

# Respecting victims and treating them with courtesy and dignity



## STANDARD 2

| Engagement   | Compliance with this standard  | Evidence standard has been put into practice                               |
|--|--|--|
| Ensure our staff and volunteers treat victims with respect and dignity.                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Victim support workers communicate with victims in a proper way.</li> <li>▪ Victim support workers treat victims in a respectful, kind and polite way.</li> <li>▪ Victim Support organisations put a complaints strategy in place.</li> </ul> | Policy<br>Training<br>Complaint strategy                                   |
| Insure that infrastructure and organization of services are respectful towards victims | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Respond to victims within a reasonable time and in a clear and precise way.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that premises are pleasant, clean and comfortable.</li> <li>▪ Ensure there is privacy provided when talking to a case-worker</li> </ul>         | Service procedures<br>Welcome pack new staff<br>Pictures of infrastructure |

There are many ways to treat victims in a respectful and courteous way, and equally many ways to leaving victims feeling dissatisfied or further harmed as a result of their contacts. Examples of provided below of what can be considered a minimum level of actions to ensure a respectful approach to victims. In implementing measures, it should be recalled that people may treat victims without respect but equally the way we set up our procedures, administration and infrastructure can also result in poor treatment of victims.

## Ensure our staff and volunteers treat victims with respect and dignity

- *Communicating with victims in a proper way.*

From the very first contact – whether by email, phone, social media or face-to-face, we have to ensure that victims are treated with courtesy, politeness and kindness. Language used in any materials and when speaking to victims should be easy to understand and clear. Communications should be non-judgmental, take into account gender, cultural, religious and other sensitivities as well as the sensitivities of different types of victims (based on the crime).

Giving clear information about service procedures, making clear to victims what they can expect, informing them when an appointment has to be cancelled or delayed, listening to victims requests and responding to them, are all methods of ensuring you treat victims with respect.

Whilst these are the expected outcomes, it will be helpful to establish protocols or rules around communication approaches as well as providing training on communication methods.

- *Put a complaints strategy in place.*

An important aspect of treating victims with respect is listening to them, giving them an opportunity to voice concerns or complaints, and then acting on those complaints. A complaint procedure should be in place within the organization to allow for this process and victims should be informed about it. The process for submitting a complaint and acting on that completing should be transparent and clear for both victims and the organisation's personnel.

## Ensure that infrastructure and organisation of services are respectful towards victims

- *Respond to victims within a reasonable time and in a clear and precise way.*

Victims should be reached as soon as possible after they contact or are referred to the Victim Support organisation. A clear procedure should be in place and this procedure has to be communicated with victims directly and network partners. When the waiting time would be longer than normal, it will be very important to communicate this. If victims can't be reached when first contacted it will be very important to contact them again or let them know an attempt has been made.

- *Ensure that premises are pleasant, clean and comfortable.*

When visiting the organisation, victims should feel welcome from the outset. This means ensuring that premises are easy to find, properly signposted (e.g. being clear which bell to ring or where to go once they have entered the building). If there are security concerns about advertising the office, clear information on how to get to the premises should be provided directly.

If visitors have to wait at all, a seated area is essential, with different approaches taken to make the wait comfortable e.g. magazines, toys for children, availability of a toilet, water etc. When offenders also access the same building, special arrangements should exist to prevent victims and offenders coming into contact. These measures will vary for each building but could include e.g. separate entrances and waiting rooms. There should be careful consideration of how persons with disabilities would be able to access the premises. If premises are not adapted or cannot be adapted, separate measures should be put in place to ensure such victims can access support.

- *Ensure there is privacy provided when talking to a case-worker.*


The story of every victim is a private story. It is important that victims can give their story in a private way.

This means in face to face meetings with a case worker, no one should be able to hear them. The same should be true for phone calls. Having clearly separated rooms for this purpose, which are well insulated and with a sign indicated if there is a meeting taking place, are good methods to achieve this objective.

In addition, there should be a quiet environment without noisy distractions. For example, for a victim, to hear people laugh and talk in the background can be very disturbing.

## Evidence standard has been put into practice:

- Policy
- Training
- Complaint strategy
- Service procedures
- Welcome pack new staff
- Pictures of infrastructure

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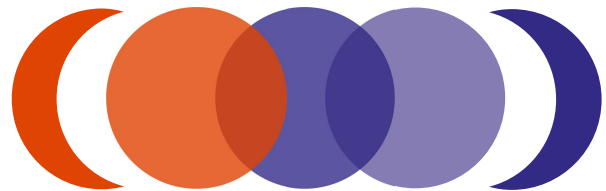
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