



Victim Support Northern Ireland

Annual Report 2009 - 2010

Victim Support Northern Ireland
is a full member of
Victim Support Europe,
a confederation of
victim support organisations.

What we do

We provide services that help people affected by crime. Our services are important because the consequences of crime reach deep into society.

Every crime has immediate victims. But, directly or indirectly, it can have consequences for many more people – family members, friends, neighbours, witnesses and others in the community.

And the impact of crime can have longer lasting effects.

Many offenders are never apprehended and their victims must live with a sense of injustice. For those who see their case reach court, the path to justice is often slow and stressful and the workings of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) appear confusing, unsympathetic and intimidating to many.

All this takes its toll.

We know that ‘the price’ of crime varies from person to person. Its impact may be psychological, physical, financial or social. And we understand that individuals react in their own way and that their response is not necessarily related to the type of crime they experience.

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All Victim Support services are provided totally free of charge. No legal fees are involved.

The support services we provide take account of these circumstances:

Community Service

This service is often the first point of contact people have with Victim Support. It helps those affected by crime to deal with its personal and practical impact, by providing emotional support, information and advice about dealing with the police, courts, legal professions and making a compensation claim.

Witness Service

This service helps adult prosecution witnesses before, during and after they go to Crown, Magistrates’ and Youth Courts. Most witnesses are unnerved by the thought of going to Court and the Witness Service helps them through what can be a frightening and bewildering experience.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Service

People injured as a result of violent crime may be entitled to compensation. This service deals with all aspects of making a claim, from completing the application form, to representation at reviews, appeals and hearings.

Foreword

Recorded Crime Northern Ireland (crime reported to the Police)

| Type of Crime | 2009-10 | 2008-09 | % Change | Detection Rate 2009-10 |
|-----------------|---------|---------|----------|------------------------|
| All | 109139 | 110094 | -0.9 | 26% |
| Violent Crime | 33100 | 32694 | +1.2 | 34% |
| Sexual Offences | 1944 | 1943 | - | 25% |
| Burglary | 7270 | 7351 | -1.1 | 10% |
| Theft | 26605 | 26241 | +1.4 | 23% |
| Criminal Damage | 26450 | 28421 | -6.9 | 12% |

Source: PSNI Crime Statistics

We need to keep crime in perspective. In general crime levels in Northern Ireland have been falling.

Violent crime, theft, criminal damage and burglary account for 86% of all recorded crime. We need to remember that most violent crime does not involve significant physical injury, although the psychological impact of any form of violence, including threat, can be considerable.

Recorded crime figures do not give us a complete picture. The Northern Ireland Crime Survey, 2007-08 shows that 48% of crime isn't reported and estimates that 13% of households are affected by crime each year. This is well down on the peak of 1998, when 23% of households were victims of crime.

The reality is that most of us will not be affected by crime and that the risk of crime is generally low.

The Need for Victim Support

However, if 13% of Northern Ireland households experience crime each year, it means that over 227,000 people will be directly affected (91000 households x 2.5 people per household) and that many more will feel the indirect impact of crime.

Crime will affect these people in different ways. Some will cope better than others, but it is clear that many thousands will need information, advice and support to deal with their experience and move on with their lives.

Our focus in 2009-10

In this context, we focused on three key areas in 2009-10:

- Providing people who contact Victim Support with an excellent service
- Increasing volunteer numbers and ensuring that staff and volunteers are well-trained
- Developing a Manifesto for Victims and Witnesses of Crime, as part of our ongoing campaign to bring their needs to the attention of the CJS and ensure that crime's victims are treated in an appropriate way, bearing in mind that the vast majority of people hurt by crime will not end up in court.

“I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to our team of dedicated staff. Without them we could not provide such a high quality service to so many people”.

Service Performance

In purely quantitative terms, Victim Support NI and each of our three services achieved high standards against targets* set for 2009-10.

We aimed to achieve a total of 29 core organisational and service-specific objectives. Twenty-eight of these targets were achieved or exceeded, representing 97% of our core objectives, compared to 88% in 2008-09 and 64% in 2007-08.

The people who matter most are those who use our services and customer satisfaction levels remain very high across our Community, Compensation and Witness Services. These Services exceeded target by obtaining satisfaction levels of 89%, 87% and 96% respectively.

Our Witness Service offered support to all prosecution witnesses involved in eligible trials, while our Criminal Injuries Compensation Service helped over 2,000 victims of violent crime to claim compensation of £4.5 million.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) referred 23,408 people to our Community Service in 2009-10, falling short of the target of 24,951 for the year.

In addition to this, referrals from other organisations and the number of people contacting Victim Support directly continued to rise, to 2,611, exceeding our target by 13%.

These results provide a very encouraging picture about the quality and scope of Victim Support's services and about the productive use of the resources available to us.

Number-based objectives provide important indicators of progress, but we are always conscious that numbers mean people. Our job is to help these people deal with practical and emotive issues at trying times and the reality is that the most important measures of our success are more difficult to assess.

*targets were set with the NIO Community Safety Unit.

Volunteers

For example, statistics cannot do justice to the skills, commitment and dedication of our volunteers. And volunteers will be quick to tell you about the rewards of helping people.

The fact that volunteers get something valuable, yet unquantifiable, in return for time and effort may help to account for the growing number of people giving up time to help others.

In 2009-10 our volunteer numbers rose by 26%, to 180, compared to the previous year. Even more impressive is the fact the number of hours contributed by volunteers rose by 36%, to an average of 3,816 hours per month in 2009-10, compared to 2,800 hours in the previous year.

In hard, economic terms this is the equivalent of 30 full-time positions, adding an estimated £550,000 to the annual value of Victim Support's work. This does not include the contribution of our voluntary Trustees who bring legal, financial, business and criminal justice expertise to our organisation.

On behalf of Victim Support I would like to thank our growing band of volunteers who make Victim Support such a valuable organisation, by playing a prominent role in service delivery.

A Manifesto

Increasing awareness of the needs of victims of crime who do and do not 'have their day in court' is a major theme of our work.

It is important to distinguish between these groups. The reality is that most victims of crime will not see the offender prosecuted in a court of law. It follows then that a focus on court action alone will not meet the needs of most victims. Clearly, other measures are required or the majority of those affected by crime will have been ignored.

We have campaigned extensively on these themes and there has been progress. Our ultimate aim – along with sister organisations in Europe – is to develop an EU-wide Manifesto for Victims of Crime and Witnesses. In 2009-10, we moved towards this goal by preparing the groundwork for a Manifesto for Northern Ireland.

We have set out to establish the needs of victims of crime, define the problems they face and look at how society can best support people affected by crime, which includes victims' rights to support, assistance, protection, information and compensation.

We look at our Manifesto Campaign in more detail later in this report.

Annual Conference

A major event in 2009-10 was our Annual Volunteer and Staff Conference, held at the Galgorm Manor Hotel, Ballymena on 8 December 2010. The Conference recognised the contribution of volunteers and long-serving members of staff to Victim Support and focused on key issues around the needs of victims of crime.

Keynote speakers, including representatives of the PSNI, Public Prosecution Service, Courts Service, Northern Ireland Office and Victim Support, provided a range of pertinent views on these issues.

Alongside this, a series of workshops was used to discuss the needs of people affected by crime and contribute to our thinking about the essential support mechanisms required.

Partnership

Getting things right for victims of crime isn't a task for one organisation.

Victim Support believes in progress through partnership. We work with many statutory and voluntary organisations and would like to pay tribute to the groups and individuals who have listened to the voice of victims of crime, endorsed our services and supported our efforts to make the CJS more victim-focused.

In particular, I would like to thank those we work most closely with - the Police, Courts, Public Prosecution Service, NSPCC, Compensation Agency, Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals Panel, Probation and Prison Services. We would

especially like to thank our main funder, the Department of Justice (formerly the Northern Ireland Office), as our work would be impossible without their ongoing support.

Delivering justice to all is a complex task and the importance of partnership working to improve the experience of victims and witnesses in the criminal justice process is well-illustrated by the Department of Justice's 'Bridging the Gap' Strategy, where Victim Support is represented on five groups:

- The Victims and Witnesses Taskforce
- The working group overseeing the strategy to tackle sexual violence
- The working group overseeing the strategy to tackle domestic violence
- The 'Achieving Best Evidence' working group which monitors and makes recommendations in relation to special measures
- The strategic tier of the Belfast Community Safety Partnership.

The Board of Trustees believes in strong governance. During the year, it reviewed arrangements in the interests of continuing improvement.

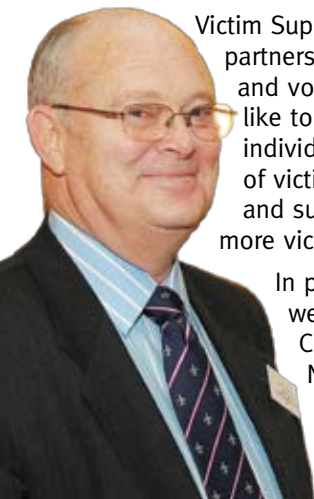
This has been an excellent year for Victim Support NI and, by extension, for victims of crime.

All but one of our core objectives were achieved, our work with voluntary and statutory sector partners, people affected by crime and our volunteers to create a more victim-focused CJS continued and we have taken a significant step towards the development of a Manifesto for victims and witnesses of crime.

We look forward to campaigning for this Manifesto in the year ahead.

Paul Simpson

Chairperson, Victim Support Northern Ireland



Recognising Volunteers



ABOVE: Volunteers with more than 10 years service. Back row (l-r) - Paul Simpson, Chair Board of Trustees; Margaret Andrews, Witness Service, Belfast; Pam Surphlis, Community Service, Ballymena; Susan Reid, Chief Executive Victim Support NI. Front Row (l-r) - Jean McMillen, Community Service, Belfast; Vicky Graham – Community Service, Belfast.

BELOW: New volunteers received certificates for achieving Open College Network accreditation (l-r) Paul Simpson, Chair, Board of Trustees; Laura Clarke, Witness Service, Antrim; Marisha McConvery, Witness Service, Downpatrick; Stephen Angus, Community Service, Belfast; Hilary Heslip, Witness Service, Craigavon; Susan Reid, Chief Executive Victim Support NI; Joanne O'Neill, Community Service, Belfast; Rosie Crozier, Community Service, Belfast.



The achievements, commitment and dedication of Victim Support volunteers and staff were recognised at our Annual Conference.

Our 180 volunteers include a good combination of experienced devotees and enthusiastic newcomers and in 2009-10 we took the opportunity to pay tribute to the work of long-serving and new volunteers.

Last year Victim Support volunteers gave almost 46,000 hours of their time to help people affected by crime.

This impressive figure illustrates the huge contribution that volunteers make to our work and to society in general. We would like to thank all Victim Support volunteers who give up their time to help victims of crime to regain their confidence, sense of safety and faith in their fellow man.

Recognising Staff

Volunteers work closely with Victim Support staff. Experienced members of staff have a wealth of knowledge and expertise which benefits volunteers, less experienced employees, the people we support and our organisation as a whole.

In 2009-10 we were delighted to recognise the professionalism and contribution of three long-serving members of staff – Janet Lynn, who has over 15 years service and Maggie Colwell and Patricia McNulty who have worked for Victim Support for over 10 years.

Volunteer and Staff Conference

The main focus of our Annual Volunteer and Staff Conference for 2009-10 - held at the Galgorm Manor Hotel, Ballymena - was on the needs of victims of crime.

Under the theme of 'People Helping People' this busy day gave Victim Support staff and volunteers and victims of crime the opportunity to hear and appreciate the views of other organisations.

It emphasised the importance and value of partnership working to address fully the needs of people affected by crime across the Criminal Justice System.

The Conference was addressed by representatives of the PSNI, Public Prosecution Service, Courts Service and Northern Ireland Office, while Victim Support Chief Executive Susan Reid, and Victim Support staff and volunteers ensured that the perspective and experiences of people affected by crime and witnesses were strongly presented.

The formal aspects of the day were supplemented by a series of workshops which discussed the needs of people affected by crime and both elements of the Conference have been used to shape our thinking about the support mechanisms required by people affected by crime and our approach to the development of a Manifesto for victims and witnesses of crime.



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Pictures

1. Reflecting on Victims Needs
2. Una McClean, Public Prosecution Service
3. Jacqui Durkin, Court Service
4. Gareth Johnston, Northern Ireland Office
5. Workshop discussion
6. Workshop discussion
7. Supt Andy McQuiggan, PSNI
8. Susan Reid, Victim Support NI
9. Workshop discussion
10. Workshop Feedback

Objectives and Achievements

In 2009-10 Victim Support NI achieved 28 of 29 core objectives.

These Conditions of Grant objectives fell into four categories.

| Category | No. Objectives | Objectives Achieved |
|---|----------------|---------------------|
| Cross Service | 10 | 10 |
| Community Service | 7 | 6 |
| Witness Service | 6 | 6 |
| Criminal Injuries Compensation Service | 6 | 6 |

Customer Satisfaction

Victim Support NI is a people-focused organisation and meeting the needs of those who use our services is central to our purpose. It is very pleasing to report that each of our services exceeded their customer satisfaction targets for 2009-10.

| | Target | Achieved |
|---|--------|----------|
| Community Service | 85% | 89% |
| Criminal Injuries Compensation Service | 85% | 87% |
| Witness Service | 85% | 96% |

Cross Service Objectives

Our cross service objectives included a mix of operational, policy and inter-organisation targets. All objectives were achieved.

Community Service

Our Community Service achieved 6 of 7 key objectives.

As this service is often the first point of contact with Victim Support it is important that people who contact us receive a quick response.

Our aim was to contact those referred to us in 2009-10 within 3 working days. We achieved an average contact time of 1 day.

We had face-to-face contact with 13% of those who were referred to us, against a target of 10%.

The majority of people who use Victim Support's services hear about us from the police. In 2009-10 we anticipated that the PSNI would refer 24,951 people to our Community Service. For a number of reasons, including technical issues with the referrals system, we fell short of this target.

However, 2,611 people were referred to us by other organisations, or approached Victim Support directly. This exceeded our target of 2,304 by 13%.

More detailed information about Victim Support's progress against objectives is available on request.

Witness Service

This service achieved all 6 of its core objectives.

Support was offered to all victims of crime and prosecution witnesses involved in eligible trials in 2009-10.

Pre-trial visits to Court were conducted with 84% of prosecution witnesses at Crown Courts, against a target of 50%.

Pre-trial visits to Court were conducted with 77% of prosecution witnesses at Magistrates and Youth Courts, against a target of 50%.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Service

Our Compensation Service achieved all 6 of its key aims.

We helped over 2,000 victims of violent crime to claim £4.5 million in compensation.

42% of those who applied for Criminal Injuries Compensation (5025 people) were assisted by this service, against a target of 40%.

We aimed to assist 28% of those who applied for Criminal Injuries Compensation Reviews and Appeals. The Service supported 29% of those who applied for Reviews (567 people) and 27% of those involved in Appeals (159 people).

Towards a Manifesto for Victims and Witnesses of Crime

Why have a Manifesto?

We work with people affected by crime on a daily basis. It's our job to help these people, to understand their views and their needs and work with others to address these issues.

Our own research and work by Government and the Criminal Justice Inspectorate for Northern Ireland (CJI) has shown that:

- many victims and witnesses of crime have unsatisfactory experiences with CJS agencies
- many people affected by crime do not have confidence in the CJS and do not report crime to the police – 48% of crimes are not reported and 8% of crimes proceed to a judicial outcome
- It takes too long for cases to get to court. This is bad news for victims as the emotional impact of crime is often experienced after court proceedings
- because most people affected by crime do not engage with the CJS, we need to take action to address the needs of these individuals.

Despite welcoming recommendations about the position of victims and witnesses in the CJS, made by the CJI in 2005 and the launch of the Government's Victim and Witness Strategy in September 2007, the reality is that progress has been limited, especially when it comes to challenging subjects like cultural change within CJS agencies.

In 2008 the CJI said that criminal justice agencies 'need to undergo a culture change to see victims and witnesses as central to their business', but in our experience this remains a distant prospect.

In our view, real progress for victims and witnesses of crime will come when minds are focused on a Manifesto which outlines the needs and rights of people affected by crime and includes a timetable for change.

Who will benefit from a Manifesto?

Clearly victims and witnesses will benefit, but there is a wider, even more important, purpose.

Ultimately, a Manifesto is not about being 'nice' to victims. It is about creating conditions which give victims of crime more confidence in the CJS, so that more crimes are reported to the police, more witnesses come forward and there are more successful prosecutions.

It follows that victims and witnesses of crime, the CJS and society as a whole will benefit.

The Needs of Victims of Crime

- Dignified, fair and respectful treatment
- Access to timely and appropriate information
- Practical help from high quality services
- Counselling (in some cases) and support in dealing with the emotional impact of crime
- Support when dealing with the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

Towards a Manifesto

In 2009-10 Victim Support NI published a report called 'Towards a Manifesto for Victims and Witnesses of Crime'*. This report:

- Defines the key issues which concern victims and witnesses
- Considers the extent to which these issues have been addressed
- Identifies outstanding issues
- Outlines the areas that a Manifesto should address – for people who do and do not get involved with the CJS
- States the key strategic themes for a Manifesto
- Looks at the steps required to make the proposed Manifesto a reality.

What next?

To take our Manifesto forward we will be gathering local and international evidence to give further support to the arguments it contains and will be developing a Campaign Strategy which will aim to launch Manifesto recommendations over a three-year period.

*Copies of 'Towards a Manifesto for Victims and Witnesses of Crime' are available on request.

Manifesto Themes

Our proposed Manifesto will focus on three areas:

Services for all victims of crime

- Research on what works best for victims of crime
- Access to specialist services, including counselling, when necessary
- Outreach services for groups which are 'hard to reach'

Putting victims at the heart of the Criminal Justice System

- Giving the needs and views of victims a central place in the CJS
- Promoting information sharing and co-operation between CJS agencies
- Ensuring that victims and witnesses receive regular and timely information about case progress
- Putting victims' and witnesses' rights in a statutory context.

Support for witnesses

- Providing support for all witnesses, including defence witnesses and witnesses at the Coroner's court
- Overhauling Special Measures' provisions.

Accounts Victim Support 2009-2010

Victim Support Northern Ireland BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2010

| | 2010 £ | 2009 £ |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| FIXED ASSETS | | |
| Tangible fixed assets | 66,659 | 61,435 |
| CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Debtors | 23,350 | 28,535 |
| Cash at bank and in hand | 313,191 | 184,887 |
| | 336,541 | 213,422 |
| CREDITORS: | | |
| Amounts falling due within one year | (204,624) | (92,676) |
| NET CURRENT ASSETS | 131,917 | 120,746 |
| TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES | 198,576 | 182,181 |
| | ===== | ===== |
| INCOME FUNDS | | |
| Restricted funds | 43,691 | 61,435 |
| Unrestricted funds: | | |
| General funds | 131,917 | 120,746 |
| Capital purposes fund | 22,968 | - |
| | 198,576 | 182,181 |
| | ===== | ===== |

Opinion

In our opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2010 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006; and
- the information given in the directors report is consistent with the financial statements

Victim Support Northern Ireland STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES Year Ended 31 March 2010

Income And Expenditure

| | Unrestricted Funds £ | Restricted Funds £ | Total Funds 2010 £ | Total Funds 2009 £ |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Incoming resources | | | | |
| Voluntary income | 1,568 | - | 1,568 | - |
| Activities in furtherance of the charity's objectives | 511 | 2,079,082 | 2,079,593 | 2,049,847 |
| Investment income | 6,082 | - | 6,082 | 9,169 |
| Other incoming resources | 2,639 | - | 2,639 | 574 |
| Total incoming resources | 10,800 | 2,079,082 | 2,089,882 | 2,059,590 |
| Costs of charitable activities | (371) | 2,083,399 | 2,083,028 | 2,092,318 |
| Governance costs | - | 13,427 | 13,427 | 10,446 |
| Total resources expended | (371) | 2,096,826 | 2,096,455 | 2,102,764 |
| Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before exceptional items | 11,171 | (17,744) | (6,573) | (43,174) |
| Exceptional item: Repayment of 2007/08 grant | - | - | - | (35,229) |
| Net movement in funds | 11,171 | (17,744) | (6,573) | (78,403) |
| Fund balances at 1 April 2009 | 120,746 | 61,435 | 182,181 | 260,584 |
| Fund balances at 31 March 2010 | 131,917 | 43,691 | 175,608 | 182,181 |
| | ===== | ===== | ===== | ===== |

W A CRAWFORD (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of CRAWFORD SEDGWICK & Co
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditor
38 Hill Street, Belfast Co Antrim BT1 2LB
July 2010





Chief Executive
Susan Reid

Board of Trustees

Mr Paul Simpson,
Chairperson

Mr Joseph Dunne, OBE
(from Feb 2010)

Mrs Judith M McCormick, MBE

Mr Sam Cooke

Mr Robert McCann
(until Oct 2009)

Mr Norman Carson
(from Oct 2009 until Jan 2010)

Mr Philip A McQuiggan

Mrs Patricia Mallon

Mr John M Cowan

Mr David W Smyth, QC
(until Oct 2009)

Mr John N Savage
(until Oct 2009)

Mr Tony Barclay

Mrs Kay Nellis

Mr Raymond A Kitson

Mr Joseph Magee
(from Nov 2009)

Victim Support Offices

Central Office
Annsgate House, Belfast 028 9024 4039

Witness Service

The Witness Service is available at all Crown, Magistrates', Appeal and Youth Service courts in Northern Ireland.

Call 028 9024 4039 for more information.

Local Offices

| | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| Ballymena | 028 2563 0784 |
| Belfast | 028 9024 3133 |
| Derry / Londonderry | 028 7137 0086 |
| Lisburn | 028 9267 5642 |
| Newry | 028 3025 1321 |
| Omagh | 028 8224 0012 |



Victim Support Northern Ireland

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