



Mother and Baby Institutions,
Magdalene Laundries
and Workhouses

Co-Design of Support and Services Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Introduction

On the 21st June 2021, the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) was asked by the Department of Health (DoH) to commence a co-design process in relation to the development of new specialist and dedicated support services with victims and survivors of Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses.

This process will be separate to the existing co-design process focussed on exploring options for an independent investigation/inquiry being facilitated by Prof. Phil Scraton, Dr. Maeve O'Rourke and Ms. Deirdre Mahon.

The aim of this co-design process is to help VSS understand:

- what support and services are needed by victims and survivors
- how services should be developed
- what a service delivery model should include and,
- how the expectations of victims and survivors can be met

2. Our Approach

At VSS, we are passionate about co-designing services with victims and survivors to ensure specialist and dedicated support is developed and put in place. We are also committed to listening to the voices of victims and survivors to ensure the co-design process is survivor-led, accessible and responsive to the unique needs of each victim and survivor.

3. Interim Support

VSS is available to provide interim emotional support to victims and survivors impacted by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses. This support is available in confidence, and in a safe and therapeutic way, with access to listening ear support and psychological therapies. This is a temporary arrangement until permanent support services are in place.

To access this interim support, please contact us in one of the following ways:

- **Email** support@vssni.org
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- **Call** **02890 311 678**
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- **Web Chat** www.victimsservice.org

4. Ethical Standards

4.1 Principles

The VSS recognises that participation in this process has the potential to cause hurt and upset to those who recount and share their experiences in making recommendations for the development of new specialist and dedicated support services. To help support victims and survivors through this, VSS has adopted the following principles:

- 1) Any engagement with the process will be voluntary and with consent
- 2) Participants have the right to withdraw from the process at any time
- 3) We will uphold our duty of care towards victims and survivors at all times and are committed to ensuring that victims and survivors are cared for during this process
- 4) We recognise and seek to safeguard against the potential harm caused to those participating in the process; emotional support will be available throughout the process
- 5) All engagement will be undertaken in the strictest confidence by a dedicated team in VSS and no individual's personal information will be included in any reports or recommendations from the process
- 6) We guarantee participants' right to privacy in all written or verbal contributions, which will be anonymised; any information provided will be treated with sensitivity and care and in line with the VSS Data Protection Policy
- 7) The process will reflect the range of views expressed by participants that will inform the development of the service delivery model and presentation to the Department of Health (DoH) and The Executive Office (TEO).

4.2 Disclosure of criminal offences

An exception to the above principles are circumstances that requires a breach of confidentiality in order to safeguard others. In such cases, VSS has a responsibility to disclose information to PSNI and/or the Health and Social Care Trust where not reporting may cause harm to that individual or another. In such cases, reasonable steps will be taken to obtain the individual's agreement for information to be disclosed. However there are limited exceptions permitting breach of confidentiality without an individual's consent, where there is sufficient evidence to raise serious concern about:

- (a) the safety and well-being of victims and survivors;
- (b) the safety and well-being of other persons who may be endangered by the alleged perpetrator's behaviour; or
- (c) the health, welfare or safety of children or vulnerable adults;
- (d) there is evidence that a crime has been committed.

4.3 Gathering Information

The VSS will seek participants' consent before making notes of one-to-one or group discussions. Participants may request a copy of the anonymised note of their discussion with VSS at any time before the conclusion of this initial co-design process.

4.4 Data Security

Personal data gathered from survivors and relatives during the process will be recorded and safely stored on the VSS file server, with access restricted to only those members of staff involved in the process. Personal data submitted on paper will be kept securely until it is processed and will then be either returned to its owner by request or securely destroyed.

Only VSS staff members involved in the co-design process will have access to this information. The exception being in the event of a technological issue, a NICS IT expert may need to access the VSS file server, but this will be permitted only to the extent strictly necessary and under strict confidentiality obligations.

Personal data gathered in this process will be held only for the duration of the co-design process, which is due to finish at the end of September 2021.

When the co-design process is fully completed and the report delivered any personal data gathered will be securely destroyed.

For more information about rights as a data subject, please see the VSS Privacy Policy [here](#).

5. Methodology

5.1 Expression of Interest (June – August 2021)

Victims and survivors wishing to be involved in the process should contact VSS in one of the following ways:

- **Email** codesign@vssni.org
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- **Call** **02890 311 678**
.....
- **Web Chat** www.victimsservice.org

Victims and survivors can also contact VSS to find out some further information or, alternatively, would prefer to be kept updated on date on our progress

5.2 Initial Contact (June – August 2021)

A member of the dedicated [VSS team](#) will make contact with those expressing interest to discuss the process and how they would like to be involved in the process.

5.3 Listening and Learning (June – August 2021)

A VSS team member will arrange to meet with victims and survivors on an individual or group basis (depending on individual preference) to help VSS understand what support and services are needed. This will ensure the co-design process is survivor-led, accessible and responsive to the unique needs of each victim and survivor.

Meetings will be in person in a place that is convenient to each individual or via telephone or video call.

5.4 Service Delivery Model (September 2021)

Based on the information obtained during the 'Listening and Learning' stage, VSS will develop a specialist and dedicated service delivery model which will be presented to the Department of Health and The Executive Office.