

Public Consultation on the New Strategy for Victims and Survivors

Overview

A New Strategy for Victims and Survivors Survey

In November 2009, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister launched the current Strategy for Victims and Survivors. The Strategy was designed to address a range of victims and survivors' issues, be victim-centred and demonstrate Government's commitment to victims and survivors.

The current Strategy, as originally conceived, had a ten-year timeframe, however in the absence of an Executive or Ministers to progress a new Strategy a number of extensions have been approved with the latest one approved by the Permanent Secretary up to November 2024 to allow time for development and approval of this new Strategy.

A new draft Strategy has been developed by TEO in co-operation with VSS, CVS and a variety of stakeholders including funded groups and individual victims and survivors. This draft Strategy has been developed in the absence of Ministers and would be subject to their decisions on their return.

A copy of the draft Strategy can be obtained via the following link https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/teo/public-consultation-on-the-new-strategy-for-victim/user_uploads/victims-and-survivors-strategy.pdf <user_uploads/victims-and-survivors-strategy.pdf>

Why your views matter

This Strategy sets out the outcomes we aim to achieve for Victims and Survivors of the Troubles/conflict and build on the progress we have made to date to ensure the needs of victims and survivors continue to be met.

The Victims and Survivors Strategy has been developed around 3 strategic pillars: Past, Needs and Future. These pillars, or themes, remain unchanged from the previous strategy. Dealing with the past, meeting the needs of victims and survivors and building for the future, still encompass the key issues for victims and survivors today. It's our approach to achieving these aims that's different with this strategy.

The new strategy will ensure the right trauma informed and victim centred services are in place to empower and support victims and survivors and contribute to building a shared and peaceful future. It will also set out the specific issues affecting victims and survivors which require particular focus.

As part of this consultation process, we are seeking your views on the new Strategy.

We would be extremely grateful if you would complete an online survey which should take no longer than 20 minutes

Please note that no individual will be identifiable through their response to this questionnaire.

All responses will remain anonymous and will not be identifiable within the consultation.

In accordance with data protection laws, information obtained will be stored on password protected computers. The data will be kept for a minimum of five years, or at least two years post-publication. It will then be destroyed.

The closing date and time for responses is **29th March 2024 at 23:59**

If you have any further questions about the questionnaire, the evaluation, or if you would like to complete a paper based version of the questionnaire, please contact vsstrategypublicconsultation@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

Your help and input is very much appreciated.

About you

1 Are you responding to this consultation as an individual or representing an organisation?

Please select only one item

Organisation - please specify below

Please add name of organization:

Royal College of Psychiatrists Northern Ireland

Victims and Survivors Strategy Awareness

1 Prior to answering this questionnaire, were you aware of the Strategy for Victims and Survivors?

Please select only one item

Yes, we were aware of it from our work within this Policy space and from the work of our Members.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCPsych) is the statutory body responsible for the supervision of the training and accreditation of Psychiatrists in the UK and for providing guidelines and advice regarding the treatment, care, and prevention of mental and behavioural disorders. Among its principal aims are to improve the outcomes for those with mental illness and to improve the mental health of individuals, families and communities.

The College has approximately 450 Members in Northern Ireland (including Doctors in training) who provide the backbone of the local Psychiatric service, offering inpatient, day patient and outpatient treatment, as well as specialist care and consultation across a large range of settings.

This response is submitted on behalf of the Devolved Council of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Northern Ireland.

Vision, Principles and Values

Initiatives and proposals within the Strategy for Victims and Survivors will work towards an enduring vision articulated by a number of key principles and core values.

1 Do you agree with the vision as set out below for the strategy?

Strategy Vision

A trauma informed society that addresses the needs of victims and survivors

Please select only one item

Yes

2 Do you agree with the Principles and Values as set out below for the new strategy?

Principles and Values

- Victim centred. Trauma
- informed.
- Collaboration and partnership.
- Responsive to changing needs.
- Evidence based.
- Trust and confidence. Empowering.
-

Please select only one item

Yes

3 Do you feel there are Principles and Values missing from this list?

Please select only one item

Yes

We agree that Trauma informed services are essential for victims and survivors.

However, the trauma can also be an aetiological factor in precipitating or contributing to co-occurring mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, addictions and severe mental illness. There needs to be an awareness of this among counsellors and staff in the Regional Trauma Network - and the community and voluntary sector. There also needs to be developed pathways of care into secondary care mental health services if required. *This principle of joined up mental health care and treatment should be included.*

This needs to apply across the whole age range with appropriate treatment related strategies and techniques, especially for children and young people. In addition, there is a need for appropriate therapies for people with a learning disability, many of whom were affected by the traumas of the Troubles.

1 Do you agree with the aim listed below for the Past pillar?

Past Pillar Strategic Aim

Support victims and survivors and their families as they move forward from experiences of the past.

Yes

2 Do you agree with the high level outcome listed below for the Past pillar?

Past Pillar High Level Outcome

Victims and Survivors feel supported in their journey.

Yes

3 Do you agree with the key priority areas listed below that have been included under the Past Pillar?

Past Pillar Key Priorities

- We will continue to work with victims and survivors to meet their needs and ensure that they are supported in dealing with the legacy of the past, and we will be flexible in the face of changing needs and prevailing circumstances.
- Continue to support victims and survivors through the Advocacy Support Network within the VSS PEACE PLUS project currently funded through the VSS.
- Work with victims and survivors, and wider society, to develop a designated public space of reflection where people can come together to remember our past.
- Work with third and faith sectors to recognise and promote the Annual Day of Reflection on 21st June each year.
- Further explore themes of Acknowledgement including shared acts of commemorative activity to collectively acknowledge the impact of the Troubles/conflict on the peoples of these islands and beyond.
- Engage with the Irish and UK Governments to ensure they are aware of the needs of victims and survivors, and the potential impact on individuals and communities of failing to meet those needs.
- Continue to deliver the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme in a victim centred and trauma informed way.

Yes

4 Do you feel there are Key Priority Areas missing under this Outcome?

Yes

There should be the ongoing availability of mental health treatment or care, if indicated.

On many occasions the impact of a trauma can be delayed, with the resultant connection with the trauma of the Troubles not initially being very obvious.

1 Do you agree with the aims listed below for the Needs pillar?

Needs Pillar Strategic Aims

To support and enable victims and survivors to improve their health and wellbeing, addressing the factors which impact on mental and physical health.

To ensure victims and survivors have an improved awareness of and access to high quality, trauma informed services.

Yes

2 Do you agree with the high level outcome listed below for the Needs pillar?

Needs Pillar High Level Outcome

Improved physical health and emotional wellbeing of victims and survivors.

Yes

3 Do you agree with the key priority areas listed below that have been included under the Needs Pillar?

Needs Pillar Key Priorities

- Deliver a strategy that can adapt to changes in needs, environment and learning to ensure the best possible outcomes for victims and survivors and encourage piloting of new ways to support victims and survivors.
- Ensure access to victim-centred, trauma informed, needs based support and services that contribute to improved wellbeing and quality of life for victims and survivors.
- Raise awareness of Troubles/conflict-related trauma and the needs of victims and survivors in other service providers and across government.
- Maintain a Network of Health and Wellbeing Case Managers and Regional Health and Wellbeing Case Workers to identify and address the needs of victims and survivors.
- Deliver the Regional Trauma Network and monitor progress to ensure learning and development for the future provision of services.
- Deliver appropriate support for the bereaved.
- Improve access to services for rural and socially isolated, including through the promotion of befriending.
- Invest in capacity of the sector through training and development to meet national and regional standards, research, and improved regulation.
- Improve awareness of services and support available including clear pathways and signposting.
- Review the accessibility of the services we provide, including any potential barriers to access.
- Work to better understand the different impact that the Troubles/conflict had on men and women, and how the different needs can be met today.

Yes

4 Do you feel there are Key Priority Areas missing under this Outcome?

No

1 Do you agree with the aim listed below for the Future pillar?

Future Pillar Strategic Aim

To ensure that families are supported, and that society works towards “breaking the chain” of transgenerational trauma.

Yes

2 Do you agree with the high level outcome listed below for the Future pillar?

Future Pillar High Level Outcome

Improved quality of life for victims and survivors

Yes

3 Do you agree with the key priority areas listed below that have been included under the Future Pillar?

The Future Pillar Key Priorities

- Continue to include those with lived experience in discussions and decisions around issues that affect them.
- Ensure victims and survivors issues are integrated into relevant and emerging strategies, policies and programmes including for example the Central Good Relations Fund and Communities in Transition, which can deliver outcomes for victims and survivors. We will actively seek opportunities for strategic alignment and collaborative working across government and the wider public sector, by creating connections with initiatives supporting reconciliation and the development of a shared and better future.
- Carry out research to maintain and develop our understanding of the current needs of victims and survivors and conduct, as necessary, further research into the impact of transgenerational and intergenerational trauma to ensure adequate services and support are available and raise awareness of the transgenerational transmission of trauma.
- Work with other sectors and Departments to build on existing and create new formal and informal education programmes to enhance knowledge and mutual understanding about the transgenerational impacts of the Troubles/conflict.
- Work together with faith organisations to raise awareness of victims and survivors needs and help shape a peaceful society for all.
- Consolidate expertise within the sector and work in partnership to protect front line services for victims and survivors, supporting victims' groups to partner and collaborate to deliver for victims and survivors on a regional basis.
- Build upon our experience in dealing with trauma and work to support partners in the sector through organisational transition to support our aspiration of becoming a fully trauma informed society that can be an exemplar for others.
- In light of the results of these actions, review how best victims and survivors can be supported in the future.
- Review the facilities available to community and voluntary organisations who support victims and survivors and consider the need for a capital building programme.
- Build links between sectors, across the public sector and with GB and RoI to raise awareness and share learning on the needs of victims and service provision for those who have suffered trauma.
- Expand upon and support the roll out of trauma education throughout society, raising awareness of trauma and developing trauma informed services.

Yes

4 Do you feel there are Key Priority Areas missing under this Outcome?


No

Additional information

1 Do you have any further comments relevant to this consultation?

No

Dated: 26 March 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Wilson', with a horizontal line underneath it.

**Dr Richard Wilson Chair RCPsych NI & Vice President RCPsych -
on behalf of RCPsych NI**

Contact Details: thomas.mckeever@rcpsych.ac.uk