delivery of excellent needs-led services.

We have a detailed action plan over the next three years to meet these goals. Achieving these changes will not always be easy and we have limited resources.

- **2018 – 2019** will be about building the foundations for a more stable and successful VSS, at the same time as providing priority services to a high standard.

- **2019 – 2020** is where we will tackle more of the complex challenges that we have and start to secure our future through new fully funded services.

- **2020 – 2021** will see VSS continuing to implement the changes of the previous two years, reviewing our performance against this strategy, and preparing VSS for the next stage.

In 2021, I want us all to be able to look back and see that VSS is a more effective organisation that is making a lasting difference to people. We want victims and witnesses to have improved health and well-being, feel safer and more secure, and be better informed.
Strategy at a glance

Vision and mission

All those affected by crime who need it receive high quality support to recover from their experiences.

Victims and witnesses of crime are at the heart of justice in Scotland.
Outcomes

People affected by crime have improved health and well-being

Those affected by crime feel safer and more secure

Victims and witnesses are more informed

VSS is a more effective organisation that makes a lasting difference
Victim Support Scotland

VICTIMS AND WITNESSES FIRST: VSS STRATEGY 2018-2021

Strategy at a glance

Strategic objectives

**Deliver** high quality support for anyone affected by crime who needs it.

**Build** partnerships and alliances with other organisations to work together on putting victims and witnesses first.

**Champion** the rights of victims, witnesses and those affected by crime.

**Develop** VSS to enable the delivery of excellent needs-led services.
Strategy at a glance

Identity
VSS is a service by its communities for communities, this includes:
❖ Geographic communities – Scotland and local
❖ Communities of identity and belonging – crime types and demographics (e.g. young people and equalities groups, for example people who identify as LGBTi, BME groups, etc.)

VSS is modern, keeps up-to-date with trends and reaches out in a way that suits those affected by crime.

Values
❖ Supportive
❖ Excellence
❖ Personalised
❖ Accessible

Organisational objectives
❖ We will create a well-governed, well-led, well-managed, resilient organisation that is purpose-led (lives its values) and adapts to changing needs.
❖ We will be inclusive of the views and aspirations of volunteers and those who use our services.
❖ We will work in partnership with other organisations to deliver high quality support services as measured by outcomes for people affected by crime.
❖ Our organisation systems will be up-to-date, legally compliant, fit for purpose and accessible to all.
❖ We will develop our resources and work to ensure we have staff and volunteers with the right skills in the right place at the right time.
❖ We will plan training and personal development for all staff and volunteers, and have succession planning for senior staff and board.
❖ We will plan for the future.
**VICTIM SUPPORT SCOTLAND**

**VISION**
ALL those affected by crime, who need it, receive high quality support to recover from their experiences. Victims and witnesses of crime are at the heart of justice in Scotland.

**MISSION**
VSS exists to ensure all those affected by crime receive high quality support to enable recovery from their experiences.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

**OUTCOME 1**
People affected by crime have improved health and well-being

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

**OUTCOME 2**
Those affected by crime feel safer and more secure

**BUILD** partnerships and alliances with other organisations to work together on putting victims and witnesses first.

**OUTCOME 3**
Victims and witnesses are more informed

**CHAMPION** the rights of victims, witnesses and those affected by crime.

**OUTCOME 4**
VSS is a more effective organisation that makes a lasting difference

**DEVELOP** VSS to enable the delivery of excellent needs-led services.
The big picture

Taking stock

- We have reviewed where we are now. VSS has many strengths, especially its staff and volunteers, and has a long record of providing valuable support to victims and witnesses. However, we still have a long way to go to be the organisation we want and that our communities need.
- We have secured a three-year funding deal to enable us to deliver this strategy.
- We hosted our first visit from the current Cabinet Secretary for Justice.
- We have a new Executive Board and are establishing a new leadership team.
- We have agreed this new strategy which provides clarity on our work over the next three years.
- We have secured funding to lead the establishment of a new homicide service for Scotland.
The big picture

Making better decisions
Going forward, we will assess our biggest decisions against these four factors:

- **Benefit**: can we show evidence of a positive impact on victims and witnesses in line with our strategy?
- **Excellence**: is it in line with our quality framework?
- **Accessible**: can we make this service open and easy to access to all who need it?
- **Finance**: is it affordable now and is it sustainable into the future?
YEAR 1 PRIORITY: building the foundations

**Deliver**
- Support services for victims and witnesses using digital and mobile phone technology as well as via more traditional methods.
- Develop plans for the new homicide service and supporting children coming to court as part of children’s hearing proofs (a partnership with Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration).
- In partnership with other organisations plan the ‘victim-centred’ support model, sometimes referred to as ‘single point of contact’ or ‘one front door’ which will enable people who have been affected by crime to be supported by the appropriate agency and to receive a consistent level of service in their journey through the criminal justice system.

**Build**
- Review our current partnerships and actively promote a new strategy.

**Champion**
- Prepare a co-production strategy and plan to involve those who use our services in the development of our work.
YEAR 1 PRIORITIES: building the foundations

Develop

- Re-engage all VSS staff and volunteers with our mission/vision and values
- Launch our strategy
- Redesign our structures and resources
- Establish a fundraising function
- Develop a strategy for these key areas: equality and diversity, organisational development, volunteering, community engagement, capability and capacity building, income generation
- Agree a quality improvement framework for whole organisation (e.g. Investors in People/Investors in Volunteers) and prepare for its introduction
- Create evaluation plan and systems to enable us to capture the difference VSS makes to those who use our services

We will also gather baseline data about the views and experiences of our volunteers, staff, stakeholders and others.
YEAR 2 PRIORITIES: embed and deliver

Deliver
- Fully-fledged digital/mobile service delivery approach
- Pilot new services
- Have funding applications in progress for new services where necessary

Champion
- Put in place structures for service user involvement in policy influencing and VSS developments

Build
- Provide evidence of improved community engagement
- More partnerships with other organisations as well as improvements to partnerships

Develop
- Embed a quality framework tool across the organisation
- Put personal development plans in place
- Develop and pilot a performance management system
Victim Support Scotland

VICTIMS AND WITNESSES FIRST: VSS STRATEGY 2018-2021

YEAR 3 PRIORITIES: deliver, review, plan

Deliver
- Demonstrate an improved digital experience for those who use our services
- Have new service models and approaches in place that meet needs of people affected by crime whose needs were previously unmet

Build
- Review and prepare for our new strategy
- New collaborations with external organisations and deeper partnerships

Champion
- Show that co-production, service user participation and engagement is in place and the new norm

Develop
- Repeat the stakeholder, staff and volunteer surveys from Year 1
- Embed performance management systems
VSS Strategy 2018-2021

Deliver programmes of high quality support services

Outcomes
Victims and witnesses:
- Have improved health and well-being
- Feel safer and more secure
- Are more informed

Services
- Individual support for victims and those affected by crime
- Information provision
- Witness support in court
- Digital access to support and information
- Signpost to other services

Activities
- Develop our services and awareness raising externally in relation to cybercrime and fraud, children and young people, and those affected by homicide and hate crime
- Identify unmet need and consider ways of meeting those needs especially in relation to equality and diversity
VSS Strategy 2018-2021

Champion the rights of victims and those affected by crime

Outcomes

► A more effective organisation that makes a lasting difference
► Improved health and well-being for victims and witnesses
► Victims and witnesses feel safer and more secure
► Victims and witnesses are more informed

Activities

► Encourage user involvement to influence and inform VSS policy and practice
► Involve people affected by crime in Influencing/Campaigning plan
► Complete advocacy and rights-based work responding to consultations, service reviews, developing legislation etc.
► Raise awareness to:
  – Shine a spotlight on the emotional, social and economic impact of crime on victims and communities
  – Highlight strategic priorities, new crime types, and help that is available to those whose needs are currently unmet.
VSS Strategy 2018-2021

Build supportive partnerships and alliances

Outcomes
- A more effective organisation that makes a lasting difference
- Improved health and well-being for victims and witnesses
- Victims and witnesses feel safer and more secure
- Victims and witnesses are more informed

Activities
- Build partnerships with other organisations ensuring that everyone affected by crime has their support needs met
- Establish strategic alliances to develop and deliver new services for victims
- Collaborate with others to influence policy, practice and campaigns
VSS Strategy 2018-2021

Develop VSS capacity and capability

Outcome
- A more effective organisation that makes a lasting difference

Activities
- Maintain strong supportive governance to lead the way
- Strategic Management will align to changes in the external environment and the needs of victims
- Operational Management will focus on strategic priorities, being responsive, pro-active and needs-led
- Build a flexible, resilient workforce
- Embed new cultural norms that embrace change, new ways of working, flexibility, learning and a new set of values to underpin everything we do
- Establish a new modern brand image
- Continue to provide support to volunteers to deliver a high quality service