



The Guernsey Charity for the support of Victims and Witnesses



**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**June 2018 – May 2019**

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# SECTION 1

## VISION

The vision of the Bailiwick of Guernsey Victim Support and Witness Service (VS&WS) is to ensure that victims and witnesses of crime within our community have access to support of the highest standard.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the VS&WS is to provide emotional support, practical help and information to all victims and witnesses of crime in the Bailiwick, regardless of whether or not they choose to report the crime. It provides that same service to the families and friends of victims and witnesses.

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

For victims, we help people cope with the effects of crime, we listen while they talk through their feelings and reactions to the crime and we try to help them find the way that best suits them to work through their emotions. The support we provide can relate to both personal and/or practical issues and may include accompanying clients during visits to the police station, advocates, hospital etc., securing them access to other services, for example crime prevention, and, if they are required to give evidence in court, supporting them before, during and after the trial.

The Witness Service provides guidance and support for witnesses who find themselves having to attend court when perhaps they have never done so before. This can be extremely daunting and sometimes frightening, particularly for young or vulnerable witnesses. The service offers support to prosecution and defence witnesses, and their family and friends, before, during and after a criminal trial. Witnesses are offered pre-trial visits to the courtroom during which 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. These visits enable witnesses to feel less intimidated and a little more comfortable in the court surroundings, all of which may help them provide better quality evidence. Volunteers can also accompany witnesses into the courtroom whilst they give their evidence and provide on-going support after the event, which may include advising them of a verdict. Since 2008 the Witness Service has also provided support to people attending the Domestic and Matrimonial Courts and Civil Courts.

More information regarding the history of the VS&WS can be found in Appendix A.

## GENERAL ACTIVITY

### **New Staff**

We were sorry when Amanda Winkett announced that she would be returning to the UK at the end of May 2019. Amanda, as Manager of our organisation from June 2017, guided us through a significant period of transition in terms of training, staffing, brand refreshment and a re-focus on our role in providing victim support. We are very grateful for her contribution. We are very fortunate that we were able to recruit Deborah Robinson as Amanda's deputy in 2018 and that Deborah was willing to take over the Manager's role, which she did so seamlessly. We have also been successful in recruiting Hannah Robilliard as Deputy Manager. We were also sorry to lose Sandra Sebire after many years as our Administrative Assistant but we are delighted to appoint Hope Napwanga as her replacement.

## **Volunteers**

We currently have 25 volunteers (5 male and 20 female) who form the backbone of our services. We are extremely fortunate to have many longstanding volunteers, seven of whom have been with us more than 10 years. This year we have welcomed 3 new volunteers.

## **Other Activity**

### **June 2018**

On 21<sup>st</sup> June we welcomed around 50 invited guests to our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary event in the Grand Hall of the Royal Court building. The Bailiff, Sir Richard Collas, gave a speech and offered a toast to the volunteers on behalf of the judges and jurats.



*Staff, volunteers and the Bailiff, Sir Richard Collas, at the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event held in the Grand Hall*

### **August 2018**

We produced a comprehensive booking procedure for Advocates wishing to utilise the Witness Suite. The document was sent to all local legal firms both by post and email and we hope that it will reduce the number of 'last minute' bookings. Also, as we included information about the services we can offer, we may find that advocates who do not currently utilise our services begin to do so.

### **November 2018**

The Manager met with the States of Guernsey's Justice Policy Officer and the Domestic Abuse Strategy Coordinator to discuss the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy, a national initiative which aims to reduce all forms of violence against females.

The Manager and Deputy Manager met with the former Clerk to the House of Commons Justice Committee and a representative of the Committee for Home Affairs, to provide input on the Justice Policy. This formed part of the initial phase of a review to assess how the current justice related policies and processes might be improved and coordinated.

Our new website, designed in collaboration with GP Digital, went live in November 2018. The site not only provides another channel through which potential clients can contact us but it also contains a

‘News’ tab (see screen extract below) which we can update each month to include recent statistics, forthcoming events and other relevant information.

The screenshot shows the website for Victim Support and Witness Service. The header includes the organization's name, logo, and navigation links: ABOUT US, VICTIM SUPPORT, WITNESS SERVICE, OUR VOLUNTEERS, NEWS, and CONTACT. The main content area is titled 'NEWS' and features three columns of information:

- Statistics:** In the first 5 months of 2019 we came into contact with 148 victims of crime. These included victims of rape or other form of sexual assault, domestic abuse, assault, and criminal damage. During this period we also supported 235 people who have given, or will give, evidence in court, or attend Family Law Proceedings.
- Types of crimes recorded:** There are many different types of crime and the 1,580 recorded crimes in our Bailiwick in 2017 can be broken down as follows:
  - Criminal damage 26%
  - Violence against the individual 24%
  - Acquisitive crime 19%
  - Drug offences 10%
  - Vehicle crime 7%
  - Burglary 6%
  - Sexual offences 5%
  - Offences against society / other 3%Source: Report of Guernsey Law Enforcement 2017 Annual Report. To view the full report click here.
- Volunteers & Staff:** We have recently welcomed two newcomers to our volunteer pool, both of whom are keen to start supporting victims of crime and both of whom have a wealth of experience in relevant areas. This brings the number of volunteers providing the backbone of our service to 25. We have also had some staff changes with Deborah Robinson, Hannah Robillard and Hope Napwanga taking on the roles of Manager, Deputy Manager and Administrative Assistant respectively.

### December 2018

VS&WS staff met with a police officer from the Economic Crime Division and a representative of Trading Standards, to discuss how we might collaborate in the support of victims of fraud.

### February 2019

The Manager and Chairman met with the new Head of Bailiwick Law Enforcement, to discuss the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) and the potential role that the VS&WS can play in its development and operation. The relevance of our training modules to probationary police officers was also discussed and it was agreed that details would be passed to the police training officer.

### March 2019

Work began on the production of a ‘Corporate Pack’ (see Appendix D). Going forward, this will be the main tool for building relationships with local businesses and we are currently sending them out in batches of ten per month. We have recently been advised that, as a result of receiving our corporate pack, one local business will soon be presenting us with a cheque for £500 and a further two organisations are donating £200 each so it is already proving to be a worthwhile exercise.

### April 2019

VS&WS staff attended a workshop organised by SAFER at which representatives from ‘Safelives’, a UK-wide domestic abuse charity, gave an insight into their work.

The Guernsey Press published a full page article on the VS&WS project to encourage more survivors of childhood sexual abuse to utilise the support we can provide, regardless of whether or not they choose to report the crime. This is an area we will continue to focus on.



### May 2019

Following on from a meeting with the Head of Bailiwick Law Enforcement in February, the Manager and Deputy Manager attended a meeting with a Chief Inspector with Guernsey Police, along with representatives of other agencies, to discuss the way forward with regard to the formation of a SARC.

Further to the November 2018 meeting, VS&WS staff met with the policy analyst and criminologist appointed to complete the second phase of the 'Review of Justice Policy'. The analyst will also be holding two interactive workshops to discuss the Justice Vision and a member of VS&WS staff will be attending those workshops.

The Manager and Deputy Manager attended the Islands Forum in Glasgow. As well as the CEO of Victim Support Scotland and their Director of Operations and New Business, also present were service representatives from the Isle of Man and Northern Ireland. Attendees were taken on a tour of the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service's new home at Atlantic Quay, an impressive facility which has specific provision for supporting young users with additional support needs. Attendees also heard about VS Scotland's new service 'Support for People Bereaved By Crime' (SPBBC) and discussed

various topics including hate crime, sexual crime and cybercrime. Attending this forum was an extremely worthwhile exercise as it provided valuable contacts in the VS field.

## TRAINING

### VS&WS Training

Victim support volunteer training is developed and delivered by the Manager and Deputy Manager. Having reviewed all of our training during 2018, we now have 5 training modules and these are updated regularly to reflect best practice. The modules are:-

- Victim Support
- Witness Support
- Responding Sensitively to Survivors of Childhood Sexual abuse
- Trauma and its Effects on the Brain
- Understanding Rape Trauma Syndrome

Depending on their chosen discipline(s), volunteers initially complete the Victim Support and/or Witness Support training. These mandatory modules are usually completed within a month of applying for a volunteer position and always before the volunteer commences supporting victims or witnesses.

Our other training modules are available twice a year and we recommend that all volunteers undertake 'refresher' training regularly. See below for details of the training delivered during this financial year.

### Training Delivered June 2018- May 2019

Module	Delivered	Delivered
Responding Sensitively to Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse	June 2018 (Attendees = 2 current volunteers and 2 new volunteers)	October 2018 (Attendees = 8 volunteers and 5 SAFER staff)
Trauma and its Effects on the Brain	July 2018 (Attendees = 2 current volunteers and 2 new volunteers)	February 2019 (Attendees = 5 volunteers, 1 Court Security Officer and 1 HM Sheriff)
Understanding Rape Trauma Syndrome	July 2018 (Attendees = 2 current volunteers and 2 new volunteers)	February 2019 (Attendees = 5 volunteers, 1 Court Security Officer and 1 HM Sheriff)

In addition to providing in-house training to our staff and volunteers, we regularly ask key speakers from other charities and support agencies to attend our bi-annual volunteer meetings. In September 2018 we welcomed the Manager of Autism Guernsey who talked about creating a safe and supportive environment for people on the autistic spectrum. Also attending was one of Autism Guernsey's service users and together they provided volunteers and staff with some valuable insights into the difficulties that someone on the autistic spectrum may experience in the witness suite setting.

### **Other Training**

In July 2018 the Manager and Deputy Manager attended a condensed course on the role of MARAC. The course also covered the role and responsibilities of relevant agencies in attending and reporting to MARAC.

In September 2018 the Manager attended a CPD seminar with Zoe Lodrick, a UK-based sexualised trauma expert. The seminar covered offender behaviour as well as victim trauma impact. As a result of this seminar we have been able to add a new section on perpetrator behaviour to our “Responding Sensitively to Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse” training module.

The Deputy Manager attended Safer’s Domestic Abuse Awareness training day in March 2019. These are held regularly throughout the year and include a ‘carousel’ at which a number of agencies/charities speak to attendees about their work. This helps to raise awareness of the support that is available and attendees are able to sign-post their clients appropriately. VS&WS continues to participate in these carousels.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

Hannah Robilliard, the new Deputy Manager, is a registered HCPC Social Worker and her skills and experience will go a long way to replacing those of the departing Manager. The new Administrative Assistant, Hope Napwanga, has an associate degree in legal studies from the Eastern College of Law in Malawi and has previously worked as an intern at a firm of legal practitioners. Whilst our immediate focus will be on ensuring that Hannah and Hope receive appropriate and sufficient training, we will then be turning our attention to continuing the excellent work initiated by the departing Manager.

Although the remit of the VS&WS is to provide emotional support rather than counselling, the departing Manager was a qualified counsellor and could therefore utilise those skills when supporting victims of crime. We will be exploring the possibility of VS&WS staff undertaking a recognised qualification in Counselling Skills and whilst this is not intended to make us counsellors as such, it will provide us with a recognised skill base to draw upon.

A key focus for the forthcoming year is to secure replacements for the expired Lloyds TSB Foundation and Guernsey Community Foundation funding. As for all charitable organisations, there are limited opportunities for future funding so we will continue to look at the whole of the funding spectrum in order to secure the future of the service.

We will be looking to continue with our media campaign to raise awareness of our services and to encourage more victims of unreported crime to seek support, particularly survivors of childhood sexual abuse. As part of this we will update our website on a regular basis and explore how we can make the site more visible. We will also look into how social media platforms might help us to reach a wider audience.

We will continue to participate in discussions concerning the setting up of a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). It is vital that the VS&WS are involved in this project so that our experience in the provision of emotional support can be utilised and, ultimately, so that victims of sexual assault can benefit from such support.

As well as future-proofing our volunteer pool, we will be holding one-to-one meetings with each of our volunteers. These meetings will provide an opportunity for volunteers to discuss any ideas or

concerns they may have and for us to ensure that the VS&WS obtains maximum benefit from their skills and availability.

With regard to statistics, we will be looking at how we can generate more meaningful information, particularly in relation to the number of times we meet with individual victims of crime and the volume of referred clients who decline our support.

We will continue to respond to the changing needs of our community by ensuring that our staff and volunteers are trained to the highest possible standard and by working collaboratively with other agencies to ensure that appropriate support is available to victims and witnesses of all types of crime.

## CONCLUSIONS

With 3 part time members of staff and 25 volunteers providing a highly professional but cost effective service benefitting almost 800 people in our community each year, it cannot be argued that the VS&WS demonstrates excellent value for money.

Our volunteers continue to be the lifeblood of the organisation, bringing many different skills to the charity. All of our volunteers show great commitment, attending training and fundraising events as well as regularly supporting victims and/or witnesses of crime. Without their continued commitment the service would cease to exist.

Crime has no boundaries and can affect any of us at any time and the VS&WS aims to ensure that victims and witnesses have the best possible experience of support on both a practical and emotional level. During what can be a very traumatic and challenging time in their lives, victims and witnesses will receive the very best service from our staff and volunteers. A single telephone call 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. Law Enforcement Officers have found the service particularly useful in that witnesses in criminal courts being supported by the Witness Service are likely to give better evidence. A visit to the Victim Support and Witness Service office is now included on the induction schedule of new Law Enforcement Officers.

Witnesses report feeling less anxious about giving evidence when they have had an opportunity to make a pre-trial visit to the court. They also report feeling more secure and relaxed when they have been able to wait in the Witness Suite on the day of the trial. They are able to meet the prosecuting officer and read their statements quietly before going into the courtroom itself. After giving their evidence, witnesses are able to return to the Witness Suite if they wish to talk about what may have been an upsetting experience. We also ensure that witnesses leave the court building safely and, if necessary, our volunteers will walk 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, particularly if they were expecting a different outcome.

As part of our desire to ensure that we deliver the best possible service, we now provide outcomes monitoring forms and ask service users and volunteers for feedback on what they find helpful and what we might be able to do better. This not only ensures we are providing a service that is fit for

purpose but also demonstrates clear outcomes which is beneficial when applying for future funding. We have now completed our second year of outcomes monitoring and the top 5 outcomes were:-

- feeling less nervous
- feeling better able to cope
- being listened to
- feeling safe
- having better knowledge of the court system

There were many positive comments on the feedback forms including:-

*"I had found it very difficult at the beginning due to never being in court before but the ladies here made me feel safe, calm and relaxed"*

*"A very useful service to have, it helped me feel more confident for the first time"*

*"It was really helpful to have someone there next to me and to walk with me to and from the courtroom. I was very nervous and it was very comforting."*

The overall service goes from strength to strength and is an integral part of the justice system. Furthermore, the support received from the Bailiff and all other court staff 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 service.

The organisation has undergone a considerable period of transition over the past two years. We are very fortunate that we have a dedicated and skilled executive team and group of volunteers who are all totally committed to the work the organisation does for the benefit of the people of the Bailiwick. We will strive to continually improve our service into the future.

Peter Harwood, Chairman  
August 2019

## SECTION 2 - STATISTICS

### VICTIM SUPPORT

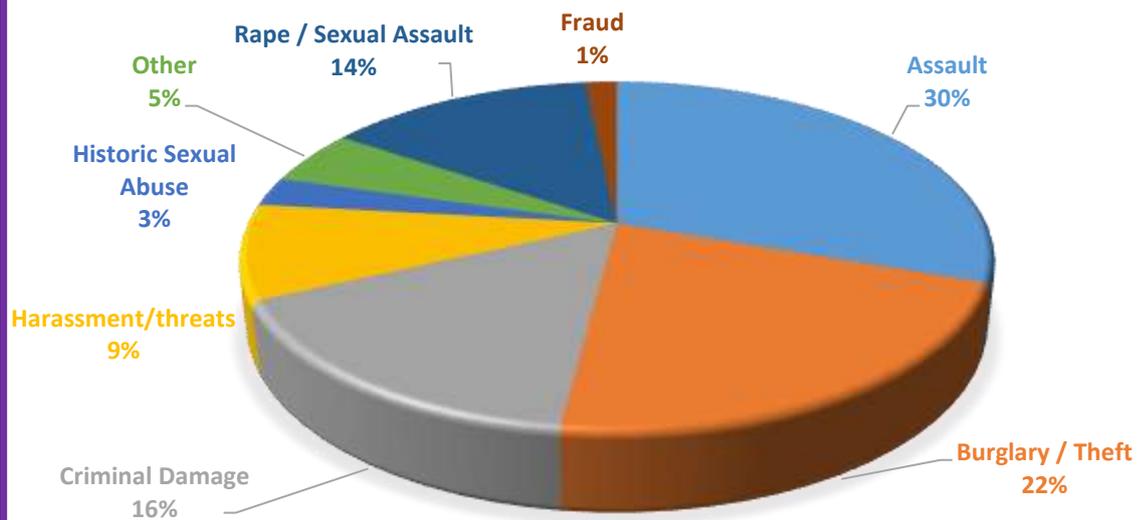
Average number of victims supported each month:

Year ended May 2017 = 26.83

Year ended May 2018 = 28.50

Year ended May 2019 = 28.67

### VICTIMS SUPPORTED Y/E MAY 2019 - NATURE OF CRIME



### Victim Contact Types

Email, Letter, Telephone Call = 658

Home or Office Visit = 77

Average number of witnesses supported each month:

Year ended May 2017 = 38.33

Year ended May 2018 = 36.66

Year ended May 2019 = 38.92

## Witness Contact Types

Email, Letter, Telephone Call = 880

Home or Office Visit (incl. PTV) = 454

The chart below shows the courts in which VS&WS volunteers have supported witnesses during the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019.

