

Making services accessible to victims of all types of crime



STANDARD 1

Engagement	Compliance with this standard	Evidence standard has been put into practice
Services are offered to all victims.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Victim Support organisations offer support to all victims of crime, regardless of the type of crime or whether the crime has been reported or not and regardless of their age, cultural background, language,... ▪ Victim Support organisations respect equality and non-discrimination principles. ▪ Basic support offered by Victims support organisations are free of charge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Constitution ▪ Mission statement ▪ Service procedures ▪ Equality policy ▪ Training ▪ Publicity ▪ Website
Services are accessible, visible and well publicised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Victim organisations make the services as easy to access as possible to all victims. ▪ Victims Support organisations provide information about their organisation. ▪ Victims Support organisations raise awareness about victims' rights and raise awareness of services provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publicity ▪ Leaflets ▪ Posters ▪ Website ▪ Annual report with information about organization
Services take specific measures to reach out to vulnerable groups of victims.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To ensure Victim Support services are accessible to all victims, Victim Support organisations engage in activities to focus on specific groups of victims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publicity ▪ Training ▪ Service procedures ▪ Website ▪ Report on activities ▪ Specific policies or strategies for different groups.

Services are offered to all victims

- *Victim Support organisations offer support to victims of all crimes, regardless of the type of crime or whether the crime has been reported or not and regardless of their age, cultural background, language, etc.*

Victim Support organisations must ensure that victims of all crime have access to the organisation. As a starting point your organisation must be open to supporting all victims of crime from a legal perspective i.e. your Constitution or other constitutive documents shouldn't place restrictions on your activities which would limit your support to only some groups of victims. Where there may be national legal limitations on who may be supported, this situation can be further discussed with VSE but a referral system is usually a sufficient alternative.

Secondly, in practice, the organisation should make it clear and evident in all relevant documentation and communications that it serves all victims. For example, if your website were to advertise on the main page that you work for victims of domestic violence, and only on sub-pages do you indicate that you also serve other victims, this will reduce access by other groups and not be wholly in line with this principle.

This does not mean that you can't specialise in certain victim groups and this of course should also be very clear for victims. Equally, you may have in place policies whereby you refer certain victims to other organisations better placed to help those victims. This too is acceptable providing that you may support that victim (in accordance with your own capacity and capability) where this is their preference or the other organisation cannot support the victim. In effect, a victim turning to your organisation should not find themselves without any support due to referral arrangements.

- *Victim Support organisations will respect equality and non-discrimination principles.*

Non-discrimination principles mean the equal treatment of an individual or group irrespective of their particular characteristics. Victim support organisations must not restrict the scope of their activities by declining to assist victims on the basis of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religious belief, political opinions, culture, disability, the nature of his/her complaint or for any other reason unless they can demonstrate that another organization already exists providing an effective service for the group of victims which has been excluded. Equality means victims are treated free from prejudice and discrimination. Victim Support organisations should have in place a policy to ensure equality and non-discrimination principles. All staff, as well volunteers as paid staff, should be aware of this policy and agree with it.

- *Basic support offered by Victims support organisations will be free of charge.*

As a general rule the services provided by your organisation should be free of charge. However, it is understood that some services may be of a specialist nature or delivered by external providers e.g. psychologists or lawyers. In such limited circumstances fees may be charged but victims should be fully aware of this from the outset. Charged services should nevertheless be the exception with the majority of services being free.

Evidence to provide to show the standard has been put into practice:

- Constitution
- Mission statement
- Service procedures
- Equality policy
- Training

- Publicity
- Website

Services are accessible, visible and well publicised

- *Victim organisations make the services as easy to access as possible to all victims.*

Given the difficulty that victims may face in come forward and seeking help, it is important for a Victim Support organisation to make access for a victim as easy as possible. It is also important to be aware of some of the challenges victims facts when coming forward e.g. victims who don't want to report the crime are unlikely to come to an office located in a police station. Alternative locations or ways of being supported should be considered for such persons. Awareness of the challenges for victims to reach victim support should inspire special measures to make victim support easily accessible.

This can be done by having flexible opening hours that go beyond regular office hours, by being located in a place easy to reach by car, foot and public transport, by offering home visits etc. The greater the visibility of the organisation and the more forms of getting support, the more accessible the service will be.

- *Victims Support organisations provide information about their organisation*

To reach a Victim Support Organization, it is very important for victims to know about the organisation. It will be important to make practical information about the organisation available in a range of formats and through different media e.g. leaflets, posters, business cards, adverts on tv, radio, local papers, in police stations, hospitals, prosecutors officers and courts, doctors waiting areas, social welfare centres etc. You should have an up to date website with full details of how to access support. You should also consider social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Evidence to provide to show the standard has been put into practice:

- Publicity
- Leaflets
- Posters
- Website

- Annual report with information about organization

Services take specific measures to reach out to vulnerable groups of victims


- *To ensure Victim Support services are accessible to all victims, Victim Support organisations engage in activities to focus on specific groups of victims.*

Certain groups of victims don't reach or hardly reach Victims Support Services e.g. children, elderly people, people with a disability, cross border victims. To reach those groups of victims, certain measures, procedures and methodologies will have to be put in place and staff may need specialized training to deal with those specific groups of victims.

Such measures could include advertising (as above) in a form easily accessed by the vulnerable groups – child friendly, disability friendly, in different languages. You should consider joining up with organisations which work regularly with those groups to help inform them about your work. E.g. disability organisations, care homes, cultural centres, refuges.

Evidence to provide to show the standard has been put into practice:

- Publicity
- Training
- Service procedures
- Website
- Report on activities

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Our Organisation

Activities