



**The Commission for
Victims & Survivors**

Victims and Survivors Service

Quarterly Review Report

July to September 2016

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Summary

1. The Executive Office (TEO) has requested that the Commission for Victims and Survivors Northern Ireland (CVSNI) review the progress of the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) and produce a report that comments on that progress.
2. This report focuses on the period from July to September 2016.
3. This reporting period has been a busy operational time for the Service, with the opening of schemes and associated processing, ongoing work in relation to monitoring and evaluation processes and assessing the impact of pilot schemes.
4. Communication and interaction between the Commission and the Service has remained constructive during this reporting period. This productive working relationship is essential regarding the Collaborative Design Programme, engagement regarding the Review of the Strategy for Victims and Survivors, the final stages of the PEACE IV application process, revision of standards for service deliverers and ongoing work relating the future of support schemes.

Recommendations

5. The Commission welcomes the Service's first monitoring and evaluation report relating to complementary therapies. With the CORE Net system going live on 1st August 2016 there is an opportunity to analyse the data provided by VSP-funded organisations. Once the first CORE Net report is available the Commission **recommends** that the Department, Commission and Service meet to discuss the content that has been generated by both MYMOP and CORE Net systems, in line with new steady state monitoring processes in 2017/18.

Background

6. Target 1.2 of the Commission for Victims and Survivors (CVSNI and 'the Commission') 2015/16 Business Plan requires the Commission to produce four quarterly reports on the progress and operation of the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS and 'the Service').¹
7. This is the second Quarterly Review Report of 2016/17 and covers an operation from July to September 2016.
8. In order to identify these findings, the Commission has collated information from a range of sources. The primary source of information is that supplied to CVS directly from the VSS. Commission staff also collate views and issues from across the sector

¹ The provision of these review reports represents a key component of the Commission's responsibility to 'keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided for victims and survivors by the Victims and Survivors Service' as outlined within the Victims and Survivors Strategy: Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (2009) *Victims and Survivors Strategy*, Belfast: The Stationery Office, p.7.

during the course of their work, for example, through arranged visits to organisations and feedback from individual victims and survivors.

9. The Quarterly Review Reports remain an important element of the Commission's responsibility to keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice affecting the interests of victims and survivors. The content is used by the Commissioner, in line with her statutory duties, to keep under review services provided for victims and survivors. They also act as a useful reference point for other key stakeholders and those with an interest in service provision to victims and survivors.

Individual Support

Support Schemes

10. The Individual Needs Programme (INP) was opened for 2016/17 in May 2016 and schemes mirrored the support schemes that were opened by the VSS in 2015/16:

- Financial Assistance;
- Support for the Bereaved;
- Support for Carers; and
- Support for the Injured.

11. Schemes were administered on the basis of one award per person, alongside Financial Assistance, for the period of 2016/17.

Reporting Data

12. As of 30 September 2016 the Service has provided the following summary of award letters issued to individuals:

Scheme	Awards Issued 2015/16	Awards Issued 2016/17	Difference	Award Value	Total Committed
Support for Injured (DLA Middle Rate Care)	606	813	+207	£500	£406,500
Support for Injured (DLA High Rate Care)	598	693	+95	£1,500	£1,039,500
Support for Bereaved	2,595	2,662	+67	£500	£1,331,000
Chronic Pain	45	44	-1	variable	£30,000
Support for Carers	511	452	-59	£500	£226,000
Financial Assistance	2,670	2,496	-174	£750	£1,871,200
Education and Training	24	14	-10	£500	£11,720
Disability Aids	29	8	-21	variable	£12,251
					Total £4,928,171

13. The VSS has provided a summary position for 2016/17 compared to 2015/16. As of 30 September 2016 this stood at:

	2015/16	2016/17
Number of individuals	5,125	5,102
Number of awards issued	7,078	7,182
Value of funding committed	£5,079,462	£4,928,171

14. Of the 5,102 individuals in receipt of an award, up to 30 September 2016, the Service registered 411 new individuals under INP.

15. Efforts throughout this period, particularly in September, have been focused on processing Financial Assistance applications and communicating the final award value. The Service has also communicated with VSP-funded organisations regarding timescales for payments.

16. The VSS allocated all support scheme awards on a phased basis, in chronological order, to individuals with eligibility information in place from 1 April 2016.

17. During this reporting period the Service continued to provide support for 44 individuals towards Chronic Pain treatments. The VSS has advised that there is ongoing work into developing a plan to review these individuals and their needs on a case-by-case basis. During this period the VSS met with Belfast Health & Social Services Trust to initiate the development of a Chronic Pain Management Review, for delivery to identified individuals.

18. During this period the VSS initiated a physiotherapy pilot with Ashton Centre (connected to the north Belfast area) and WAVE (intended to have a regional reach). The Service has advised that an interim evaluation is due at end of October 2016 and the Commission looks forward to reviewing its content.

Telephone calls and Unscheduled Client Visits

19. The VSS has reported the following figures for telephone calls and unscheduled visits for this reporting period:

Month	Telephone calls	Unscheduled visits
September	4,443	543
August	4,618	472
July	8,169	446

20. The Service has advised that interaction with individuals during this period related to queries regarding payment dates and processing times for Financial Assistance, clarifying eligible items under the other support schemes and requesting engagement with Caseworker support.

Caseworker Approach & Disability Aids Pilots

21. As of the 30 September 2016 the Service has advised that 87 individuals were registered to participate in the Caseworker pilot project with 29 Caseworkers within 16 VSP-funded organisations and 2 at the VSS. The individuals, overall, participating are broken down as 64 Injured and 23 Bereaved.
22. At the end of this reporting period 26 awards had been issued under the Disability Awards Scheme. During this reporting period the VSS engaged in procuring a supplier for Home Adaptations under this scheme and hopes to be in a position to appoint a supplier and have in place a framework by February 2017. Prior to the procurement and appointment the VSS prepared a Direct Award Contract application in August in order to deliver support. The VSS has also continued to engage with Health and Social Care Trusts, in relation to Community Occupational Therapy provision, and followed-up for individuals engaged with the scheme.

Forum Services Working Group

23. During this reporting period there was no interaction between the Victims and Survivors Forum and the VSS board or their senior management due to the replenishment process of the Forum. It is planned that an initial meeting will be held between the Victims and Survivors Forum members and the VSS Board and senior management in during the next reporting period.

Victim Support Programme

24. The Victim Support Programme (VSP) provides funding for organisations that provide health and wellbeing services and social support. The VSP has two funding streams: Large Grants (amounting to more than £75,000) and Small Grants (up to £75,000).

Reporting Data

25. The Service has provided a summary of reporting data received to date for 2016/17 (at the time of compiling this report):

July 2016 - Reflecting data submitted to VSS by 31 October 2016	
> £75k contracts	
Number of groups issued with the finalised M&E materials	40
Number of groups yet to be issued with the finalised M&E materials	0
< £75k contracts	
Number of groups issued with the finalised M&E materials	24
Number of groups yet to be issued with the finalised M&E materials	0
Gender	
Males (plus as a percentage of total)	3,170
Females (plus as a percentage of total)	4,575
Transgender	2
Blank	12

Age	
Age range	6 to 98
Average age	55
Primary identification with Victims & Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006	
Injured (physically)	559
Injured (psychologically)	4,996
Bereaved	1,480
Carers	294
Identifies with more than one category	93
Blank	337
Health and wellbeing numbers accessing Services	
Total number of clients accessing HWB services (note: not unique records, includes duplicated instances of individuals accessing multiple services)	3,508
Counselling	1,532
Complementary Therapies	1,845
CBT/EMDR	98
Other H&W services	33
Total number who have exited services	1,975
Social Support numbers exited and numbers current	
Total number of clients accessing Social Support services (note: not unique records, includes duplicated instances of individuals accessing multiple services)	13,318
Total number who have exited services	8,431
Overall	
Number of unique clients registered in VSS-funded organisations for the period 1 April 2016-31 July 2016	7,759
Number of clients that VSS can see have exited services for the period 1 April 2016-31 July 2016	10,406

26. During this reporting period the Service highlighted to the Commission that 4,996 individuals are registered as psychologically injured with VSP-funded organisations, representing an increase of 1,292 from the last reporting period. The Commission does acknowledge this noticeable increase. The increase in registrations is important in the context of a static budget and the opening of the VSP application process. Further, the increase in registrations may be reflected in the opening of INP for the 2017/18 period and registrations prior to the end of this financial year, with a potential impact upon eligibility for accessing the new support schemes. The Commission acknowledges this as a significant increase and would welcome a discussion at the next Collaborative Design meeting.
27. The VSS continues to signpost and refer individuals to support within VSP-funded organisations. The Service has advised that during this operating period they made 3 referrals in September, 4 in August and 4 in July. The VSS also signposted individuals to a range of statutory services and community-based organisations during this reporting period (35 in September; 19 in August; 13 in July).

Support Visits

28. VSS staff continued to meet with VSP-funded groups during this reporting period. Support Officers conducted 11 visits in September, 27 in August and 8 in July.

Monitoring and Evaluation

29. Demonstrating the effectiveness of support services through robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks remains a matter of priority for the Commission. The Commission acknowledges the efforts made by the Service with VSP-funded organisations during 2016/17 in continuing to develop and progress processes.
30. During this reporting period the VSS made available its first monitoring and evaluation report; covering complementary therapies. The report was based upon data received from 24 organisations relating to 1,152 individuals and covered the period of April to August 2016. The analysis on symptoms, activities and general wellbeing indicated clinically significant outcomes for reduced symptom distress, improved capability to complete activities of daily living, and general client wellbeing. The analysis provided also determined a clinically significant improvement in the overall MYMOP profile of individuals engaged in complementary therapies.
31. The Commission welcomes the first monitoring and evaluation report relating to complementary therapies. With the CORE Net system going live on 1st August 2016, and VSS advising that data analysis will be developed from November 2016, there is an opportunity to assess and analyse the data provided by VSP-funded organisations. The Commission looks forward to the first CORE Net reporting being shared and **recommends** once it is available the Department, Commission and Service meet to discuss the content that has been generated by both MYMOP and CORE Net systems, in line with new steady state monitoring processes in 2017/18.

Workforce Training and Development Plan

32. During this reporting period the Service finalised the 2016/17 Workforce Training and Development Plan.
33. Training areas to be delivered to the sector during 2016/17 will include Befriending Training and Supervision, Safe Talk, Welfare Reform, Corporate Governance, Strategic and Project Planning, Resilience and Emotional Intelligence, Trauma Focused CBT, Safeguarding, Drug and Alcohol Awareness, Introduction to Mindfulness, Legal and Ethical Issues and Trauma and the Family.

Revision of Standards

34. Since July 2015 the Commission convened a working group, with the Greater Belfast area Victims and Survivors Practitioners Working Group and representatives from the Service and Department, to assist with revising standards prior to a wider consultation. During this reporting period the working group met on 2 August and its final meeting was held on 31 August 2016.
35. The Commission opened an eight week public consultation on 20 September 2016. A structured process was established to obtain and analyse narrative responses with the consultation process being aimed at service deliverers and those working within the sector. The invite to provide feedback was also extended to other key interested parties and individual victims and survivors.

36. The final standards document will form an essential element of the process for organisations applying for funding from the VSS.
37. An overview of consultation findings and will be provided in the next Quarterly Review Report.

Victims and Survivors Practitioners Working Groups

38. During this period the Greater Belfast area met on 4 August and 20 September, the North West area met on 28 September and the Southern area group met on the 7 July and 8 September. The three groups now have work programmes in place; facilitated through subgroups.

Commission and Service Engagement

Commission Advice

39. In August 2016 the Commission submitted advice to the First and deputy First Ministers on the future Service Delivery Model. This advice seeks to make recommendations that improve current provisions.
40. In producing this advice the Commission has taken into consideration a number of recent research reports, ongoing consultation with the Forum over these issues, feedback from the workshops as part of the collaborative design process and ongoing engagement with the sector.
41. The collaborative design process led by the Executive Office (Department) and in conjunction with both the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) and the Commission has been instrumental in developing this advice paper. The Department's Strategic Discussion paper, June 2016 which reflected feedback from the sector during various co-design workshops provided a strong foundation to develop this advice.
42. The most pressing issue facing the current service delivery model is sustainability. The Commission has acknowledged in the advice that the sustainability of support programmes is not just about funding alone and the co-design programme of work over the past eighteen months has begun to embed new practices that will address the bespoke needs of individuals, realise better outcomes and hopefully lead to cultural change in how society and government looks after victims and survivors.
43. The new service delivery model is expected to be implemented from April 2017.

VSS Board

44. During this reporting period the Commission and the VSS Chair held face-to-face meetings once in July and once in August. It should be noted that there was also frequent interaction through telephone and email communications during this period.

Trilateral Meetings

45. The Commission can report that trilateral meetings for this period took place on 19 July, 15 August and 20 September 2016.

46. It was agreed at the September meeting that the approach to future trilaterals would be reviewed. All partners agreed that being conscious of operational pressures and the necessity to ensure that all interaction is focused is a priority. The Commission looks forward to conversations regarding future nature of this interaction in the context of agreeing Steady State Monitoring approaches.

Collaborative Design

47. In this reporting period CVS and the VSS attended three Collaborative Design meetings (20 September, 16 August and 22 July).

48. Ongoing interaction between the Department, Service and the Commission has proved constructive in terms of assessing service delivery and facilitating conversation on strategic decision making. In terms of interaction with the sector, it is planned that three regional information events will be arranged in October.

PEACE IV

49. The Department, in consultation with the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB), has developed a proposal in relation to PEACE IV funding across an overarching theme of improving the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors. The Service's nomination as Lead Partner for the Victims and Survivors element of the programme was approved as part of the EU Commission's approval of the Peace IV Cooperational Programme on 30 November 2015.

50. Interaction between the VSS, TEO and CVS has been ongoing throughout this reporting period. During this reporting period the Service received confirmation of Ministerial approval (8 September) and Department of Finance approval (16 September).

Consultations

51. The consultation process for the draft Programme for Government Framework closed on 22 July 2016. The Commission, Service and Department were keen to ensure that organisations participated in this consultation process. A joint communication was issued to the sector on 27 June 2016 encouraging responses; directly to the Executive Office or by providing feedback to inform the Commission's consultation response by 8 July 2016.²

Queries and Complaints

52. The Service has a complaints procedure in place to answer, investigate and/or appeal feedback from individuals and organisations. In addition, the Commission also logs complaints from individuals not wishing to make a formal complaint.

² The Commission's response to the draft Programme for Government Framework 2016-2021 can be accessed on the CVS website: <http://bit.ly/2gE6mSy>

53. For this reporting period, the VSS received nine complaints and the Commission received one query from an individual:

	VSS	CVS
1-30 September	3	1
1-31 August	3	0
1-31 July	3	0

54. Queries received by the Commission were handled in accordance with the Service's Complaints Policy and Procedures and the Memorandum of Understanding between the VSS and CVS.

Managing Individuals

55. It is recognised that the impact behaviours can have on staff and it is accepted that staff in CVS and VSS should be able to conduct business in a non-threatening environment and unacceptable behaviour from members of the public will not be tolerated. Since 2014 both organisations have operated an Unacceptable Behaviour Policy and share information regarding individuals placed on each other's register.

56. In recognition of a small number of individuals known to three organisations, the VSS suggested at July's trilateral the exploration of a case management approach. All agreed that a collaborative approach would be suitable. The VSS committed to looking at the most suitable process and would share potential options with CVS and the Department. This is an important area for all three organisations and the Commission looks forward to options being discussed as soon as possible.

Seminars

57. During this reporting period the Commission held a policy seminar on 27 July 2016 at Malone House, Belfast. The seminar was aimed at those within the sector with a working knowledge of the welfare system and an interest in Welfare Reform. The seminar provided an overview of Welfare Reform process and presentations were delivered by the Commission, Service, Wave, East Belfast Community Advice Centre, Department for Communities and Capita. Attendees were also provided with an opportunity to engage in a question/answer session. As a result of the seminar the Department for Communities plan to engage with the three Victims and Survivors Practitioners Working Groups.

Commission Research

58. During this particular reporting period, the Commission's research activity focussed on working towards finalising the project, Review of the Victims and Survivors Strategy 2009-19. Awarded to PACEC in January 2016, this important mid-term evaluation focuses on the progress and impact of implementing the overall principles of the Strategy and the arrangements in place to take forward victims and survivors work in the area of dealing with the past, service provision and building for the future.

59. Throughout this period, the Commission and other representatives of the Project Steering Group from the Victims and Survivors Forum, the Victims and Survivors Service and the Executive Office provided feedback on drafts of the Final Report. On the basis of this feedback, the Project Steering Group advised that PACEC draft a shorter Summary Report containing key findings, future challenges and

recommendations related to the key areas of the Strategy. A further update on the presentation of the Final Report and Summary Report will be outlined in the next Quarterly Review Report.

60. In the previous Quarterly Report, the Commission highlighted their development of three research proposals for inclusion in a VSS-led application for funding from the PEACE IV Programme. The application process continued during this period under consideration. An update on the decision relating to this application for funding will be provided in the next reporting period.

Conclusions

61. The Commission is committed to continuing the tripartite relationship whereby the Department, Service and Commission works together in order to improve service delivery to victims and survivors. Collaborative approaches to sectoral issues in this reporting period included ongoing interaction through Collaborative Design, engaging with VSP-funded organisations and the Department of Communities regarding welfare changes and ensuring that the views of victims and survivors are reflected in the Commission's response to the draft Programme for Government framework.
62. The Commission would like to highlight the ongoing work to revise the 2011 Minimum Practice Framework to reflect practice within the sector. The approach of using a working group has enabled the Commission with preparing a robust document for public consultation process. The process has highlighted that service provision standards require frequent revision in order to reflect changes in practice. The Commission recognises the experience within the sector and willingness to work collaboratively to deliver the best possible service provision for victims and survivors. The final published document will form an integral element for the Service's forthcoming opening of funding for service deliverers. It is therefore essential that this area is reviewed and monitored.
63. At the September trilateral meeting the future approach and format of the meetings was highlighted as an area for discussion. The Commission welcomes a conversation on how best to manage frequent interaction and information sharing.