



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

SCRA Victim Strategy

Victims - supported, informed, participating

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SEEN. HEARD. SUPPORTED

Introduction

The Programme for Government announced by Scottish Ministers made a commitment to support victims of crime. In January 2001 the Scottish Strategy for Victims was launched.

The Strategy was developed by and is owned by all agencies with an interest in victims within the Scottish Criminal Justice System. Key agencies are the Scottish Police Forces, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Scottish Courts Service and the Scottish Prison Service. Each agency has produced an Action Plan setting out how implementation of the Strategy is to occur.

Victims of crime can be victims of youth crime. The majority of youth crime is dealt with within the Children's Hearings System. Victims in the Criminal Justice System can also be involved in the Children's Hearings System as children or family members requiring support or protection and sometimes as witnesses in Children's Hearing court proceedings.

It is important that the Children's Hearings System, and SCRA in particular, make a similar high level commitment not only to the Scottish Strategy insofar as this is relevant to the Children's Hearings System, but also to our own Strategy for Victims.

This Strategy, containing SCRA's Implementation Plan*, aims to complement the Scottish Strategy and clearly define SCRA action to ensure that victims of youth crime who are involved in the Hearing System receive the support to which they are entitled.

*As SCRA's Implementation Plan is a dynamic document which is updated on an on-going basis, please contact SCRA if you wish an up to date copy.

Broad Principles

These are:

- Recognition of the importance of the victim of crime and the need to provide practical and emotional support to assist recovery and the prevention of further crime or secondary victimisation.
- Recognition that victims have a legitimate interest in the cases within which they are involved.
- Commitment to provide explanations for victims about the Children's Hearings System and other processes with which they are involved.
- Commitment to offer victims information on the outcome of their case.
- Recognition that victims should be enabled to have a voice throughout stages of the Children's Hearings System.

Policy Objectives

Objective 1: to provide for the emotional and practical support needs of victims.

Key features of this objective are:-

- Identifying needs, especially for vulnerable victims and those in need of protection.
- Facilitating access to appropriate services.
- Providing information about support available that is co-ordinated with other information available.
- Communicating effectively.
- Reducing stress and the potential for intimidation by physical and procedural methods.
- Seeking and responding to feedback from victims.
- Working together amongst agencies.
- Providing training for staff.
- Resolving any issues about confidentiality.

Objective 2: to provide for the information needs of victims.

Key features of this objective are:-

- Providing access to information to clarify process, facilitate involvement and ensure personal safety.
- Offering information to all victims.
- Providing choice for victims about the level of information available.
- Ensuring information is up-to-date, of good quality, and fully accessible.
- Listening and responding to victims.

Objective 3: to encourage participation in the Children's Hearings System.

Key features of this objective are:-

- Developing 'shuttle mediation' in relation to youth crime responses
- Ensuring restorative justice services in the Children's Hearings System reflect good practice in relation to victim participation

SCRA'S Role

To ensure that the objectives of this Strategy are met, SCRA has set out a 3 year Implementation Plan which is attached which can be accessed on our website at www.scra.gov.uk. Particular features of that plan include:-

- Ensuring the introduction of a national scheme for providing information to victims of youth crime. This is a significant piece of work requiring a separate action plan, and can also be accessed on our website at www.scra.gov.uk.
- Establishing a scheme for all victims engaging with the Children's Hearings System including a charter and standards for victims.
- Establishing a working agreement with Criminal Injuries bodies to assist fully informed victim access to compensation.
- Establishing national restorative justice principles and protocols that promote the interests of victims to their full entitlement.
- Producing information for victims involved in court process for the Children's Hearings System which responds to their needs.
- Reducing delay by ensuring SCRA's court related work, and in particular the SCRA complex case strategy, covers victim interests.
- Setting practice standards for release of productions.
- Establishing a working protocol with Victim Support Scotland and other information and support services for victims.
- Co-ordinating support measures with criminal justice agencies to make information concise, clear and accessible.
- Ensuring information is locally described, accessible and developed.
- Reducing the need for precognition and interview of witnesses.
- Reducing the number of children/persons asked to be witnesses in Children's Hearing court proceedings.
- Providing and participating in intra and inter-agency training on victim and witness issues.
- Producing a Domestic Abuse Strategy for SCRA.
- Producing data and information on victims that can inform developments to support the Strategy's policy objectives, nationally and locally.
- Identifying and responding to vulnerability in the Children's Hearing System.
- Establishing a system to ensure that victims can feed back their views and experiences.

