



VICTIMS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Programmes Operating Manual

Version 5

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Please note: in this document “Programmes” refers to Victims and Survivors Programme.

1. Purpose of this Document

- 1.1. The purpose of the document is to outline the Operating Rules that apply to the Victims Support Programmes

The term Operating Rules going forward in this document refer collectively to:

- The Standard Terms and Conditions of Grant
 - National Legislation
 - VSS Guidance Notes
 - This Programmes Operating Manual
- 1.2. This document is intended as a framework to guide the work of these Programmes in a structured and consolidated manner. This manual is supplemented with more detailed, step by step **Guidance Notes** on key aspects of programme delivery including Governance, Compliance and Service Delivery.

These can be found on the VSS website <http://www.victimsservice.org/support-for-organisations/information-and-useful-downloads-for-funded-organisations/>

Reference	Title
G1/VSS	Appeal Process
G2/VSS	Clinical Governance Framework
G3/VSS	Corporate Governance
G4/VSS	Recruitment of Staff
G5/VSS	Procurement
G6/VSS	Monitoring and Evaluation
G7/VSS	Fraud
G8/VSS	Whistleblowing
G9/VSS	Debt Recovery and Clawback
G10/VSS	Eligibility of Expenditure and Audit Trail
G11/VSS	Budget Management
G12/VSS	Social Media
G13/VSS	BACS Payments
G14/VSS	Health and Wellbeing Caseworker Framework
G15/VSS	Advocacy Support Framework (in development)
G16/VSS	Capital Expenditure

- 1.1. These Guidance Notes support National legislation requirements in addition to the terms and conditions of the legally binding Contract (Letter of Offer) between the VSS and organisations in receipt of grant aid.

- 1.2. It is a condition of the Contract with VSS to abide with this Programmes Operating Manual and any Guidance Notes issued by VSS.
- 1.3. The Operating Rules may be amended from time to time at the discretion of the Victims and Survivors Service or The Executive Office based on changes in rules, legislation or from learning over the programming period.
- 1.4. In any matters of interpretation of the Operating Rules, the decision of the VSS is final.
- 1.5. In the unlikely event that there is a contradiction between the application of this Operating Manual, VSS Guidance Note and the Contract between VSS and the organisation in receipt of grant aid and National rules and legislation take precedent.
- 1.6. It should be noted that where an organisation has in place policies and procedures that go beyond what is required through the implementation of these operating rules, the organisation should continue to meet the demands of their own internal policies and may continue to use their own tools and templates if they fulfil the requirements of the VSS Operating Rules.

2. About the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS)

- 2.1 The Victims and Survivors Service Limited (VSS) is the delivery body named in the ten-year Strategy for Victims and Survivors 2009-2019 published by the Office of the First and deputy First Minister, now known as The Executive Office (TEO).
- 2.2 The Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) was established in 2013 to deliver support and services for all victims and survivors of troubles/conflict-related incident
- 2.3 The VSS is responsible for providing support and services to victims and survivors on behalf of The Executive Office. “Victims and Survivors” has the meaning ascribed by the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, as amended by the Commission for Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Act 2008. This definition has two distinctive dimensions, as follows:

In this Order references to “victim and survivor” are references to an individual appearing to the Commission to be any of the following-

- (a) *someone who is or has been physically or psychologically injured as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident;*
 - (b) *someone who provides a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for an individual mentioned in paragraph (a); or*
 - (c) *someone who has been bereaved as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident.*
- (2) *Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), an individual may be psychologically injured as a result of or in consequence of—*
- (a) *witnessing a conflict-related incident or the consequences of such an incident; or*
 - (b) *providing medical or other emergency assistance to an individual in connection with a conflict-related incident.¹*

2.1. The Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) was established to deliver support and services for all victims and survivors of troubles/conflict-related incidents.

2.2. The Victim Support Programme operates the following scheme:

- The **Victims Support Programme (VSP)**, which delivers funding to organisations that provide Health and Wellbeing and Social Support services to victims and survivors across Northern Ireland.
- The Programme enable the VSS to provide accessible, responsive and coordinated services to meet the needs of victims and survivors in an integrated way.

3. Strategic Context

The strategic direction of the VSS is informed by a range of key policies and strategies. These include:

- The draft Programme for Government (2016-2021)
- TEO Departmental Business Plan
- Strategy for Victims and Survivors (2009-2019)
- Peace IV Programme (2014-2020)
- A Fresh Start/ Stormont House Agreement 2014
- Making Life Better https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/making-life-better-strategic-framework-2013-2023_0.pdf

¹ Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, which is available online at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2006/2953/contents>

4. Overview of Programmes

4.1 Victims Support Programme

Programming period – **1 April 2017 – 31 March 2024** (subject to extension)

- 4.2 The overall aim of the VSP is aligned to the vision of the VSS: **to improve the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors**. All projects funded through this programme must demonstrate how the activities they deliver contribute to this aim.
- 4.3 Support services for victims and survivors, funded through the VSP should be in line with the Comprehensive Needs Assessment undertaken by the Commission for Victims and Survivors in 2012 and are detailed within the Strategic Outcomes framework.
- 4.4 The VSS are focused on the delivery of outcomes that will improve the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors. All organisations funded through VSS are required to demonstrate how they contribute towards delivering these outcomes.
- 4.5 The table overleaf outlines our strategic outcomes for each thematic area of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment undertaken by the Commission for Victims and Survivors in 2012

Table 1: VSS Strategic Outcomes

Thematic Area per Comprehensive Needs Assessment (Commission for Victims & Survivors, 2012)	Strategic Outcome
Health & Wellbeing, Social Support	We improve the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors and their families
Personal Development	We improve access to opportunities for learning and development for victims and survivors
Financial & Welfare Support	We care for victims and survivors and help those most in need

Truth, Justice & Acknowledgement	We support victims and survivors and their families to engage in legacy issues
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4.6 Listed below are examples of the types of activities that can be funded.

Please note specific details of activities your organisation has been funded to deliver will be listed within Annex 2 of you Letter of Offer – Delivery Plan.

Examples of Health & Well Being Services/Activities

Counselling
 Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) / Eye Movement Desensitisation
 Reprocessing Therapy (EMDR)
 Complementary Therapies
 Life Coaching

Examples of Social Support Programme Services/Activities

Support	Truth, Justice & Acknowledgement	Welfare Support	Transgenerational Issues
Befriending Carers Social Network Group Excursions Group Activities Yoga Life Coaching	Advocacy Commemoration Storytelling Oral History	Advocacy Support Advice Signposting	Mentoring Creative Writing Music Focused Trips and Events Youth Drama Storytelling

4.7 It should be noted that the examples of the activities above are not an exhaustive list. Funded organisations should refer to your Delivery Plan and budget breakdown in the Letter of Offer agreed with VSS.

4.8 Eligible expenditure under this programme includes:

- Salaries
- Overheads
- Programme activities

Please refer to your Letter of Offer and Annexes for a detailed breakdown of eligible expenditure allocated to resource your Delivery Plan

5. GAP FUNDING

5.1 The Executive Office (TEO) has made available financial provisions for Gap Funding to be administered by Victims & Survivors Service (VSS) to organisations previously in receipt of PEACE IV Funding.

1. Advocacy Support (Truth, Justice and Acknowledgement)

Organisations funded through this programme will continue to develop and implement an advocacy support programme within the voluntary and community sector to ensure that victims and survivors have access to high quality practical support when engaging with on-going legacy inquests, enquiries, and any other historical institutions.

2. Health & Wellbeing Caseworkers & Resilience Support

GAP Funding will continue to support a network of Health & Wellbeing (HWB) Caseworkers who work directly with individual victims and survivors and their families in a pro-active and innovative way to facilitate engagement with services and activities within the statutory, community and voluntary sector in keeping with their needs. They will be the first point of contact for enquiries, liaising with agencies ensuring that complex and sensitive information is communicated with empathy and reassurance.

3. Professional training and capacity building to meet professional standards

One of the corporate objectives of VSS is to identify and roll out best practice across the sector through implementing a Workforce Development Training Plan. We do this in order to increase the capacity and confidence within VSS funded organisations and the Programme is planned in line with the CVS Standards for Services to Victims and Survivors. **(See section 7)**

6. Letter of Offer

6.1 The Contract between VSS and the organisation in receipt of grant aid means:

- **Letter of Offer**

Grant offer specific to each organisation outlining budget breakdown, delivery plan and any special terms and conditions of grant.

AND

- **Standard Conditions of Grant**

Terms and conditions to be applied by all organisations in receipt of grant funding.

- 6.2 The organisation should read all of the above documents carefully and committee members and project staff in the organisation should be fully conversant with all requirements.
- 6.3 Only costs outlined in the budget and delivery plan in each individual Letter of Offer will be eligible for reimbursement by the VSS, subject to compliance with the VSS Guidance Notes and any Terms and Conditions of Grant.
- 6.4 Successful applicants will be issued with two VSS signed copies of the Contract which must be signed and dated by two Office bearing committee members (one of whom should be the Chairman and none of whom must be beneficiaries).
- 6.5 **Effective Dates**
The date of contracted services will be outlined in your Letter of Offer.
- 6.6 The services/activities undertaken or work commenced/expenditure incurred by an applicant prior to the date of the Contract is not eligible for support aid. In most cases the eligible date for the Letter of Offer is 1st April 2017.

Services/activities will only be assisted where:

- the work/expenditure involved commences **after** the successful application has been received;
- a Letter of Offer has been issued;
- the signed acceptance of the Letter of Offer has been received by VSS; and
- satisfactory governance arrangements remain in place throughout the programming period.

Only eligible expenditure per the Letter of Offer will be reimbursed.

7. Minimum Standards

- 7.1 In October 2011 the Commission published a Minimum Practice Framework as a guide to organisations providing services in the victims sector in order to identify the standards expected.
- 7.2 This was in line with the Commission's statutory duty to keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided for victims and survivors. In November 2016 the Commission refreshed these standards to reflect changes to service delivery within the sector.

- 7.3 All organisations must adhere to the standards outlined within the CVS 'Standards for Services Provided to Victims and Survivors' <https://www.cvsni.org/media/1552/final-standards-document-2016.pdf>.

The Standards include:

- Management and Organisational governance.
- Employment and Volunteering Structures.
- Organisational Practice and Service Delivery.
- Training.
- Health and Well Being.
- Complementary Therapies.
- Counselling.
- Life Coaching.
- Advocacy.
- Social Support/Resilience.
- Storytelling and Remembrance.
- Befriending.
- Social Activity and Confidence Building.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 VSS funded organisations should read in detail the contents of the Programme operating manual as well as the accompanying Guidance Notes.
- 8.2 These documents provide the framework for the delivery of the Victims Support Programme.

All documents will be available to download from the VSS website

- 8.3 If you have any questions or queries on any aspect of these documents, please inform your Programmes Officer who will be able to provide further clarity

Table 2: Overview of Guidance Notes

Ref	Title
G1/VSS	<p>Guidance Note on Appeal Process</p> <p>This information booklet is a guide to the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) appeal process. It sets out the procedure to be implemented in the event that an applicant wishes to request an appeal of a decision in relation to the application process and/or subsequent award of funding.</p>
G2/VSS	<p>Guidance Note on Clinical Governance Framework</p> <p>The VSS Clinical Governance Framework has been established to ensure recognisable and consistent standards of treatment and support apply to the delivery of services to victims and survivors by all organisations funded under the Victims Support Programme (VSP) and PEACE IV Programme.</p>
G3/VSS	<p>Guidance Note on Corporate Governance</p> <p>This Guidance Notes outline the seven key principles of corporate governance and sets out best practices which should be followed within the voluntary and community sector</p>
G4/VSS	<p>Guidance Note on the Recruitment of Staff</p> <p>This Guidance Note outlines the key principles and the minimum steps to be followed by any Organisation recruiting staff.</p> <p>The Guidance Note provides templates that can be adapted and changed as necessary to reflect the actual position being advertised.</p>
G5/VSS	<p>Guidance Note on Procurement</p> <p>Whenever purchases are made, contracts awarded and external suppliers engaged, public procurement rules must be observed. This Guidance Notes outlines the rules that must be followed in order to ensure a transparent and fair competition and aim to achieve value for money.</p>

<p>G6/VSS</p>	<p>Guidance note on Monitoring and Evaluation The Victims and Survivors Service is committed to implementing outcomes based monitoring and evaluation. This means that in partnership with our funded organisations we will be able to demonstrate the impact/benefit/change that our funding has on the lives of victims and survivors.</p>
<p>G7/VSS</p>	<p>Guidance Note on Fraud The purpose of this guidance note is to provide guidance on the action required when evidence or suspicion of fraud arises within a funded organisation. Where there is any doubt, the VSS should be contacted immediately for advice and direction.</p>
<p>G8/VSS</p>	<p>Guidance Note on Whistleblowing Each VSS funded organisation is responsible for ensuring an appropriate Whistleblowing Policy is in place within their organisation. The purpose of this guidance is to outline how you as an individual or as a funded organisation can raise a concern with the VSS.</p> <p>This guidance also enables you to raise your concern about such malpractice at an early stage and in the right way.</p>
<p>G9/VSS</p>	<p>Guidance Note on Debt Recovery and Clawback This guidance note outlines the Debt Recovery and Clawback Procedures that will be applied, when necessary, to irregular, ineligible, fraudulent or suspected fraudulent expenditure incurred using VSS funding.</p>
<p>G10/VSS</p>	<p>Guidance Note on Eligibility of Expenditure and Audit Trail The purpose of this Guidance Note is to provide additional information to VSS funded organisations to ensure that a distinction can be made between eligible and ineligible costs and that there is an understanding of the need for a comprehensive audit trail.</p>
<p>G11/VSS</p>	<p>Guidance Note on Budget Management The purpose of this Guidance Note is to provide information to funded organisations on permissible budget flexibility within your approved budget detailed in Annex 1 of your Letter of Offer. It also provides some handy tips for budget management.</p>

<p>GN12/VSS</p>	<p>Guidance Note on Social Media This Guidance Note is intended to assist VSS funded organisations to make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Google+ and LinkedIn. Other social media includes but is not exclusive to blogs, video, picture blogging and audio.</p> <p>It outlines the standards VSS requires funded organisations to observe when using social media, the circumstances in which VSS will monitor your use of social media and the action that will be taken in respect of breaches of this guidance note.</p>
<p>GN13/VSS</p>	<p>Guidance Note on BACS Payments This guidance note is intended to assist VSS funded organisations to make appropriate decisions about the use of BACS as a form of payment for suppliers, staff or other relevant parties.</p>
<p>GN14/VSS</p>	<p>Guidance Note on Health and Wellbeing Caseworker Framework This Guidance Note outlines the Operating Framework for the PEACE IV funded Health and Wellbeing Caseworker Network</p>
<p>GN15/VSS</p>	<p>Guidance Note on Advocacy Support Framework This Guidance Note outlines the Operating Framework for the PEACE IV funded Advocacy Support Programme.</p>
<p>GN16/VSS</p>	<p>Guidance Note on Capital Expenditure This policy is intended to assist VSS funded organisations to make appropriate decisions about the application of Capital Expenditure and the management of Fixed Assets.</p>