

# Assessment Journey

## 1 Introduction.

The Service plans to address the needs of individual victims and survivors, to provide funding for the services delivered through groups and to ensure the appropriate targeting of all resources.

It is the Commission's view that it is neither practical nor appropriate for every victim and survivors to have to undertake an extensive individual assessment through an assessor. The proposed Individual Assessment Manual for the Service suggests an assessment model of 'one size fits all' and the Commission would disagree with this. Indeed, it is likely that many victims and survivors may only access one level of support eg social or financial and do not require any further support.

There are two aspects of assessment which have to be addressed relating to social support:

- I. the individual assessment of victim and survivors both through indirect and direct contact with the Service
- II. the initial assessment by the service of projects proposed by groups, the data collated as part of this process eg the footfall of the personnel participating and the assessment and evaluation of the impact of the overall project.

## 2 Client Needs

### **2.1 Is Social Support viewed as a Need or an Intrinsic Value?**

In June, there were 4,000 street parties across the U.K. in honour of the royal wedding. This phenomenon was not based upon 'need' as such. Rather, the street parties had an intrinsic value as expressions of community; solidarity; civic validation. Northern Ireland Executive funding of the GAA and the IFA assumes an intrinsic value in funding collective or communal activities involving thousands of people. The GAA and IFA are not asked to undertake individual assessments which seek to measure football meets the personal needs of each person who turns up at a match. Similarly, one could argue that in a society recovering from violent conflict there is intrinsic merit in the existence of meetings/events or clubs/association which are spaces for victims/survivors. Football fans are not viewed as needy; there is no such stigma around them. Attending a game is not viewed as addressing need (even though it is) but rather as a good and wholesome part of being alive. **Therefore, we should not see victims groups solely in terms of addressing need. Seeking to 'assess need' with every person involved in a group would be like standing at a turnstile trying to assess every football fan who wishes to pass through on their way in to a game.**

CVS would emphasis again the need to ensure that all personnel within groups and the Service who dealing with victims and survivors are fully aware of the sensitivities around the nature of this work. It would be essential that key personnel in associated agencies who may have contracts with the Service have a very clear understanding of the issues involved.

## **2.2 Registration**

The Commission is fully aware that there is a need to capture accurate data to ensure that any resources are appropriately targeted and it is possible to plan for future provision. However, we are also very aware of the sensitivity, perceptions and misconceptions around the issue of access to personal information. There are also time issues relating to the input of this data onto a central database.

**Individual Registration:** All Victims and Survivors who receive services which are funded through the Service will be required to be registered over a period of time either individually or via groups.

## **3 The Levels**

The following four levels illustrates how an individual client from a group would be assessed and by whom at each of the levels.

CVS believes this model provides a more realistic approach to the assessment of victims and survivors.

### **(a) Informal Support**

Level 1 refers to the social value of participation in a group for victims and survivors. This is largely informal and should have minimal individual assessment. This area of work – perhaps the greater part of the sector’s landscape – cannot properly be understood by applying a medical model of assessment i.e. one which focuses on the individual, in isolation from communal context. The project and how the group manages the project should be assessed by the Service: initially, throughout the project and evaluated upon completion.

#### **Level 1: Informal Support**

Services Provided: Social networks, social support events,

Delivered by: Victims Groups

Assessment: No assessment of the individual required at this stage (see Introduction above)

Funded by: The Support Programme (SSF via the groups)

### **(b) Formal Support and Financial Assistance**

CVS would determine these as the levels where there is one-to-one interaction ie between the individual and service provider. Practical Assistance – Levels 2 and 3 refers to the range

of services which assist victims with financial, practical and bureaucratic issues affecting them. A lot of this work is akin to the kind of interaction between staff and customers in the Post Office, a Benefits office, a Housing Executive office. Much of the work is clerical/executive in nature. Therefore, 'assessment' should be task focussed (not holistic!) and not geared to in-depth examination of the person. This will require generic training for individuals within groups to administer Level 2 to ensure a consistency of application. As there will be clear eligibility criteria for the Financial Assistance Scheme it also may be possible/practical to extend the role of these personnel, who are trained to assess for Level 2, to enable them to undertake some of the administration work for the Service for the Financial Assistance at Level 3

### **Level 2: Formal Support**

Services Provided: Befriending, Listening Ear, Welfare Advice, Personal and Professional Development, Advocacy

Delivered by: Victims Groups

Assessment: Assessment required carried out by groups and input onto Service database via web link

Funded by: The Support Programme (SSF via the groups)

### **Level 3: Financial Assistance**

Services Provided: Individual Financial Assistance and Advice

Delivered by: The Victims Service

Assessment: Individual financial assessment carried out by a Service employee against pre-determined eligibility criteria

Funded by: Any Financial Assistance Scheme which is appropriate

### **(c) Further Support**

Further Support at Level 4 refers to individuals who consciously and willingly enter a client-helper relationship aimed at effecting some kind of positive change in the client's life. While there may be a range of people involved in a programme of work with a client, at the core is a one-to-one relationship with a professional. It is imperative that the assessment is undertaken by a health professional while the outworking of this assessment may be a multi-agency approach. This referral is not just about counselling but may also be a referral to trauma therapies and therefore must be undertaken by appropriate personnel. While there will be groups who will deliver counselling to the appropriate standards they should not be involved in the assessment of individuals who may be associated with the same group

#### **Level 4: Professional Assessment**

Services Provided: Specialised medical services, mental health services, counselling, physical health services, physiotherapy, chronic pain management, complementary therapies

Delivered by: Specialised contracted service providers which may include groups working to specified standards

There are many issues relating to the professional services and the Service is setting up a group of professional to address this area.

CVS would wish to interact with this group.

#### **4 Direct Contact with the Service**

For those clients going directly to the Service there will be a generic assessment:

- I. for informal and formal support (identified at 3(a) and (b)) which may be delivered through
  - groups
  - or other voluntary or statutory agencies (SLA needed)
- II. for direct financial assistance (identified at 3(b)) which the Service delivers

If it is considered that any further support is needed the Service refers the client to one of its Assessors as is identified at 3 (c).