



ADVICE PAPER ON FUTURE FUNDING

Introduction

1. At the Forum meeting on 26th September 2014, members discussed the current funding arrangements for the victims and survivors sector and the focus for future funding. This discussion is in parallel to the current research project examining both the Individual Needs Programme (INP) and the Victims Support Programme (VSP).
2. The Commission provided the historical context in relation to funding detailing the schemes and allocated funding in 2013/14 and the current schemes operating in 2014/15.

Recommendations from the Forum

Individual Needs Programme

3. As the number of individual victims and survivors presenting for services is increasing to both the Victims and Survivors Service and groups, government should find additional resources to meet this increasing demand and make more funding available to the VSS to address individual needs.
4. The focus of future funding should be on meeting the needs of individual victims and survivors rather than schemes to which they may qualify. It should be all about the best way to meet people's needs.
5. This change will require a more holistic person-centred approach and will include the design of a package of measures that are bespoke to the individual.
6. In order to ensure that any changes in how resources are allocated are deliverable, alternative funding models should be scoped by the Commission in consultation with the Forum and piloted so that the learning can be applied.
7. This package of support will, therefore, be able to meet a broad range of needs for the bereaved, the physically or psychologically injured and carers.

8. Forum members recommend that any proposed designed changes should be piloted and thoroughly evaluated and any learning applied before being implemented across all victims and survivors.

Victims Support Programme

9. There needs to be a formalized understanding with groups that if they are in receipt of public funds, there needs to be the sharing of data and outcomes for victims and survivors and this is conditional on funds being awarded to the groups by the VSS.
10. Forum members acknowledge the unique services offered to victims and survivors by groups. However, as the needs of victims and survivors are complex and often multiple, the resource should follow the victim and not the group as victims and survivors can have the choice of accessing different services from different groups.
11. It is not a reasonable expectation that every group will be able to furnish every victims and survivor with every service they may need. Therefore, if the resource follows the victim/survivor they will be empowered with choice to decide what they need, where they access it from and how their 'package of support' is designed.
12. Forum members suggest that a scoping exercise should be conducted by the VSS to scope trans-generational and welfare services provided by other agencies in order to maximize what is already funded in wider civic society and may be utilized by victims and survivors.
13. For example, welfare support is reported as a growing area of need given the current proposed changes to the welfare system. Therefore, in order to meet need, the VSS should check the feasibility of sign posting to service providers funded under different funding streams across geographical areas to ensure that support is available across Northern Ireland.
14. Similarly, youth programmes are offered across Northern Ireland and the VSS should seek to optimize partnerships to ensure the best use of resources.

Administration of funding

15. Members agreed that the planning for future funding should be strategic and that consideration should be given to 'area based' planning which would address the

broad range of services provided by groups in a specific geographical and demographical area.

16. This will allow victims and survivors to access high quality services that they need while optimizing funding to the sector and avoid any potential for duplication of service provision. This will require increased partnership and joint working across groups.
17. In order to strategically plan and fund services to victims and survivors, high quality impact data is required. This will inform planning as to what services work and have the best outcomes for victims and survivors.
18. It is imperative that this data is shared with the VSS and the Commission for Victims and Survivors in order to optimize resources and inform effective strategic planning across Northern Ireland.
19. The Forum members recommend that the administrator of funds and services in the groups oversee the gathering and sharing of the data with the VSS
20. The Forum members acknowledge that this will necessitate the use of unique identifiers. There should be one system operated by the VSS with one number per victim and survivor and this is used by the group's administrator. This is absolutely necessary to;
 - Track the impact of services to victims and survivors, and
 - Track the use of services to victims and survivors.
21. Eligibility remains a critical area that requires careful consideration. Due diligence should be exercised by the VSS to ensure that the right level of services are going to the right victim or survivor in order to maximize the impact of the available resources.