



Bailiwick of Guernsey Victim Support and Witness Service

Annual Report 1 June 2015 – 31 May 2016

VISION

The vision of the Service is to be the Bailiwick's leading provider in the delivery and sourcing of top quality services to Victims and Witnesses.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Scheme is to provide emotional support, practical help and information to all victims or witnesses of crime in the Bailiwick. It provides that same service to the families and friends of victims. Whilst the initial emphasis was on the victims of crime this was subsequently expanded to include witnesses through the Witness Service.

Volunteers working with both sets of clients are trained specifically for the separate disciplines.

The Witness Service provides guidance and support for all witnesses who find themselves having to attend Court when perhaps they have never attended the Court before. This can be extremely daunting and sometimes, particularly for young or vulnerable witnesses, frightening. Witnesses are offered pre-trial visits to the Courtroom when the court procedure will be explained, including where they will be asked to stand to give their evidence, where the judge will sit and where all other participants will be positioned. The visits enable them to be a little more comfortable in the Court surroundings and less intimidated, leading to better quality evidence.

The Service offers support to prosecution and defence witnesses, their family and friends before, during and after a criminal trial.

Volunteers can also accompany witnesses into the courtroom whilst they give their evidence and provide ongoing support after the event which may include advising them of a verdict and explaining a sentence.

Since 2008 the Witness Service has also provided support to people attending the Domestic and Matrimonial Courts.

More information regarding the history of Victim Support and Witness Service can be found at Appendix A

Volunteers:

All those who deal directly with either Victims or Witnesses are trained to the highest standards – we currently have 18 volunteers (3 male and 15 female). 2 of the male volunteers are Witness Service only volunteers with the remaining 16 (1 male and 15 females) supporting both victims and witnesses.

One female volunteer left us in June 2016 and we began training 3 new female volunteers the same month.

Training:

Victim Support volunteer training is in accordance with National standards and is carried out locally by an accredited trainer and former Jersey Probation Officer.

Witness Service volunteer training is carried out by the Manager.

General Activity June 2015 to May 2016:

We work closely with the Restorative Justice Development Officer where offenders have expressed a wish to make reparation with their victims. We make every effort to contact the victims to ascertain whether they would be prepared to participate in some form of Restorative Justice, which is of course entirely victim focussed.

The support we provide to the domestic and matrimonial courts has again increased, particularly for those clients who are not represented by an advocate or those with learning difficulties. Some of the volunteers involved in these cases have also been asked to meet with clients prior to a hearing in order to read through the court file and ensure the client has an understanding of the content. Many of these cases run for multiple days.

On 25 and 26 June the Manager and staff attended a half day awareness training for the new Sex Offender Law.

On the evening of 29 June 2015 the Manager, staff and some volunteers attended the event “A conversation with Otherness” at the Princess Royal Centre for the Performing Arts. This event was organised by the Guernsey Arts Commission in partnership with the Committee for Home Affairs and the guest speaker was Sylvia Lancaster, mother of Sophie Lancaster who died in August 2007 having been attacked by youths for being different, a hate crime (she and her boyfriend were Goths).

On the evening of 30 June the Manager attended a Guernsey Community Foundation workshop held at St Pierre Park jointly with HSSD “Building a Stronger Partnership” to consider how a stronger partnership between the voluntary sector and the States can be created. Dr Carol Tozer, Chief Officer of HSSD gave a presentation as did Phillipa Stahelin (Headway Gsy), Ruby Parry (director adult services), Vanessa Spiller and Tracey Rear (drug Concern).

On 30 June 2015, 3 members of the Rothschild Charities Committee visited the Witness Suite and were very impressed. Rothschild Charities Committee have donated towards the cost of training new volunteers.

The annual Victim Support & Witness Service Islands’ meeting (chairmen and managers from Guernsey, Jersey and Isle of Man) was held in July 2015 in Jersey.

The level of all fines in Jersey are being reviewed and about to be increased. A suggestion was made at their Criminal Justice Group meeting to fund the Compensation Fund, and possibly Victim Services, by allocating a percentage of the monies collected in fines.

Isle of Man reported that they have maintained their annual grant of £77,000, however all costs including utilities must be paid from this (they own the property that houses Victim Support with the top floor being rented out).

Jersey is hosting the bi-annual conference on 13 June 2016 and the Islands’ meeting will be held after the conference.

In July 2015, Phil Taylor joined Victim Support & Witness Service as a director. Phil was previously managing director of G4S

In November 2015 the service was one of 3 charities shortlisted for the Guernsey Community Foundation Charity of the Year, this was won by another very worthy charity, Caritas.

In December 2015 we were notified by Committee for Home Affairs that our annual grant would be reduced by 2% in 2016.

Our part time assistant (12hr per week) left at the end of January 2016 to take up a full time post with HSSD which led to us advertising at the end of February for a part time administrative assistant and also some additional volunteers.

We received 40 calls about the administrative post with 16 of those applying. They were invited to pop in and have a look around and a chat about the post and out of the 16 we selected 5 for interview.

Amanda Winkett was our choice for the post, she was newly arrived in Guernsey with her husband who works for Barclays. Her previous experience working in the UK was with the Children's Bereavement Centre and with ISAS (Incest and Sexual Abuse Survivors) and she has a higher professional diploma in counselling.

We received 12 calls about volunteering with 6 of those applying and they too were invited to come and have a look around and a chat about the service. Out of the 6 applicants only 3 decided they would be able to become volunteers for Victim Support & Witness Service.

We are in the process of staff re-organisation which means we will have in our employ our 16hr per week assistant (Sandra), plus our new 21hr per week assistant(Amanda) with our Manager reducing her hours from 30 pr week to 21hrs per week as from 1 August 2016. We are hoping that Amanda may wish to take over as Manager when Marilyn retires in 2018.

Also at the end of February we placed an advertisement about our services in the Guernsey Press for Charity Awareness Week which saw a page each day dedicated to charities' services.

Two of our directors, Anna Guilbert and Phil Taylor, attended the UK & Ireland Forum in Glasgow on 4 March together with representatives from Ireland, England & Wales, Scotland, N Ireland, Isle of Man, Jersey & Guernsey.

On 9 March 2016 the Manager and her assistant and 2 volunteers attended the one day presentation by Dr David Briggs (Forensic Clinical Psychologist) on "An Introduction to the Psychology of Sexual Offenders". We have been supporting quite a few victims of sexual abuse recently and this proved to be very useful.

One of our Directors, Mark de Garis, resigned in April 2016 and we are seeking to appoint a replacement.

I attended the Association of Guernsey Charities AGM and State of the Nation presentation on 25 May 2016 where the speakers were Deputy Jonathan Le Tocq, Paul Whitfield, Stuart Falla MBE and Tabitha Carr, Chair of the Youth Forum. The evening was hosted by John Fernandez, Channel Television.

I will be attending the Victim Support 5th Inter Islands Conference to be held in Jersey on 13 June 2016. Also attending will be Sandra (Manager's assistant).

Throughout the year we continue to give short presentations to attendees of the Safer Domestic Abuse Awareness training days.

The weekly visits to the criminal justice unit office at the police station continue as does the excellent working relationship with the Judiciary and Court staff, Probation Service, Police, Guernsey Border Agency (GBA), Safeguarder Service, Social Security Department, the Womens Refuge, Action for Children (formerly NCH) and other voluntary and statutory agencies.

We continue to attend the following meetings:-

Fortnightly MARAC (multi agency risk assessment conference) meetings as and when necessary

Quarterly Restorative Justice Management Committee

Bi-annual Criminal Justice Working Group

Challenge Working Group (formerly Victim Focus Working Group (which recommends to the CJWG enhancements as to how victims and witnesses are supported in the criminal justice system)

MAPPA (multi agency public protection arrangements) meetings as required

Quarterly Domestic Abuse Strategy Task Group (work schedule permitting) (formed in April 2012)

MARAC Steering Group meetings (formed in March 2012)

Bi-annual Criminal Court Users Group (remit is to work together to ensure the speedy and efficient administration of justice).

DAISY (data information system) User Group meetings (every 4 months)

Looking Forward:

We are continuously seeking funding in the form of donations or sponsorship to supplement the set annual £38,000 grant (not RPI linked) which we have received from the Committee for Home Affairs since 2004. We also intend to run/attend at least 3 fundraising events each year.

We continue to hope we will be able to assist the Committee for Home Affairs in moving forward the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme, although we understand this is not a work stream in the Committee for Home Affairs' business plan for 2015 – 2018.

There are more historic sexual abuse trials scheduled for 2016 and the victims and witnesses, their families and friends in these cases are so very grateful for the continued support they receive from our service.

We are looking at opportunities of working more closely with other relevant agencies who offer similar services to ours, not necessarily non-statutory and in particular the police Witness Care Unit.

We will be attending the Islands' Conference and annual meeting for Chairmen and Managers being held in Jersey on 13 June 2016.

The Bailiwick of Guernsey Victim Support and Witness Service website at www.gov.gg/victim-support-witness-service is updated to include information leaflets and links to other agencies' websites as well as our annual reports.

We continue to update and amend the information leaflets we provide in order to incorporate Bailiwick information.

Conclusions:

At the worst time of their lives, victims and witnesses will have the very best service provided to them by our staff and volunteers. Victims' interests are as important as preventing crime.

A single telephone call to a victim may be all that is needed to give initial support but the victim will be assured that more support is readily available if required at any time.

Witnesses are crucial to the administration of justice and there has been excellent feedback from other agencies and individuals who have used the services we provide.

Police and GBA have found the service particularly useful in that witnesses in criminal courts being supported by the Witness Service are likely to give better evidence than those with whom we have had no contact. Victim Support and the Witness Service is now included on the induction schedule of new GBA Officers and new Police Officers.

We also continue to support parties and witnesses attending the Matrimonial/Domestic Proceedings courts and sometimes for full hearings when there is a vulnerable witness or there has been domestic abuse within the family.

The service has this year also supported witnesses in civil proceedings.

Witnesses feel more at ease after a pre trial visit to the court as early as possible in the process and feel more secure and relaxed waiting in the witness suite on the day of the trial. They are able to meet the prosecuting officer and read their statements quietly in our waiting room before going into court to give their evidence.

Law Officers, Police Officers and interpreters are able to come in and speak with witnesses in our waiting room – it is neutral ground.

After giving their evidence, witnesses are able to return to the witness suite to talk about their experience which they may have found very upsetting. We ensure witnesses leave the Court building safely and on occasions our volunteers have walked witnesses back to their places of work or their cars.

We are also able to explain verdicts and sentencing, which again can affect victims/witnesses in different ways, especially if they were expecting a different outcome. In this we are able to liaise with the Probation Service who are happy to provide a detailed explanation of Probation/Community sentences should this be requested by the victim/witness.

The overall service goes from strength to strength and is an integral part of the justice system. It is more highly accessible to both victims and witnesses and the support received from the Bailiff down is exceptional.

The support from the Committee for Home Affairs is much valued and the budget provided is used very wisely to ensure best value for money from the Scheme.

The whole Victim Support and Witness Service team continues to be totally committed to the work it does for the benefit of the people of the Bailiwick. We will strive to continually improve our service into the future.

Brian Richings, Chairman

June 2016

**VICTIM SUPPORT REFERRALS with MONTHLY
AVERAGES 2010-2016**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	TOTALS
Homicide	0	0	0		0	0	0	0
Sexual Offence	31	33	24	15	27	29		130
Robbery	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	3
Assault GBH	9	2	8	3	14	8		36
Assault ABH	178	146	131	96	93	116		644
Burglary/Theft	136	109	98	115	95	93		553
Criminal Damage	100	115	90	89	51	87		445
Fraud	9	5	5	10	9	15		38
Arson	1	2	4	8	1	2		16
Other Crime	18	22	25	31	5	2		101
Non-Crime	16	34	41	24	26	5		141
Threats	4	12	7	3	17	9		43
Road death	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTALS	504	480	433	396	338	366	0	2151
<i>Monthly Averages</i>	42	40	36	33	28	31		
Domestic Abuse	120	130	122	82	49	51		503
(included in above)								
<i>Monthly Averages</i>	10	11	10	7	4	4		

WITNESS SERVICE REFERRALS 2006 TO 2016 BY MONTH

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
JAN	3	11	14	20	31	20	32	50	53	49	
FEB	3	21	6	23	11	46	31	17	48	30	
MAR	0	14	15	43	19	39	43	28	39	47	
APR	1	13	16	38	33	18	42	27	44	41	
MAY	8	6	21	6	31	34	54	38	27	52	
JUNE	3	9	11	43	12	24	43	44	54	78	
JULY	10	26	20	16	15	14	54	25	38	47	
AUG	9	6	17	14	20	26	14	18	34	37	
SEPT	6	0	12	15	35	44	58	23	58	52	
OCT	6	18	25	24	20	36	43	43	33	44	
NOV	8	10	25	11	42	48	22	51	54	54	
DEC	18	8	11	30	18	43	32	52	29	32	
TOTALS	75	142	193	283	287	392	468	416	511	563	
Pre Trial Visits	56	98	33	63	74	114	88	55	88	92	
Video Link from 12.3.08			6	20	11	11	6	13	44	65	
Screen use from 25.9.12							3	1	3	5	

Appendix A

History:

The Victim Support Scheme in the Bailiwick was initially conceived and set up in 1998 with funding from the Lloyds TSB Foundation for the Channel Islands, providing a 3-year endowment to enable the scheme to establish itself and subsequently seek States funding.

States funding was ultimately received in 2004 and has subsequently been received annually.

The original committee was headed by Niall McCathie as Chairman with Peter Niven as Treasurer. Niall gave up the Chairmanship in 2004 with Peter Niven taking over the role until January 2007. Robin Fuller became Chairman from January 2007 until December 2010 when Brian Richings took over the role.

The Treasurer's role was undertaken by the Manager, Marilyn King, from September 2006 until the current Chairman took over the role in April 2013.

The local Scheme was affiliated to the much bigger UK structure until June 2008 when the National Scheme became a single charity rather than a federation.

In June 2009 the Bailiwick of Guernsey Victim Support and Witness Service won the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services.

In May 2010, the Management Committee made a decision to launch the Scheme as a Company Limited by Guarantee under the Companies (Guernsey) Law, 2008. The Bailiwick of Guernsey Victim Support and Witness Service LBG was registered on 10 December 2010.

The Company is overseen by a Board of Directors and certain functions in respect of the management of the business and affairs of the Company are delegated to the Management Committee.

Initially the Manager's role was undertaken on a volunteer basis; this subsequently became a part time paid role and ultimately full time in view of the increasing commitment to victims of crime in the Bailiwick.

Claire Pearce was the first manager and was with the Scheme at the outset as the volunteer Manager; she resigned from the Scheme at the end of 2005 and was replaced by Marilyn King who took up the position on 20 February 2006.

Until a part time assistant was employed in 2008, two of the longstanding volunteers used to help manage the service while the manager was on leave and will still do so if necessary at any time.

As the Scheme became busier, an assistant was employed on a part time basis. From 2008 the post was initially funded with donations from the following:-

HSBC Securities Services Guernsey Charitable Foundation

Trustees of The Sarnia Memorial Trust

Northern Trust Guernsey Charitable Trust

The Charles Hayward Foundation

The Securities & Investment Institute

Rothschild Charities Committee

The Association of Guernsey Charities (Christmas Lottery 2007)

Lloyds TSB Foundation for the Channel Islands has since provided a further 5 years funding initially November 2008 to November 2010 and latterly from November 2010 until November 2012 for the part time post.

From November 2012 G4S Secure Solutions have provided a 3 year sponsorship until the last payment in November 2014 which will fund the part time assistant post until October 2015.

The Guernsey Community Foundation provided funding for one year in 2015 for our 16 hour and 12 hour part time posts, this enables the office to be manned during working hours throughout the week.

The Scheme was initially run from the Manager's home, although in 2003 this was transferred to a small office in Lower Vauvert that was paid for by the Scheme. This provided office accommodation and a separate, more comfortable room for victims to speak to volunteers.

With the opening of the new Courts in January 2006, a suite of rooms was made available to the Scheme, designed to provide not only office accommodation and storage but also a waiting room for witnesses and a video link room to be used for vulnerable and intimidated witnesses to avoid the necessity of them physically entering the courtroom in very sensitive cases.

On 16 June 2010 we hosted the first Victim Support Inter Islands Conference at Les Cotils which was attended by approximately 120 guests, including representatives from the Isle of Man Department of Home Affairs and Jersey Law Officers.

See Appendix B for details of the current Board of Directors and Management Committee members.

Appendix B

CURRENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Brian Richings	Chairman
Phil Taylor	Vice chairman
Anna Guilbert	Chief Probation Officer, Probation Service
Marilyn King	Victim Support and Witness Service Manager
Kate Clark	Probation Officer
Erin Adkins	Police Witness Care Unit Manager
Karen Archenoul	Police Representative
Jenny Ridley & Cathy Boscher	Volunteer Representatives

Mark Windham, formerly of HSSD Youth Justice, retired from the Management Committee in April 2015 as he was leaving the island.

Mark de Garis retired from Management Committee and as a Director in April following his appointment as Chief Secretary for the Committee of Health and Social Care, we are actively seeking another Director to replace him.

The committee meets once each month against an agreed agenda. Minutes are kept of each meeting and the Minute Book is provided to the auditors each year.