



**CORPORATE PLAN 2015-2018**  
**INCLUDING**  
**THE VICTIMS & SURVIVORS SERVICE**  
**ACTION PLAN 2015-2016**

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## **FOREWORD**

### **Chair**

It is just over 12 months since the Board of the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) was appointed by Ministers in December 2013. Since then, my fellow Board Members and I have come to truly understand Sir Kenneth Bloomfield's often-quoted comment: that working with those who have been bereaved and injured is 'a painful privilege'. We have met with and been inspired by many people who carry their pain and precious memories with great dignity, passion and pride. We are very grateful for the warm welcome that has been extended to us by them, as well as by the diverse organisations that provide vital services and support across the region. We look forward to meeting and speaking with many more over the coming months

The past year has been an intensely busy and challenging one. VSS has worked with more than 70 organisations and over 6,000 individuals. In doing so, we have listened to what you have had to say about your experience of using our service. We have acknowledged our shortcomings and worked hard to address each and every recommendation made for improvement. We have come a long way and firmly believe we are now much better placed to work in partnership with individuals, groups, the Commission for Victims and Survivors and Departmental officials to properly provide for the needs of victims and survivors.

As I look to the months ahead, I feel hopeful about the work that is yet to be done. From the point of view of the governance of the VSS: I am looking forward to the Ministerial appointment of additional Board members in the near future. This will strengthen the framework of the VSS and increase our capacity for listening and responding to you.

In terms of the next steps for the delivery of funding and support to organisations and individuals: I am pleased to note the publication of the reports commissioned by the Commission for Victims and Survivors into the impact of the Victims Support and Individual Needs Programmes (produced on behalf of the Commission by RSM McClure Watters). These reports include strategic and operational recommendations for the way forward, and the VSS will work closely with the Commission and the Department of OFMDFM over the coming months to adopt these improvements. I am keen to begin work with the Department on the current co-design process, specifically to enable the voices of all of the organisations and individuals that are important to VSS to feed into that policy development process. And I am eager to follow the work of the Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group that, through the Victims' Practitioners' Working Group, is engaging with the VSS to agree a workable framework for monitoring and demonstrating the impact, quality, and consistency of funded services.

All of this co-working is so valuable. My fellow Board Members and I are convinced that this collaborative approach must underpin every step that we take from now onwards. This Corporate Plan has been developed with this objective, committing the VSS to work in partnership with its stakeholders, and ensuring both the continuity and ongoing improvement of services and support for all victims and survivors. We are pleased to commend it to you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Oliver Wilkinson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Oliver Wilkinson**  
**Interim Chair**

## **Chief Executive**

The publication of this Corporate and Business Plan marks an important juncture for the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS). We have now completed the delivery of a £20 million, two-year programme of OFMDFM funding for victims and survivors (2013-2015). Over this period substantial changes and challenges have been managed, and a great deal has been learned. This Corporate Plan presents the immediate VSS Action Plan for 2015-16, setting clear targets in the context of both the accumulated learning of the past two years, and our broader aims objectives. It is to be expected that these aims and objectives will evolve over time, with the implementation of the Action Plan.

The greatest challenge over the past 12 months has been the delivery of the Victims Support and Individual Needs Programmes in the context of the significant financial constraints faced by the NI Executive in 2014/15. The VSS Board and Staff were mindful that the inevitable budget limitations on our Programmes constituted a difficult message to communicate to our stakeholders, and a painful one for both our individual clients and funded organisations to accept.

I am pleased to note, however, that having worked hard with OFMDFM we successfully obtained additional funding in both the October and January monitoring rounds in 2014-2015. These funds have enabled us to maximise every opportunity to deliver support to individual victims and survivors over an otherwise challenging period.

Perhaps the most important thing that has been learned is that collaboration and co-working with all of our valued stakeholders is vital to the successful delivery of services that really work for victims and survivors. By November 2014, recommendations made by the CVS had been implemented for that financial year with two key long-term strategic recommendations carried forward, namely Monitoring and Evaluation and Assessment of victims' needs.

Over the coming months, the VSS will continue to work closely with its partners in OFMDFM and the Commission for Victims and Survivors to deliver the co-design programme of consultation on future programmes and policy to address these recommendations in the longer term.

In this context, the current Victims Support Programme will be extended for a period of up to 1 year, ensuring the continuity of provision while this important collaborative process takes place. Our Programmes Team, therefore, is continuing to work with more than 60 victim/survivor support organisations that are funded through the Victims Support Programme to deliver a wide range of Health and Wellbeing and Social Support services across the region.

Our Client Services Team, too, is continuing to engage with more than 6,000 individuals, delivering packages of support that the VSS administers through the Individual Needs Programme and signposting and referring to our partners and other voluntary and statutory services.

Our Corporate Services team, having successfully delivered the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2013-2014, is continuing to work on our internal processes and information systems in all areas of corporate governance to enable us to continually improve and provide the best service we can to victims and survivors.

We are proud to be able to deliver these services, and I want to pay thanks to the staff at VSS who have risen to this challenge.

Looking to the year ahead, I am optimistic about the work that needs to be accomplished, which is detailed in the VSS Action Plan 2015-16. The VSS budget for this period represents a significant commitment and statement of confidence from the NI Executive. It is allocated to the VSS in the context of the ongoing consultation with the funded victim/survivor sector. I look forward to engaging with all of our valued stakeholders as we move forward, and am pleased to commend this Corporate and Action Plan to you as part of that process.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Margaret Bateson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Margaret Bateson**  
**Acting Chief Executive Officer**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) was established to deliver support and services for all victims and survivors of troubles/conflict-related incidents.

The VSS operates two Programmes of funding:

1. The Individual Needs Programme (INP), which delivers financial support and direct access to goods and services to individual victims and survivors in particular circumstances.
2. The Victims Support Programme (VSP), which delivers funding to organisations that provide Health and Wellbeing and Social Support services to victims and survivors across Northern Ireland.

These Programmes enable the VSS to provide accessible, responsive and coordinated services to meet the needs of victims and survivors in an integrated way.

The funding for these Programmes comes from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

## 2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### **The VSS within the Programme for Government (2011-2015) and the Strategy for Victims and Survivors (2009)**

The Strategy for Victims and Survivors (2009) is one of the building blocks for the Programme for Government 2011/2015. The Programme identifies a range of measures to tackle poverty and social exclusion through the 'Delivering Social Change' framework. The establishment of a Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) is one of those measures. It aligns specifically with Priority 2 of the Programme: *creating opportunities, tackling disadvantage and improving health and wellbeing*.

The Strategy for Victims and Survivors (2009) sets out a framework of organisations that work together to for all victims and survivors.

The VSS plays a key role in this framework, delivering funding and engaging directly with individuals.

The important relationships that support this activity include:

#### **1. Links between the VSS and OFMDFM.**

The VSS is accountable to OFMDFM in terms of its procedures, activities, and financial responsibilities which are managed through regular Accountability and a Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM).

In addition, OFMDFM directs VSS on matters of policy.

#### **2. A pathway of communication and reporting between the VSS and the Commission for Victims and Survivors and the Victims and Survivors Forum.**

These bodies work together to scrutinise the delivery of Services for Victims and Survivors (as well as other matters, including the impact on victims and survivors of the thematic areas of work referred to as Dealing with the Past, and Building for the Future). On the basis of this analysis and insight, the Commission is responsible for developing advice for OFMDFM on policy matters affecting victims and survivors.

There is also a link between the VSS and the Victims and Survivors Practitioners' Working Group. This group is a vital network of communication and collaboration between professionals who work with victims and survivors, and who have developed expertise and insight in relation to effective treatments, good governance, and support strategies for staff and volunteers in the sector.

Whereas this network has been concentrated in the Belfast area up to now, from 2015 onwards the VSS will drive its expansion across the whole region.

This structure builds upon the insights, experience and work that have been accumulated to date, ensuring more coordinated, efficient and effective service delivery for victims and survivors.

### **The VSS within the OFMDFM Departmental Business Plan**

The VSS Corporate Plan is linked to the Business Plan of its Sponsor Department, OFMDFM. Specifically, the VSS falls under one of the OFMDFM customer-facing objectives, namely: *to deliver a range of measures to tackle poverty and social exclusion through the Delivering Social Change framework and develop a longer-term policy framework*. The aims, objectives, and targeted actions outlined in this VSS Corporate Plan are aligned to this commitment in the OFMDFM Departmental Business Plan.

### **3. IMPROVING SERVICES**

The VSS is working to continually improve the services and support that it delivers to victims and survivors. The following three developments are key to this work:

- The Independent Assessment of the VSS, commissioned by the Commission for Victims and Survivors (CVS) and published in February 2014;
- Research commissioned by the CVS into the impact of the INP and VSP, which reported to OFMDFM in December 2014; and
- The work of the Victims and Survivors Service Co-Design Programme, initiated in November 2014 to carry forward the recommendations of the CVS research.

#### **Commission for Victims and Survivors: Independent Assessment of VSS**

In December 2013, the CVS appointed independent consultants to carry out an assessment of the VSS. The assessment focused on the following four themes:

- Governance, Strategy and Policy
- Interactions with clients
- Interactions with VSP funded organisations
- Management of People, Resources and Information

The report was finalised in February 2014 and made a number of recommendations focusing on the implementation of a change management process that would ensure an effective transition from an administrative model of delivery to a service model of delivery. While most of these concerned the VSS specifically, some were also relevant to the VSS' key partners including OFMDFM.

The VSS Board and Senior Management Team committed to implementing all of recommendations relevant to VSS on a timely basis throughout 2014/2015. An action plan was immediately put in place, and was reported upon and monitored on a monthly basis. In January 2015, it was identified that the outstanding recommendations directly correlate with and influence the strategic direction of the Co-Design Programme of work described below, and as such are being carried forward as part of that process. These include the delivery of an agreed monitoring and evaluation framework, and the process of assessing victims' needs.

## **Commission for Victims and Survivors: Research Reports into the Impact of VSP and INP**

In July 2014, the CVS commissioned RSM McClure Watters to deliver two research reports into the impact of the INP and VSP respectively. This research involved consultation with individuals and groups. The final reports were submitted to OFMDFM in December 2014.

As anticipated, this research has delivered both strategic and operational-level recommendations for the improvement of policy and programmes for victims and survivors. Given the timing of these reports, the OFMDFM and the VSS have agreed a process whereby the current round of VSP funding (2013-2015) will be extended for a period of up to 1 year. This will allow OFMDFM, VSS and CVS to engage in a systematic process of programme renewal, including the testing of pilot measures recommended by the research, and ensuring that the whole process is informed by robust consultation with all of the relevant stakeholders.

### **Victims and Survivors Service Co-Design Programme**

In November 2014, in view of the pending delivery of the CVS research into the impact of the VSP and INP, a Victims Co-Design Programme Team was established. This has brought together OFMDFM strategy and policy representatives, the CVS, and the VSS Board and Senior Management in a facilitated process focused on re-designing service provision and delivery mechanisms in light of the learning accumulated via the steps described above. In its early stages of work, the Co-Programme team identified a number of core themes to be addressed, including:

- The need for 3 strands of service provision: INP, VSP, and a Mental Trauma Service. While the VSP and INP lie within the scope of VSS to deliver, OFMDFM and the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) have agreed in principle to develop a joint application for PEACE IV funding to develop a Mental Trauma Service Model within the NHS. The framework for driving this forward has been put in place, with OFMDFM having included this in a PEACE IV Operational Plan, and reference having been made to such a model for victims in the Stormont House Agreement (December 2014).
- The need for a pilot approach to testing new elements (specifically: a Personal Case Worker approach to engaging with individual victims and survivors, and a Personal Budgets approach to delivering financial assistance).
- The need for robust Monitoring and Evaluation data, gleaned through an agreed framework.

- The need for an agreed process for assessing victims' needs, including a framework for confirming eligibility for services.
- The need for consistency in clinical approaches and interventions.
- The needs for greater partnership working.
- The need to review the staffing requirements of the VSS to ensure that it is equipped to deliver services in line with any agreed revisions to the service delivery model going forward.

The Co-Design process to address these themes and deliver an improved service delivery model for victims and survivors has already begun, with preliminary communication having been issued to key stakeholders in January 2015. This work will be carried forward over the coming months and is referenced in the VSS Action Plan included at **Annex 3**.

#### **4. PROGRESS TO DATE 2013-2015**

The VSS successfully completed its Annual Report and Accounts for 2013-14 and submitted this to Companies House by the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014. In May 2015, the Annual Report and Accounts for 2014-15 will be developed by the deadline for NIAO audit of September 2015 and will provide full details of progress against the VSS business plan for that period.

##### **Support to Individuals - Individual Needs Programme (INP)**

In 2013-14, individuals accessed support through the Individual Needs Programme through an Individual Needs Assessment and as a result, 3,056 individuals had support available through the Education and Training, Respite Breaks, Chronic Pain, Disability Support, and Care for Carers schemes. In addition, 1,754 awards were issued for Financial Assistance.

In 2014-15, the VSS streamlined the Individual Needs Programme to improve the access to support and services and significantly reduce the administrative burden on victims and survivors.

This included:

- Self declarations under Scheme 6 for those whose eligibility had already been confirmed;
- Fairness and equity in Scheme 6 by widely publicising the opening and closing date and allocating the budget across all individuals who applied;
- Awards to the seriously injured from August 2014 with a flexible list of eligible items;
- Awards to carers from August 2014 of a cash payment of £500 to reduce the need for invoicing and quotations;
- Awards to the bereaved from December 2014 with a flexible list of eligible items.

The VSS continues to engage, listen and provide support to individuals on a daily basis.

3,048 individuals have support available through the Support for the Injured, Bereaved and Carers schemes. In addition, 2,247 awards were issued for Financial Assistance.

During 2014-15, telephone calls have averaged 500 per week and on average 50 individuals call into the VSS in person.

The reduced budget position in 2014-15 has brought with it significant challenges in managing communication and distress and anxiety for individuals due to delays in

support and reductions in the support available. While additional funding was secured at the end of the financial year, this was allocated within a very short period for the expenditure to occur for the individual.

The vast majority of these interactions are positive. However, in 2013-14 and 2014-15 to date, VSS has recorded 63 and 66 formal complaints for the respective years. An overview of the complaints recorded shows that key issues identified included:

- Frustration with the timescales involved in accessing support and payments;
- Confusion as a result of insufficient information or clarity regarding services/support available;
- Anger and dismay that one of the Individual Needs Programme Schemes (Scheme 6 – Financial Assistance) is means tested, and therefore cannot be availed of as a gesture of acknowledgement of bereavement or injury;
- Frustration with the relatively limited support available under the Individual Needs Programme in 2014-15.

VSS takes all complaints and feedback very seriously and actively monitors themes and response times. Each of the recorded complaints was resolved in conversation with the complainants concerned, with VSS acting quickly to identify the specific issue, rectify it, communicate with the complainant, and strive to improve processes to ensure that the likelihood of a recurrence was minimised.

In April 2014, the VSS complaints procedure was reviewed in conjunction with the CVS and Forum Services Working Group to ensure a clear and transparent process within the VSS and a clear appeal mechanism.

### **Supported to Organisations - Victims Support Programme (VSP)**

Over the period April 2013 – March 2015, VSS delivered funding over £75,000 each to a total of 43 groups/organisations. In addition, smaller awards were made to a further 23 groups consisting mainly of voluntary organisations.

The VSP supports two main strands of work;

- Health and Wellbeing Programme
- Social Support Programme

The aims and objectives of the VSS (discussed in Section 7 below) overlap with and underpin the specific aims and objectives of these two strands of the VSP for 2013-2015, which are as follows:

### ***Aims and Objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Programme***

**Aim:** To contribute to the health and social care of victims/survivors through the provision of individualised courses of treatment and/or care.

**Objectives:**

- To provide packages of treatment of care designed for specific individuals, to monitor progress made and the outcomes for individuals;
- Provide high quality care for individuals through direct support and referrals to organisations who work to professional best practice standard.

### ***Aims and Objectives of the Social Support Programme***

**Aims:**

- To support and maintain the resilience of victims and survivors.
- To assist victims and survivors in addressing the legacy of the past.
- To assist victims and survivors in building a shared and better future.

**Objectives:**

- Provide a two year funding programme from 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2015 (reviewed after year 1) to services and activities aimed at group activity and informal engagement with victims and survivors.
- Provide services and activities to support the needs of individual victims and survivors for which there is an evidence base and using best practice standards.

The Social Support contracts were for a 2 year funding period to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and Health and Wellbeing for 1 year up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014. These were extended a further year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 in line with Social Support.

In 2013-14, monitoring reports from groups indicate that more than 2,500 individuals received Counselling support and that nearly 4,000 individuals received complementary therapies.

Within Social Support there were over 21,000 interventions delivered to individuals with services ranging from befriending to personal development, welfare advice, advocacy support and intergenerational support.

Similar numbers of beneficiaries are being reported for 2014-15 to date.

## **Corporate Governance**

The VSS second set of Accounts and Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2014 were certified by Northern Ireland Audit Office and submitted to Companies House in December 2014.

Due to budgetary pressures identified early in the year, VSS successfully bid for additional funding of £1.3m in October monitoring and £1.3m in January monitoring in 2014-15, both of which were approved and allocated in December 2014 and January 2015 respectively.

These budgetary pressures also resulted in a reduction in VSS staffing from 40 FTE as at March 2014 to 26 FTE in September 2014. A staffing re-structure took place at that time in addition to staff planning days and a change management process to ensure front line service delivery could be maximised while legal and statutory duties could be fulfilled.

These positive outcomes are evidence of the work carried out by the Corporate Services team over the year to establish systems and processes that enable the efficient management of the resources allocated to VSS. Specifically significant work has been undertaken in the areas of management information and telephone systems. Work will continue to streamline and improve these areas going forward.

The budget position for the year ahead 2015-16 will ensure VSS can continue with these critical improvements in addition to the procurement of a bespoke Management Information System that will facilitate not only improved business processes but also more efficient delivery of services to individual clients and funded groups.

VSS is committed to an ongoing process of service improvement in all areas of our work. In doing so, we are working closely with the Commission for Victims and Survivors and OFMDFM.

## **Clinical Governance**

The VSS has established a robust framework of protocols to support its Client Services function. This framework ensures the safety both of individual clients and the VSS staff. It includes training, policies, and protocols in relation to lone working, engaging with vulnerable adults, and clinical risk monitoring and management.

From October 2013, VSS worked closely with the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trust to ensure that all clients with identified mental health needs were transitioned safely into statutory care.

The VSS continues to work closely with the VSP funded organisations and other voluntary and statutory providers to refer and signpost individuals requiring access to mental health services.

The CVS and OFMDFM continue to build on relationship with the Trust, and a key focus going forward will be of continued engagement to develop and maintain appropriate care pathways for vulnerable victims and survivors.

The VSS has also carried out a skills audit of all counselling staff and developed a workforce development plan to build upon the existing high skills and capacity within the sector and to promote further opportunities for learning and networking. This will be rolled out from the end of this year and into 2015-16.

## 5. OUR MISSION AND VISION

### What makes the VSS a dedicated service for victims and survivors?

The VSS represents an important development in the provision of assistance to victims and survivors funded by OFMDFM. The key changes that this has enabled are as follows:

- **A client-centred approach:** When appropriate, the VSS can meet face to face with individual victims and survivors. This is a very important and sensitive dimension of our work. It provides the opportunity to understand the unique circumstances of each person that requires assistance, and to identify the most appropriate and accessible options for support that the VSS can offer. This support can be delivered either directly under the Individual Needs Programme or through the organisations funded under the Victims Support Programme.
- **Coordinated service delivery:** Previously, two separate bodies delivered resources to individuals and organisations respectively (the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund and the Victims Unit within the Community Relations Council).

Now, the VSS has been set up to ensure more coordinated, efficient and effective delivery of services and support to both individuals and organisations, through the two programmes of funding listed above.

### **Vision**

The vision of the VSS is to improve the lives and wellbeing of all victims and survivors, enabling them to live as fulfilled a life as possible.

### **Mission**

The mission of the VSS is to ensure that all victims and survivors are aware of the support available to them and are assisted in appropriate ways to access high quality services that meet their needs.

To do this, the VSS will cultivate an understanding of the value and role of the organisation for victims and survivors, working in partnership with other bodies that provide relevant services to deliver high quality programmes and operate to good governance standards. In doing so, the VSS will be committed to the development of strong, mutually respectful, and collaborative working relationships with all stakeholders.

## 6. OUR VALUES

The core values of VSS are respect, trust and responsiveness.

**Respect** Acknowledging that what happened to victims and survivors matters, to them and those who love and care for them.

**Trust** Working with integrity and transparency to develop an honest relationship with each and every individual.

**Responsiveness** Listening to every individual, reaching and developing tailored and coordinated responses to meet their needs and improve their health and wellbeing.

In all of the work that we do,

- We put clients first;
- We seek and listen to the views of others;
- We work in partnership with others; and
- We strive continuously to improve our standards and the experience of our clients.

### Philosophy of Care

The VSS is committed to the delivery of person-centred services that improve the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors.

In delivering these services, the VSS will maintain a non-judgemental, compassion-focused approach.

The staff of the VSS recognise and value the uniqueness of each and every individual that avails of our services. This means that VSS staff respect the dignity, privacy and independence of each client. It also means that ensuring the client's safety and enabling his or her personal choices are of the utmost importance to the VSS.

The VSS is committed to learning from the experiences of our clients, and to equipping staff with the resources and knowledge to deliver services to an excellent standard.

## **7. OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Aims**

The overarching aim of the VSS is to provide safe, effective, and accessible support and care which places victims and survivors at the centre of our services.

These services fall into two main areas of work: the provision of Health and Wellbeing interventions and Social Support for victims and survivors. Each of these areas of work is underpinned by specific aims (discussed in Section 3 above), as follows:

#### ***Aim of the Health and Wellbeing Programme***

To contribute to the wellbeing of victims and survivors by providing treatment and/or care appropriate to the individual.

#### ***Aims of the Social Support Programme***

1. To support and maintain the resilience of victims and survivors.
2. To assist victims and survivors to address the legacy of the past.
3. To assist victims and survivors to build a shared and better future.

### **Objectives**

The objectives that guide the work of the VSS are:

1. To respond to calls from victims and survivors by
  - a. delivering assistance under the Individual Needs Programme, and
  - b. signposting and supporting access to victim/survivor support groups and other relevant agencies.
2. To support, assess, approve, fund, and monitor annual Programmes of Work to be delivered by a network of victim/survivor support organizations.
3. To monitor access to services by victims and survivors across the region.
4. To disseminate information around best practice.
5. To influence service development with a view to improving the experiences and outcomes for victims and survivors.
6. To identify and engage with all relevant stakeholders.
7. To improve the performance of the VSS and strengthen its Corporate Governance. This means ensuring that the VSS delivers OFMDFM funding to victims and survivors in an accountable, transparent and efficient way.

## **8. OUR PROGRAMMES**

### **Support for Individuals: the Individual Needs Programme**

The VSS prides itself in providing support that is responsive to the particular needs of the individual, and that respects absolutely the dignity and personal choices of each client.

The support that VSS can offer individuals is delivered under the Individual Needs Programme, and is informed by advice given by the Commission for Victims and Survivors in relation to the needs of victims and survivors. It includes:

- Support to access services and goods that improve the physical wellbeing and quality of life of victims and survivors living with injuries and their carers.
- Direct financial assistance for certain victims and survivors who have particularly low incomes.
- Support for certain victims and survivors to access education and training opportunities and respite.

### **Funding for Organisations: the Victims Support Programme**

The VSS delivers funding to organisations that provide services and support to victims and survivors across Northern Ireland. The work funded through the Victims Support Programme within these organisations meets the VSS aims and objectives and is informed by advice given by the Commission for Victims and Survivors regarding the needs of victims and survivors.

The services and support delivered by organisations funded by the VSS include:

- Services that support and maintain resilience among victims and survivors.
- Welfare advice and support for victims and survivors, and opportunities and activities focused on personal and professional development.
- Advocacy support for victims and survivors in relation to historical investigations and inquiries.
- Support and activities for young people affected by the impact of trauma in families and communities.
- Counselling and complementary therapies that improve the mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of victims and survivors, and that enhance their quality of life.

The budget for these Programmes, as well as the VSS Corporate Budget, is outlined at **Annex 1**.

## **9. OUR PEOPLE**

### **Fitness of Persons to Work within the VSS**

The VSS is committed to ensuring the availability of appropriately qualified, experienced and competent staff members across its different areas of work.

There are robust policies and procedures in place governing the recruitment on on-going performance management processes including confirmation of identity, criminal clearance disclosures, confirmation of experience, qualification and references linked to the requirements of the role.

In addition, the VSS provides an ongoing programme of professional development for all staff tailored to their specific learning and developmental needs through internal and external support, mentoring and training.

In order to deliver a client-centred service, the VSS is committed to establishing and maintaining a culture and operating systems, protocols, policies and procedures that are designed around the wellbeing of the client.

These are complemented by the provision of robust governance arrangements and information structures, as well as the appropriate facilities and equipment required to deliver a service of excellence.

### **VSS Organisational Structure**

#### ***VSS Board***

The VSS permanent Board was appointed in December 2013.

The Board meets monthly and has an oversight role of holding the Senior Management Team to account for the implementation of this plan. This will be achieved through regular performance reporting and appraisal of key performance indicators, targets and any recommendations emerging as a result of any internal or external reviews or assessments.

### **Senior Management Team**

The Interim Chief Executive Officer is the Interim Accounting Officer for the VSS for all matters relating to financial propriety and regularity and for all considerations of prudent and economic administration of the organization.

The Interim Chief Executive Officer is supported at a senior management level by the Programmes Manager, the Finance and Governance Manager and a part-time Psychologist.

The SMT has responsibility for two key functions within the VSS:

- (i) Programmes and Client Services
  - a. Best Practice in services and therapies
  - b. Assistance and support to individual victims and survivors
  - c. Referrals and signposting to goods and services
  
- (ii) Corporate Governance
  - a. Corporate Governance of the Individual Needs Programme and Victim Support Programme
  - b. Corporate Services (HR, IT, Communications, Corporate Finance)
  - c. Monitoring and Reporting

An organisation chart outlining the VSS structure for 2015-16 is provided in **Annex 2**.

## 10. OUR STAKEHOLDERS

Our aim is to be a safe pair of hands that supports victims and survivors as they engage with the diverse services, agencies, and other parts of society that contribute to the full and healthy life of the individual.

To become that safe pair of hands, we need and value a strong network of partners with whom we can communicate and work in the interests of victims and survivors.

We are committed to taking steps to engage with all of these groups over the years ahead.

Our key stakeholders are listed below.

**Figure 1: VSS Key Stakeholders**



## 11. OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

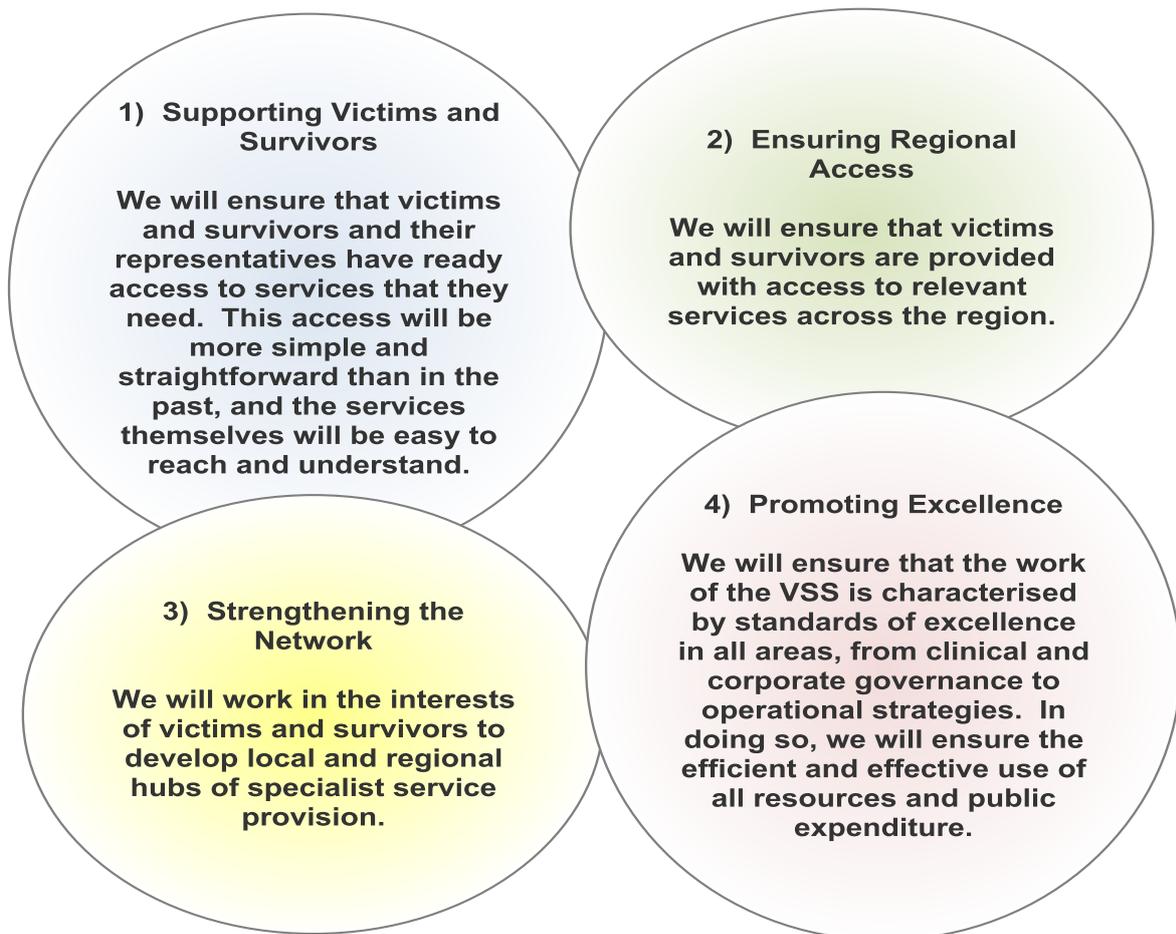
We have four overarching strategic objectives for the years ahead, namely:

1. Supporting Victims and Survivors
2. Ensuring Regional Access
3. Strengthening the Network
4. Promoting Excellence

In developing these priorities, we have listened closely to our stakeholders, who have emphasised the need for a client-centred service that is responsive to need, easy to understand and access, and that enables the development of networks of support.

Our strategic objectives are presented below, together with key actions that will enable us achieve these goals. The VSS Action Plan for the financial year 2015-16 develops each priority and its associated actions in greater detail, and is attached at **Annex 3**.

**Figure 2: VSS Strategic Objectives for 2015 and Beyond**



## **1) Supporting Victims and Survivors**

We will ensure that victims and survivors and their representatives have ready access to services that they need. This access will be more simple and straightforward than in the past, and the services themselves will be easy to reach and understand. The underlying goal here will be to deliver a more client-centred service.

### ***In order to deliver a more client-centred service, we will:***

- provide streamlined access to the Individual Needs Programme, by reducing paperwork and monitoring payment turnaround times.
- procure a bespoke Management Information System that will enable staff to swiftly and efficiently assist individual clients with full understanding of their particular needs.
- establish clear pathways for signposting and referral into statutory, voluntary and VSS-funded services.
- communicate clearly with our stakeholders to ensure that they understand this signposting and referral process.
- develop protocols that enable us to support and follow the client's journey through that referral process, establishing the VSS as a safe pair of hands for victims and survivors as they negotiate services and day-to-day activities.
- invite feedback that will inform our work and help us to improve our service delivery.

## **2) Ensuring Regional Access**

We will ensure that victims and survivors are provided with access to relevant services across the region.

### ***We will:***

- support and promote the delivery of Health and Wellbeing and Social Support services delivered by organisations funded under the Victims Support Programme.
- review this service provision on an ongoing basis.
- monitor the geographical spread of relevant services.
- identify areas with limited access to support.
- conduct a gap analysis to identify services that should be developed or extended, and work with groups to enable this.
- review and improve the VSS website.
- engage proactively with stakeholders to increase understanding of our role, the needs of our clients, and the work of our funded organisations.

### **3) Strengthening the Network**

We will work in the interests of victims and survivors to develop local and regional hubs of specialist service provision.

***We will:***

- support the observation and development of Best Practice standards in all relevant services.
- identify a role within VSS to begin scoping the standards development and quality assurance routines of VSS-funded groups and other partner organisations/stakeholders.
- map development and training plans for all funded organisations.
- roll out the pilot Victims and Survivors Practitioners Working Group on a permanent, regional basis.
- build upon existing relationships with statutory mental health service providers.
- agree and document referral procedures between VSS-funded organisations and the statutory health and mental health services.

### **4) Promoting Excellence**

We will ensure the work of the VSS is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies. In doing so, we will ensure the efficient and effective use of all resources and public expenditure.

***We will:***

- develop Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks for all services in consultation with organisations funded under the Victims Support Programme.
- reduce the bureaucracy associated with the Victims Support Programme by updating the Programme Manual in light of experience and feedback to date.
- reduce the bureaucracy associated with the Individual Needs Programme while adhering to public accountability rules.
- conduct regular corporate governance, monitoring and evaluation, and other relevant training with all funded organisations.
- strengthen the VSS' corporate governance through monthly Board meetings, with published minutes on the VSS website.
- finalise the VSS workplan for 2015-16, and review the staffing capacity and structure of the organisation to ensure the feasibility of this plan.
- conduct Corporate Planning Days on a quarterly basis to continually review progress and refresh the vision and mission of the organisation.
- develop a programme of staff training and supervision to ensure that all staff are resourced to deliver a service of excellence to victims and survivors.
- observe and adhere to the objectives of the NI Executive's Asset Management Strategy, by ensuring effective management of our property assets through involvement in the preparation and monitoring of the Departmental Asset Management Plan.

## **12. ACTION PLAN 2015-2016**

The VSS has listened to its stakeholders and has developed an action plan for 2015-16. The Plan outlines in detail how the VSS intends to meet its objectives, and is attached at **Annex 3**.

### **12.1. Monitoring, Evaluating and Communicating the Plan**

The implementation and progress against objectives in the corporate plan and action plan will be monitored and evaluated on an on-going basis through the following measures:

#### **(i) Senior Management Team**

The Senior Management team will consider and report upon progress against targets at monthly meetings. A risk register has been established in order to identify key areas of risk and actions to be taken to ensure the achievement of the business and corporate plan objectives.

#### **(ii) Staff Corporate and Business Planning**

At least twice per year, there will be an opportunity for all staff to discuss progress against targets and identify any changes required in response to changing environments. Annual business plans with detailed targets and objectives will be discussed and improved upon during the business planning days.

#### **(iii) External**

An Audit and Risk Committee and a Board have both been established in line with good practice and each meets at least 4 times per year. The VSS reports issues around accountability, risk and control, and progress against corporate targets.

#### **(iv) Departmental**

The VSS will comply with Departmental monitoring requirements including attendance at regular Accountability Meetings, and submission of Budget Management and other Departmental Returns.

#### **(v) Commission for Victims and Survivors, Victims and Survivors Forum**

The VSS will develop and maintain clear lines of regular communication with the Commission for Victims and Survivors, the Forum, and specifically the Forum Services Working Group. This will ensure these key stakeholders are kept up to date and have every opportunity to feed into the work of the VSS as it develops.

In addition to these measures, VSS will publish news and key information on its website ([www.victimsservice.org](http://www.victimsservice.org)). By maintaining this site, VSS will ensure that all stakeholders and members of the public can access current, accurate information about its work.

## Annex 1: VSS Funding Allocation 2014-2016

Table 1: Breakdown of Funding Allocation, 2014-2015 and 2015-2016

| Description                                    | 2014/2015<br>Provisional<br>Outturn | 2015/2016<br>Provisional<br>Budget |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Budget Heading</b>                          | <b>£'000</b>                        | <b>£'000</b>                       |
| <b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>                  | <b>4,844</b>                        | <b>4,995</b>                       |
| Organisations - Psychotherapy/ CBT/ EMDR       |                                     |                                    |
| Organisations - Complementary therapies        |                                     |                                    |
| <b>Organisation Funding Streams</b>            | <b>2,747</b>                        | <b>2,400</b>                       |
| Education & Training (long term courses)       | 69                                  | 25                                 |
| Schemes 1 to 5 (April 2014 to August 2014)     | 446                                 | N/A                                |
| <b>From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014:</b>     |                                     |                                    |
| Individuals – Support for Carers               | 216                                 | 250                                |
| Individuals – Support for the Injured          | 664                                 | 1,320                              |
| Individuals – Support for the Bereaved         | 702                                 | 1,000                              |
| <b>Individual Funding Streams</b>              | <b>2,097</b>                        | <b>2,595</b>                       |
|  |                                     |                                    |
| <b>Social Support</b>                          | <b>3,320</b>                        | <b>3,800</b>                       |
| Social Support                                 | 1,170                               | 1,250                              |
| Personal & Professional Development            | 700                                 | 700                                |
| Truth, Justice, Acknowledgement                | 500                                 | 500                                |
| Transgenerational Issues & Young People        | 300                                 | 350                                |
| Small Grants                                   | 500                                 | 850                                |
| Welfare Support                                | 150                                 | 150                                |
| <b>Organisation Funding Streams</b>            | <b>3,320</b>                        | <b>3,800</b>                       |
|  |                                     |                                    |
| <b>Training &amp; Practice Development ***</b> | <b>140</b>                          | <b>200</b>                         |
|  |                                     |                                    |
| <b>Co-Design*</b>                              | <b>Not applicable</b>               | <b>200</b>                         |
|  |                                     |                                    |
| <b>Scheme 6: Financial Assistance</b>          | <b>2,246</b>                        | <b>2,250</b>                       |
|  |                                     |                                    |
| <b>VSS Corporate Budget**</b>                  | <b>2,075</b>                        | <b>1,800</b>                       |
|  |                                     |                                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                   | <b>12,625</b>                       | <b>13,245</b>                      |

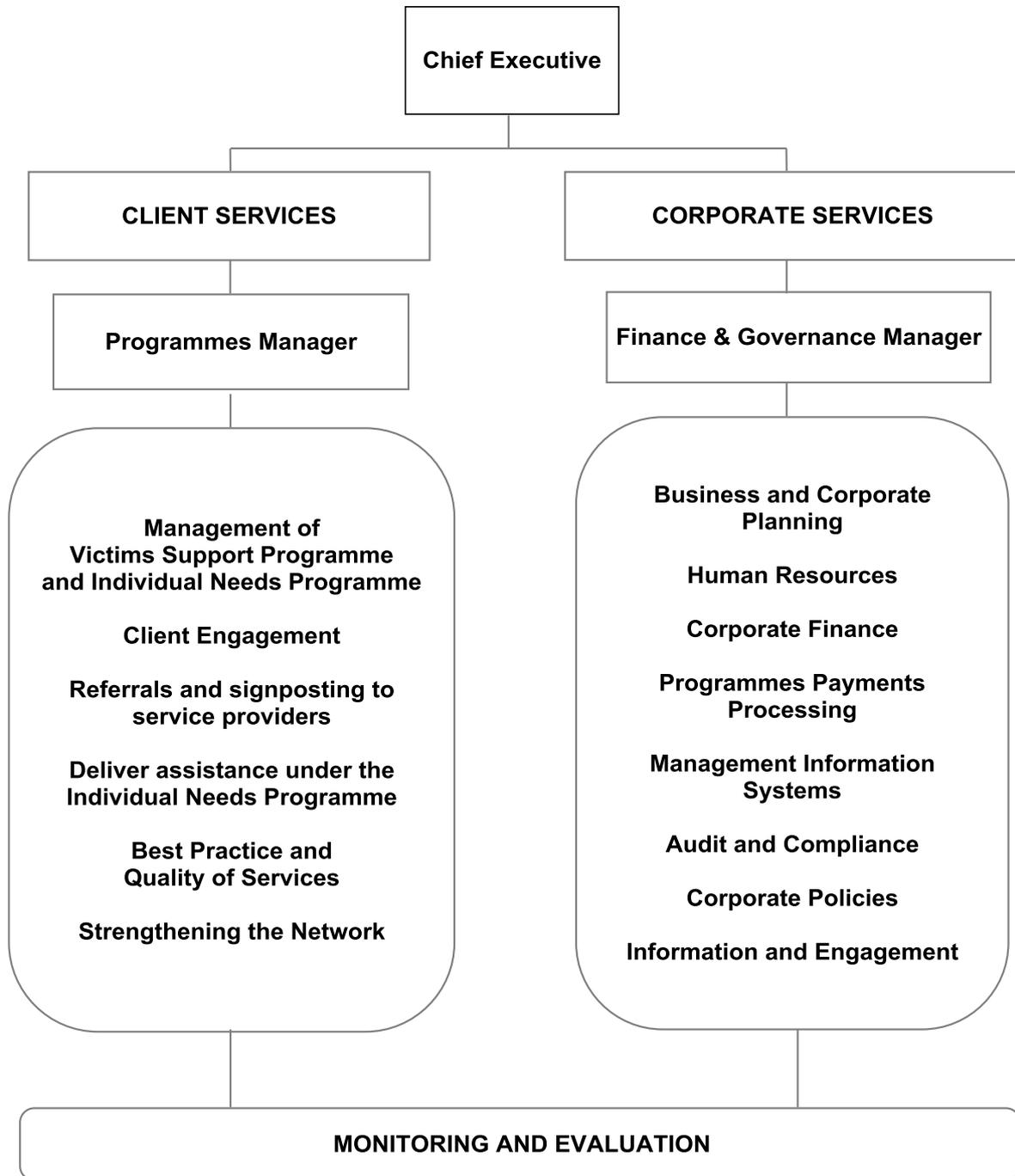
\* Case worker and personalised budget pilot

\*\* Include ground floor rent and rates and exceptional payments for 14/15 which will not re-occur

\*\*\* Workforce Development Plan and Clinical Governance plan in place for VSP and ready to role out in 15/16

1. The allocations listed are initial allocations and may need to be amended in line with client demand.
2. Outturn by budget heading for 2014/15 will be available on 20<sup>th</sup> February (late awards are currently being input for ICONI database and reconciled to SAGE for fully accurate final position).
3. Provisional Budget - Business Case for funding figures previously provided on basis of budget assumptions. This is currently being updated for the £13.245m. These budget breakdowns may therefore change as we work through the detail in February 2015. Each team is currently finalising detailed forecasts and operational task lists.
4. Funding for 2016-17 will be subject to allocation under the Comprehensive Spending Review, to be confirmed for 2016 onwards.

## Annex 2: VSS Organisation Chart



Note: the total approved VSS headcount for 2015/16 is 31 full time equivalent (FTE) posts.

**Annex 3: VSS DRAFT Business Plan 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016**

| <b>Strategic Objective 1: SUPPORTING VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS – We will ensure that victims and survivors and their representatives have ready access to services that they need.</b> |   |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Action 1.1: Streamline and improve access to goods and services to the Individual Needs Programme for individual victims and survivors</b>                                      |   |  |   |  |
| <b>Targeted actions</b>  | <b>Target date</b>  | <b>Outputs/Outcomes</b>  | <b>How will this be measured?</b>   | <b>How frequently will this be measured?</b> |
| Open Financial Assistance (Scheme 6) including the design of improved, user-friendly application and self-declaration forms  | May 2015<br><i>(Publicise Scheme in March; application period April, payments commence May)</i> | Decreased complaints<br><br>Improved access to goods and services<br><br>Improved outcomes for individuals | Number of acknowledgement of receipt letters issued with estimated processing time (to decrease complaints/ telephone queries)<br><br>Payment turnaround times (10 working days maximum from receipt of complete paperwork) | Weekly<br><br>Weekly                         |
| Open Care for Carers Scheme  | April 2015  |  | Eligibility for services verified in 100% of cases  | Monthly                                      |
| Open Support for Injured Scheme  | April 2015  |  | Monitoring of implementation of Communication Plan  | Monthly                                      |
| Open Support for Bereaved Scheme   | May 2015  |  | Level of feedback and complaints  |  |

**Strategic Objective 1: SUPPORTING VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS – We will ensure that victims and survivors and their representatives have ready access to services that they need.**

**Action 1.2: Design and implement a pathway to services model for individual victims and survivors**

| Targeted actions  | Target date      | Outputs/Outcomes  | How will this be measured?   | How frequently will this be measured? |
|---|------------------|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| Commence review of the signposting process at entry to service. Document available support through partner and funded organisations and general support available in local areas. | April 2015 - INP | <p>VSS Clients, stakeholders and the general public understand the role and purpose of VSS and how to access the services it delivers.</p> <p>Managed referral and signposting to statutory services for at risk clients.</p> | <p>Establishment and operation of Risk Management Protocol</p> <p>KPIs for referral from VSS to groups to be agreed in consultation with groups</p> <p>Production of <i>How can the VSS Help?</i> leaflet addressing INP Support options: leaflet available in hard copy and download format</p> | Progress reviewed monthly             |

| <b>Strategic Objective 1: SUPPORTING VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS – We will ensure that victims and survivors and their representatives have ready access to services that they need.</b> |                 |   |   |  |
|--|-----------------|---|---|--|
|  | June 2015 - VSP | VSS Clients, stakeholders and the general public understand the role and purpose of VSS and how to access the services it delivers.   | <p>Simple clear pathways of signposting and referrals available.</p> <p>KPIs for referral from VSS to groups to be agreed in consultation with groups.</p> <p>Referrals to groups to be matched with VSP funding.</p> <p>Production of <i>How can our Network Help You?</i> leaflet outlining VSP Support options, complemented by improved e-guidance available on VSS website with useful download options.</p> | Progress reviewed monthly  |
| Commence pilot exercise 1: 6 month pilot of allocation of personalised budgets   | May 2015        | <p>Recommendations for future programmes and policy design</p> <p>Improved relationships and trust-building on the basis of thorough follow-up of the recommendations arising from CVS research and consultation with the sector in 2014/15</p> | This pilot will be developed, implemented and evaluated in collaboration with the Victims Co-Design Programme Team  | One-off exercise: progress monitored on a monthly basis and evaluated to inform design |

| <b>Strategic Objective 1: SUPPORTING VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS – We will ensure that victims and survivors and their representatives have ready access to services that they need.</b> |                         |  |   |  |
|--|-------------------------|--|---|--|
| Commence pilot exercise 2: Pilot of caseworker approach to managing individual client engagement   | May 2015                | Recommendations for future programmes and policy design<br>Improved relationships and trust-building on the basis of thorough follow-up of the recommendations arising from CVS research and consultation with the sector in 2014/15 | This pilot will be developed, implemented and evaluated in collaboration with the Victims Co-Design Programme Team  | One-off exercise: progress monitored on a monthly basis and evaluated to inform design |
| Monitor the client journey   | Ongoing from April 2015 | Delivery and impact data to inform future Programmes design  | INP: Monitor delivery of Schemes and payment turnaround times<br><br>INP: develop a follow up evaluation of services delivered with clients.<br><br>VSP: Monitor impact data through Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, once agreed (following consultation with sector). | Weekly at Team Leader level,<br>Monthly at SMT and VSS Board Level<br><br>Monthly      |
|  |                         | Ensure complaints procedure is accessible both in VSS premises and on VSS website  | Feedback from FSWG<br><br>Level of complaints and feedback  | At regular meetings with FSWG<br><br>Monthly   |

| <b>Strategic Objective 1: SUPPORTING VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS – We will ensure that victims and survivors and their representatives have ready access to services that they need.</b> |                    |  |   |  |
|--|--------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Action 1.3: Design an automated Client Management System (PM / CLSM)</b>  |                    |  |   |  |
| <b>Targeted actions</b>  | <b>Target date</b> | <b>Outputs/Outcomes</b>  | <b>How will this be measured?</b>   | <b>How frequently will this be measured?</b> |
| Implementation of MIS timetable to improve current manual system and upgrade to an electronic records management system  | May 2015           | Improved client response times<br><br>Automated management reporting to ensure quicker decision making       | Monitoring delivery by MIS workgroup within VSS<br><br>Completion of full data cleanse/integrity exercise following all improvements  | Weekly at Team Leader Meetings               |
| Implementation of improved Telephony System operated by IT Assist on completion of Belfast premises move   | May/June 2015      | Upgraded telephone system to VOIP<br><br>Automated management reporting to ensure 24 hour call back in place | Management information available on no of calls x operators, hang ups, duration of waiting.<br><br>Call monitoring service to provide both evidence of satisfactory call handling and call content. | Monthly                                      |
| Transition of manual file system to automated consolidated client records management system (ICONI)  | April 2015         | Consolidation of all NIMF and VSS manual files into one system   | Consolidated system in place<br><br>Completion of training for all VSS staff in use of ICONI system, focusing on data integrity, consistency, and updated correspondence functions                  | Weekly at Team Leader Meetings               |

| <b>Strategic Objective 2: ENSURING REGIONAL ACCESS – We will ensure that victims and survivors are provided with access to relevant services across the region.</b> |                       |  |  |  |
|---|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Action 2.1: Ensure regional access to goods and services (PM / CLSM)</b>   |                       |  |  |  |
| <b>Targeted actions</b>   | <b>Target date</b>    | <b>Outputs/Outcomes</b>  | <b>How will this be measured?</b>  | <b>How frequently will this be measured?</b> |
| Ensure continuity of services of the Health and Wellbeing Programme under the VSP by issuing final letters of offer for 2015-2016                                   | Final LoO: April 2015 | Monitoring and Evaluation reports from each Group<br><br>Consistent service review meetings between VSS and Groups re activity analysis<br><br>Promotion of existing signposting services and support available to all clients through VSS | 100% of letters of offer issued<br><br>Activity analysis at each quarterly visit linked to M&E framework<br><br>Referral of clients from VSS met with additional funding for groups<br><br>KPIs for referral from VSS to groups to be agreed in consultation with groups | Monthly                                      |
| Monitor geographical spread across the region   | September 2015        | Identified areas with limited access to services support<br><br>Priority areas identified for VSP re-opening late 2014   | Mapped geographical spread in conjunction with M&E reports<br><br>To be monitored in line with CVS implementation of VSP review findings   | Quarterly                                    |
| Carry out a trend/gap analysis of goods and services available  | September 2015        | Identified gaps in goods and services<br><br>Accurate information to feed into future policy and decision making   | M&E reports from groups<br><br>To be monitored in line with CVS implementation of VSP review findings<br><br>Analysis of goods and services through INP to date  | Annually                                     |

| <b>Strategic Objective 3: STRENGTHENING THE NETWORK – We will work in the interests of victims and survivors to develop local and regional hubs of specialist service provision.</b> |                       |  |  |  |
|--|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Action 3.1: Development of local and regional specialist hubs (PM / CLSM / CO)</b>  |                       |  |  |  |
| <b>Targeted actions</b>  | <b>Target date</b>    | <b>Outputs/Outcomes</b>  | <b>How will this be measured?</b>  | <b>How frequently will this be measured?</b> |
| Identify and roll out Best Practice across the sector  | March 2016            | <p>Implementation of Workforce training plan for groups throughout 2015/16</p> <p>Accredited training courses and seminars for therapists and counsellors</p> <p>Increased capacity and confidence within VSS-funded organisations</p> | <p>Completion of 2015/16 phase of Workforce training plan for groups</p> <p>Feedback on development and training carried out</p> <p>M&amp;E built into application for training requests</p> | Quarterly                                    |
| Co-chair Victims and Survivors Practitioners Working Group Meetings  | April 2015-March 2016 | Improved communication between agencies and organisations involved in delivering services to victims and survivors   | <p>Progress of discussion on emerging issues / policy / good practice / partnership work</p> <p>Regional roll out of Victims Practitioners Working Group to commence in June 2015</p>        | Meetings every 6-8 weeks                     |

| <b>Strategic Objective 3: STRENGTHENING THE NETWORK – We will work in the interests of victims and survivors to develop local and regional hubs of specialist service provision.</b> |                       |  |   |   |
|--|-----------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Action 3.2: Development of relationships with statutory mental health providers (CLSM)</b>  |                       |  |   |   |
| <b>Targeted actions</b>  | <b>Target Date</b>    | <b>Outputs/Outcomes</b>  | <b>How will this be measured?</b>   | <b>How frequently will this be measured?</b>              |
| Progress and develop work on care pathway for victims and survivors with mental health needs in conjunction with CVS and Department  | April 2015-March 2016 | Documented and agreed referral process with each VSP group<br><br>CVS and Department to lead on referral processes into Statutory services | Established referral routes<br><br>Referrals to groups to be matched with additional funding  | Monthly   |
| <b>Action 3.3: Stakeholder Engagement (CO / PM / CLSM)</b>   |                       |  |   |   |
| <b>Targeted actions</b>  | <b>Target Date</b>    | <b>Outputs/Outcomes</b>  | <b>How will this be measured?</b>   | <b>How frequently will this be measured?</b>              |
| Review and renew stakeholder analysis and engagement plan  | April 2015-March 2016 | Current and accurate framework of stakeholders<br><br>Strong communication with relevant agencies & sectors                                | Accuracy of stakeholder map<br><br>Engagements diary, corporate calendar  | Quarterly   |
| Review and renew communications plan   | April 2015-March 2016 | Updated Communications Plan for 2015/16, to include Social Media Plan<br><br>Strong and relevant key messages                              | Monitoring of implementation of Communication Plan, to include:<br>Daily press monitoring, with weekly updates for VSS Board and SMT. Daily updates in exceptional circumstances<br>Weekly monitoring of internal and external communications and | Monthly with specific tasks daily and weekly per the plan |

**Strategic Objective 3: STRENGTHENING THE NETWORK – We will work in the interests of victims and survivors to develop local and regional hubs of specialist service provision.**

|  |                       |   |  |         |
|--|-----------------------|---|--|---------|
|  |                       |   | <p>engagements activities</p> <p>Daily monitoring of Social Media accounts</p> <p>Weekly monitoring of AQ register</p> <p>Daily monitoring of Complaints register</p> <p>Daily monitoring of Enquiries email account</p> <p>Monthly monitoring of Website traffic</p> <p>Monitoring of Press engagement register</p>   |         |
| Review and update publicity and communications information and actions for clarity and relevance | April 2015-March 2016 | <p>Informed and dynamic engagement with key stakeholders that is responsive to changing views and emerging concerns</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Quarterly e-zine for VSP groups</p> <p>Engagement diary</p> | <p>Renew publicity collateral in line with INP 2015/16 when details become available</p> <p>Establishment of suite of letter templates relevant to client correspondence</p> <p>Mark key calendar dates (e.g. 'Older People's Day on 1 October every year) with updates to website / email communications to VSP groups</p> <p>Monitoring of implementation of Communication Plan</p> <p>Stakeholder satisfaction with</p> | Monthly |

| <b>Strategic Objective 3: STRENGTHENING THE NETWORK – We will work in the interests of victims and survivors to develop local and regional hubs of specialist service provision.</b> |                           |  |   |                                 |
|--|---------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------|
|  |                           |  | levels of information provided – feedback from FSWG, VSPWG and individual clients   |                                 |
| Integrated engagements plan with key stakeholders including FSWG, CVS and OFMDFM   | April 2015-<br>March 2016 | <p>Reviewed and updated MOU agreed between CVS &amp; VSS</p> <p>Monthly tri-lateral meetings CVS / VSS / OFMDFM</p> <p>Regular engagement with Forum Services Working Group</p> <p>Monthly Accountability Meetings</p> <p>Collaboration with CVS, OFMDFM in the Co-Design process.</p> | <p>Reduction in number of complaints</p> <p>CVS quarterly progress reports</p>  | <p>Monthly</p> <p>Quarterly</p> |
| Information exchange   | April 2015-<br>March 2016 | <p>Positive, strong working relationships with key partnership-level stakeholders</p> <p>VSS Clients, stakeholders and the general public understand the role and purpose of VSS and how to access the services it delivers.</p>   | <p>Improved information about funded organisations and relevant services on VSS website</p> <p>Collaboration with CVS around seminar and networking event planning and delivery</p> | Monthly                         |

| <b>Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the VSS is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.</b> |                       |  |   |  |
|--|-----------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Action 4.1: Driving Results through Clinical Governance (CLSM / PM)</b>   |                       |  |   |  |
| <b>Targeted actions</b>  | <b>Target date</b>    | <b>Outputs/Outcomes</b>  | <b>How will this be measured?</b>   | <b>How frequently will this be measured?</b> |
| Implementation of Workforce Development Training Plan (based on findings of 2013 Skills Audit and 2013-2015 engagement with HWB Service Providers)   | March 2016            | <p>Consistent high standards of service delivery across funded organisations</p> <p>Accredited training courses and seminars for therapists and counsellors</p> <p>Increased capacity and confidence within VSS-funded organisations</p> | <p>Delivery of Training Plan targets</p> <p>The identification of individual groups' training needs by Project Officers</p> | Monthly                                      |
| Maintain Befriending Services established in 2014/15   | April 2015-March 2016 | Framework for supervision and support across groups providing befriending services   | Number of newly trained befrienders, befriending coordinators, and supervision sessions                                     | Bi-annually                                  |

| <b>Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the VSS is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.</b> |                         |  |   |  |
|--|-------------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Action 4.2: Driving Results through Corporate Governance (PM / FM / CO)</b>   |                         |  |   |  |
| <b>Targeted actions</b>  | <b>Target date</b>      | <b>Outputs/Outcomes</b>  | <b>How will this be measured?</b>   | <b>How frequently will this be measured?</b> |
| Monitor implementation of Individual Needs Programme   | April 2015-March 2016   | Decreased bureaucracy in access to services, while maintaining public accountability rules   | <p>Eligibility criteria and communications to take place in March 2015</p> <p>Open all Schemes in April and May</p> <p>Payment turnaround times</p> <p>Eligibility for services verified in 100% of cases</p> <p>Production of Client Journey Pack for INP services</p> | <p>Monthly</p> <p>With each application</p>  |
| Monitor implementation of Victims Support Programme  | April 2015 – March 2016 | <p>Issue Letters of Offer</p> <p>Review of VSP Operating Manual and Guidance Notes – April 2015</p> <p>Review and establish programme for training sessions (beyond Workforce Training Plan) with groups – May 2015</p> <p>Review of VSP application in light of Co-Design Process</p> | <p>Letters of Offer issued</p> <p>Provision of up-to-date VSP Operating Manual and Guidance Notes</p> <p>Feedback from Co-Design engagement, training sessions, VSPWG meetings</p> <p>Quarterly Project Officer Meetings</p>  | Monthly                                      |

| <b>Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the VSS is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.</b> |                       |   |  |                              |
|--|-----------------------|---|--|------------------------------|
|  |                       | Open call for applications<br>Issue letters of offer for next programming period 2016-17  |  |                              |
| Review capacity of funded organisations and their staffing structures  | April 2015-March 2016 | Clear information on capacity of funded organisations<br><br>Clear information on salary requirements of funded organisations   | Quarterly Project Officer Meetings   | Monthly                      |
| Implement Monitoring and Evaluation Framework as agreed in consultation with stakeholders Dec 2014 – March 2015  | June 2015             | Strong evidence base of statistical and impact data to inform future programme design   | Statistical data gleaned from ICONI for individual clients<br><br>Impact data submitted by VSP groups<br><br>Reduced paperwork / burden on Clients and Funded Organisations<br><br>Feedback from FSWG and Groups | Monthly                      |
| Develop a robust VSS Board to oversee the strategic direction and governance arrangements  | April 2015-March 2016 | Monthly Board meeting and minutes published on website<br><br>Board training and induction of new members to include MSFM and Companies Act<br><br>Review of Modus Operandi | Board Minutes and Action points<br><br>Completion of VSS Staff Awareness Session in relation to role and functions of VSS Board and ARC  | Monthly<br><br>Annual review |

| <b>Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the VSS is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.</b> |                                    |  |   |  |
|--|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
|  |                                    | <p>Appointment of a trained and experienced ARC</p> <p>Review of key governance policies</p> <p>Review performance of SMT, ARC and Board</p>   | <p>Completion of Strategic Training for SMT members</p>   |  |
| Design and develop the long term strategy of the VSS moving forward  | <p>June 2015</p> <p>April 2015</p> | <p>Review of Vision, Mission and Objectives</p> <p>Finalise VSS work plan for 2015/16 and 3 year Corporate Plan in consultation with VSP organisations and FSWG</p> <p>Review KPIs to ensure focus on quality of service and stakeholder needs</p> | <p>Agreed Corporate and work plan</p> <p>Continued implementation of KPI reports including telephone calls, payment processing, application form processing, awards processing, queries processing.</p> | <p>Initially: one-off exercise. May require periodic review thereafter.</p> <p>Weekly at Team Leader meetings, Monthly at SMT and VSS Board Meetings</p> |
| Monthly tri-laterals with Commission for Victims and Survivors (CVS) and OFMDFM, regular meetings with the Forum for Victims and Survivors   | April 2015-March 2016              | Robust engagement with CVS and the Forum for Victims and Survivors   | CVS quarterly monthly progress reports and minutes  | Monthly meetings with CVS, regular meetings with FSWG; CVS progress reports quarterly  |
| Ensure robust financial processes and procedures are being developed and followed  | April 2015-March 2016              | <p>Implementation of Internal Audit Plan</p> <p>Draft financial statements 2014/2015: JUNE 2015</p>  | <p>Internal Audit assurance</p> <p>NIAO report to those charged with governance</p>   | Monthly  |

| <b>Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the VSS is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.</b> |                       |  |   |         |
|--|-----------------------|--|---|---------|
|  |                       | <p>Final financial statements<br/>2014/2015: SEPT 2015</p> <p>Implementation of NIAO<br/>recommendations</p> <p>Update Asset Management<br/>Strategy</p> <p>Update Financial Procedures<br/>and Procurement Manual<br/>Annual review of MSFM by<br/>VSS Board</p>                  |   |         |
| Review and update Policies and Procedures  | April 2015-March 2016 | <p>Establishment of a register of policies and their review dates</p> <p>VSS operates with a strong and current framework of governance and operational procedures in place</p> <p>Compliance with legal, statutory and departmental requirements</p> <p>Confident staff teams</p> | Consistency of practice                                     | Monthly |
| Manage budget against expenditure and achieve 98.5% consumption  | April 2015-March 2016 | <p>Monthly NDPB consumption reports</p> <p>Monthly cash drawdowns</p>  | <p>Month end Budget Analysis</p> <p>Accurate and timely</p> | Monthly |

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|--|-----------------------|--|--|---------|
|  |                       | Monitoring Returns<br>Month end closure within 5 working days of month end   | information  |         |
| Pay 100% of invoices within the statutory time frame of 30 days  | April 2015-March 2016 | Prompt Payments  | Payments made to suppliers on a prompt basis:<br>Corporate - 10 days;<br>Grant - 15 days<br><br>All queries resolved within 30 days        | Monthly |
| Carry out vouching and verification in line with VSP and INP operating rule  | April 2015-March 2016 | Team Leader carry out 100% check at desk on supporting documentation on INP claims<br>Carry out 10% desk check on each payment run<br>Carry out 100% management check at desk on supporting documentation<br><br>Carry out 10% check with suppliers to verify goods and services on INP claims<br><br>Risk based approach to vouching of VSP expenditure<br><br>Desk vouching of 100% of expenditure claims<br><br>Debt recovery in line with VSS<br>Debt Recovery Procedure | Accurate analysis of all expenditure to identify key priorities for future funding<br><br>Consistency in implementation of Programme rules | Monthly |

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|--|-----------------------|---|---|---------|
| Meet Department Requirements in line with Good Governance Checklist and SLA at OFMDFM Accountability Meetings  | April 2015-March 2016 | Partnership approach to implementation of Strategy for Victims and Survivors<br><br>Quarterly ALB Performance Reports   | Within 4 working days of each month end<br><br>Within 6 working days of each quarter end<br><br>Periodic management information to monitor progress against business and corporate plan targets | Monthly |
| Senior Management Team meetings  | April 2015-March 2016 | Reduced risk and increased communication between functions  | SMT minutes and action points   | Monthly |
| Ensure a robust risk management process is in place and followed   | April 2015-March 2016 | Monthly Risk Registers<br>Quarterly Stewardship Statements<br><br>Staff knowledge and understanding of all policies and procedures, strengthened governance                           | Minimise impact of risk<br><br>Suite operational policies that provide clear protocols for all areas of VSS work  | Monthly |
| Ensure information is provided in response to statutory obligations and any external information requests  | April 2015-March 2016 | Answer all FOI and Subject Access Requests<br><br>Full compliance with all Data Protection Principles<br><br>Provide accurate and timely responses to AQs, Departmental / Ministerial | Publication Scheme published on VSS website<br><br>Fol and Subject Access Requests answered within statutory time frame of 20 working days  | Monthly |

| Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the VSS is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies. |                       |   |  |  |
|---|-----------------------|---|--|--|
|   |                       | Briefings, etc.   | FOI responses published on VSS website<br><br>Monthly spot checks to ensure compliance with clear desk policy<br><br>No breaches of Data Protection Principles<br><br>Maintain AQ Register<br><br>Aqs and other queries answered within timeframes set on requests |  |
| Improvement in internal communications  | April 2015-March 2016 | Staff knowledge and understanding of role and function of VSS, up-to-date knowledge of current activity<br><br>Staff intranet maintained and developed<br><br>Bi-Annual Corporate Planning Days<br><br>Daily briefings, monthly all staff meetings<br><br>Quarterly individual one to one | Documented staff briefings and feedback  | Monthly<br><br>Weekly<br><br>Bi-annually<br><br>Minimum Monthly<br><br>Quarterly |

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|--|-----------------------|---|--|--|
|  |                       | supervision   |  |  |
| Maintain a working environment that is health and safety compliant   | April 2015-March 2016 | Safe working environment that is compliant with legislation   | Risk assessments conducted annually, Health and Safety Register kept up to date  | Annually, with ongoing review of Health and Safety Register              |
| Complete Premises Move of VSS Offices in Dungannon and Belfast   | July 2015             | Establishment of new offices suited to VSS service delivery requirements and budget   | Reduced overhead costs<br><br>Timely communication issued to clients and stakeholders<br><br>Client complaints and feedback concerning move                  | Weekly at Team Leader Meetings;<br>Monthly at SMT and VSS Board Meetings |
| <b>Action 4.3: Carry out a reorganisation of the VSS for implementation of new strategy (PM / FM / CLSM)</b>   |                       |   |  |  |
| <b>Targeted actions</b>  | <b>Target date</b>    | <b>Outputs/Outcomes</b>   | <b>How will this be measured?</b>  | <b>How frequently will this be measured?</b>                             |
| Address recommendations made in the research commissioned by CVS into the Impact of the VSP and INP, ensuring completion of outstanding WKM and CIPFA recommendations being taken forward as part of Co-Design Programme | Ongoing to March 2016 | Development of the best possible Service Delivery Model which can deliver the most suitable outcomes for victims and survivors while ensuring value for money<br><br>Code of Practice to inform client eligibility checks | Fewer complaints received by VSS in relation to client engagement<br><br>Improved Monitoring & Evaluation data to inform future policy and programmes design | Monthly  |

| <b>Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the VSS is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.</b> |                              |  |  |                    |
|--|------------------------------|--|--|--------------------|
|  |                              | <p>Improved Management Information Systems</p> <p>Robust Monitoring &amp; Evaluation framework</p> <p>Robust VSS Board</p> <p>Ongoing partnership working with CVS, Department and other key stakeholders</p>            | <p>The delivery of this target as a whole will be monitored and evaluated in collaboration with the Victims Co-Design Programme Team</p> |                    |
| <p>Participate fully in Victims Co-Design Programme alongside CVS and Department ensuring completion of outstanding WKM and CIPFA recommendations being taken forward as part of Co-Design Programme</p>                 | <p>April 2015-March 2016</p> | <p>Ongoing partnership working with CVS, Department and other key stakeholders</p> <p>The delivery of a new, strategic and sustainable Programme for providing support to individuals and groups for 2016 and beyond</p> | <p>The delivery of this target as a whole will be monitored and evaluated in collaboration with the Victims Co-Design Programme Team</p> | <p>Monthly</p>     |
| <p>Plan capacity requirements for going forward in line with documented change management plan</p>   | <p>June 2015</p>             | <p>Review of staffing needs and skills and confirm required organisational structure</p> <p>Review and agree staffing posts and recruitment where necessary</p>  | <p>Capacity analysis</p>   | <p>Bi-annually</p> |
| <p>Implement a Training and Development plan for all staff to ensure skills and competencies match any changes in role requirements</p>  | <p>April 2015-March 2016</p> | <p>Quarterly One to One supervision of staff structure, in context of general open-door policy</p>   | <p>Monitoring of Stability Index, Turnover Rate and Absence Rate – Staff statistics compiled monthly for reporting to</p>                | <p>Quarterly</p>   |

**Strategic Objective 4: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – We will ensure that the work of the VSS is characterised by standards of excellence in all areas, from clinical and corporate governance to operational strategies.**

|  |  |   |               |  |
|--|--|---|---------------|--|
|  |  | <p>Review of current Performance and Professional Development Plans (PDPs)<br/>         Development of targeted and co-ordinated organisation wide training plan at start of the year based on BP objectives</p> <p>Management System to incorporate values</p> <p>Develop competency framework per staff grade<br/>         Resilience built through promotion of NICS employee assistance programme</p> | Board and SMT |  |
|--|--|---|---------------|--|