

National Characteristics Directive Implementation Article 22

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Victim Support England & Wales

December 2014

find the strength

Characteristics of Victim Support

- National independent charity providing support to victims and witnesses, 40th anniversary in 2014
- England and Wales only – there are separate charities for victims and witnesses in other parts of the UK.
- 5600 active volunteers – estimated time value £21 million per year
- 1500 staff
- Most of our support is delivered through our volunteer teams



Characteristics of Victim Support

In 12/13:

- Over 400,000 victims received a call to offer support
- We wrote to over 500,000 victims of crime
- We visited over 67,000 victims in their home
- We gave emotional support to over 73,000 victims
- We helped over 48,000 victims with security measures

find the strength

Implementing Directive 2012/29/UE

- Up to April 2015, funding for victims services in the UK is primarily from UK Ministry of Justice to Victim Support England and Wales.
- We are currently funded to provide initial contact with victims, a needs assessment process and in-depth practical and emotional support covering full range of crime types

Needs Assessment

- We offer a structured needs assessment to victims
- We train staff to talk to victims and assess their need, without use of a script
- This means we have a natural conversation from which we identify need and help resolve it
- We have a list of needs and services that we use to define our offer to victims
- We refer victims on to other agencies where appropriate

Implementing Directive 2012/29/UE

- Major changes are underway which impact on our organisation and which relate to implementation of the directive
- Change stems from three sources:
 - Update of a previously existing Victims Code of Practice (2013)
 - Publication of a report Getting it Right for victims and witnesses (2012)
 - Introduction of elected Police Crime Commissioners in local areas (2012)

Victims Code of Practice 2013

- The 2013 Code replaces a previous code issued in 2006
- Sets out the services to be provided by criminal justice agencies and sets minimum standards for their delivery - content is linked to the EU Directive
- Applicable from the moment from the moment a victim reports a crime to the end of the trial.
- Came into force on December 10 2013

Victims Code of Practice 2013

Requirements:

- Victims of crime should be treated in a respectful, sensitive and professional manner without discrimination
- Victims should get appropriate support to help them as far as possible to cope and recover and to be protected from further victimisation
- Victims need to know what information and support is available to them

Victims Code of Practice 2013

Victims are entitled to:

- An enhanced service if they are a victim of serious crime, a persistently targeted victim or a vulnerable or intimidated victim;
- Information on what to expect from the criminal justice system;
- A needs assessment to help work out what support they need;
- Information on what to expect from the criminal justice system;
- Be referred to organisations supporting victims of crime;

Implementing Directive 2012/29/UE

- In 2012 the Ministry completed a consultation titled *'Getting it Right for Victims and Witnesses'*
- This concluded that victims should experience high quality support tailored according to need and that this would be best achieved through a mixed economy of local and national commissioning.
- Decision taken for victims services to commissioned locally

Implementing Directive 2012/29/UE

- In 2012 Police and Crime Commissioners were introduced.
- Elected officials responsible for the police and related issues
- Commissioners will take over responsibility for commissioning services to victims of crime
- This means that in practice, responsibility for the practical implementation of the EU Directive will rest with Commissioners

EU Directive and Article 22

- 42 PCCs will be running their own process to commission victim services
- The Grant Conditions set out by Commissioners to those bidding for funds from them mirror the EU Directive, including the requirements that support services for victims are free, confidential and - non-discriminatory
- Services have to include a referral service through which contact is made, **the needs of victims can be assessed**, and support can be provided

Conclusion

- The Victims Code of Practice provides UK minimum standards linked to EU Directive
- Commissioning of victims services on area by area basis means local Police & Crime Commissioners will be responsible for delivering against the Victims Code/EU Directive
- Each Commissioner has their own priorities
- Competition for victim funding may mean different approaches to needs assessment in future – in some areas the police have taken on this responsibility

Conclusion

- Victim Support England and Wales has been primary provider of victims support services including needs assessment
- We are bidding in all areas of England and Wales
- We aim to continue to be the primary service provider, continuing with our offer of initial contact, needs assessment and individually tailored support