



Northern
Ireland
Office

Consultation on EQIA – Policy on the arrangements for the delivery of support services to victims of crime (core funding of Victim Support NI)

May 2007

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT CORE FUNDING OF VICTIM SUPPORT NI

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. BACKGROUND.....	4
3. CONSIDERATION OF AVAILABLE DATA.....	5
4. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS	6
Religious Belief	6
Political Opinion	7
Racial Group.....	7
Age	8
Marital Status.....	9
Sexual Orientation.....	9
Gender.....	10
Disability	10
Dependants.....	11
5. CONCLUSION.....	12
6. FORMAL CONSULTATION	13
7. PUBLICATION OF THE RESULTS OF THIS IMPACT ASSESSMENT .	15
8. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS	16
9. CONSULTATION LIST.....	17

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT - POLICY ON THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DELIVERY OF SUPPORT SERVICES TO VICTIMS OF CRIME (CORE FUNDING OF VICTIM SUPPORT NI)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1988 requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations. These duties are designed, in particular, to ensure that equality issues are integral to the whole range of public policy decision making. Public authorities, such as the Northern Ireland Office, are required to submit Equality Schemes to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and to carry out Impact Assessments of their policies in certain circumstances. The NIO Equality Scheme, approved by the Equality Commission on 28 November 2001, set out how the Department proposed to fulfil those duties and obligations with regard to all of its policies, functions and duties. A comprehensive review of the Equality Scheme covering the period November 2001 to May 2006 has been completed.

1.2 In line with the NIO Equality Scheme, the policy for core funding Victim Support NI (VSNI) was screened and it was determined that an Equality Impact Assessment should be completed on the policy.

1.3 The purpose of this consultation document is to record the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment and invite comments. This document can also be made available, on request, in alternative formats such as Braille, large print, audio cassette, signed video cassette, computer disk and minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Northern Ireland Office is responsible for the provision of support services to all victims of crime. This responsibility is mainly (although not exclusively) addressed through the provision of core funding to the voluntary organisation VSNI.

2.2 VSNI is an independent charity which works to help people come to terms with the experience of being a victim of crime. Paid staff work alongside a pool of volunteers to deliver the following services:

- Community Service - information, advice and emotional support is provided to victims after a crime has occurred;
- Criminal Injuries Compensation Service – help is given to applicants claiming Criminal Injuries compensation; and
- Witness Service – information, help and emotional support is provided to victims and prosecution witnesses attending court.

2.3 The Community Safety Unit (CSU) provides core funding to VSNI for the delivery of these services which in 2005-06 was in the region of £1.9 million. Such a significant level of funding demonstrates the NIO's commitment to the support of victims of crime.

2.4 In 2005-06 VSNI made contact with 49,381 people affected by crime, helped 1724 people make compensation claims and 1528 victim/witnesses attending court.

3. CONSIDERATION OF AVAILABLE DATA

3.1 The availability of research or data available on victims of crime was very limited and has restricted the effectiveness of this Equality Impact Assessment. However the following information has been taken into account:

- 2001 Northern Ireland Census

- PSNI Data - 05/06 recorded violent offences by gender of victim;
- 05/06 recorded violent offences by age group of victim; and
- 05/06 Notifiable Offences recorded by Age of Victim.

- NIO Statistics and Research: Crime Victimization in Northern Ireland Findings from the 2003/04 Northern Ireland Crime Survey

- Section 75 information from research completed by Deloitte and Touche on Victims and Witnesses views on their Treatment in the Criminal Justice System 2004

- VSNI referral information for the period 11 April – 30 November 2005

- VSNI Section 75 information from Satisfaction Survey 2005-06

4. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

4.1 An assessment of the possible impacts of the Policy of Core Funding VSNI is set out below, taking the 9 Section 75 categories in turn.

Religious Belief

4.2 The Northern Ireland 2001 Census shows that 44% of the population was Catholic and 53% of the population was Protestant.

4.3 The 2003/04 Northern Ireland Crime Survey Findings show that out of those surveyed (3104) 36% were Roman Catholic and 58% were Protestant. The victimisation findings showed that Roman Catholics (4.4%) were more likely to become adult victims of violent crime compared to Protestants (3.2%)

4.4 Research carried out by Deloitte and Touche in 2002/03 on 82 victims/witnesses attending court found that 43% were Roman Catholic and 41% were Protestant.

4.5 VSNI 2005-06 Customer Satisfaction Survey over the 3 different services with a sample size of about 500 victims/witnesses found that 36% were Roman Catholic and 44% were Protestant.

4.6 While the VSNI statistics showed a higher number of Protestants compared to Roman Catholics (8% difference) which differs from the NI Crime Survey findings, the breakdown would be more in line with the population breakdown in which there is a 9% differential. As VSNI services are made available to all victims/witnesses irrespective of religious belief, **CSU has no reason to believe that there is any adverse differential impact on those with differing religious beliefs in the delivery of this policy.**

Political Opinion

4.7 No data is available on the political opinion of victims or those using the services of VSNI. VSNI services are made available to all victims/witnesses regardless of political opinion. **Therefore, CSU has no reason to believe that there is any adverse differential impact on those with differing political opinion in the delivery of this policy.**

Racial Group

4.8 VSNI referral information for the period 11 April 2005 to 30 November 2005 demonstrated that out of the 31197 referrals received during that period, 58% (18112) were white, 1% (240) were other ethnic origins including Asian, Black Caribbean, Chinese, India, Irish Traveller, Pakistani and Mixed ethnic group and 41% (12845) were not specified.

4.9 In the VSNI 2005-06 Satisfaction Survey (based on 498 responses) 75% of respondents were white, 3% were other ethnic origins including Asian, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Irish Traveller and Black African/Caribbean, and 22% were not specified.

4.10 Deloitte and Touche Research into Victims and Witnesses' Views on their Treatment in the Criminal Justice System in 2004 found that all 82 of the victims/witnesses interviewed were White.

4.11 There is no actual breakdown of racial group of all victims in recorded crime therefore a comparison with VSNI findings cannot be made. However, VSNI services are made available to all victims/witnesses regardless of racial group and **the CSU has no reason to believe that there is any adverse differential impact on those of differing racial groups in the delivery of this policy.**

Age

4.12 PSNI 2005-06 notifiable offences statistics show that 12% of victims were under 16, 86% of victims were 16-64 and 2% of victims were 65+.

4.13 PSNI 2005-06 violent crime statistics show the age of victims to be as follows:

Age 0-17	19%	Age 45-54	8.9%
Age 18-24	24.7%	Age 55-64	3.1%
Age 25-34	22.7%	Age 65+	1.2%
Age 35-44	20.4%		

4.14 From the above it can be concluded that the majority of victims would fall into the 18-34 age range.

4.15 The 2003/04 NI Crime Survey identifies that the most likely victims of violent crime were young people aged 16-29 (8.4% victimisation rate), followed by the 25-44 age category (4.9% victimisation rate) with those over 45 years less likely to be a victim of a violent crime (2.9% victimisation rate). This would be consistent with the PSNI statistics above.

4.16 The 2004 Deloitte and Touche research into Victims and Witnesses Views of their treatment in the CJ System (which had a small sample size of 82) found 16% were in the 18-24 age category, 22% were in the 25-34 age category, 26% were in the 35-44 age category, 21% were in the 45-54 age category, 15% were in the 55-64 age category and 1% were 65 plus.

4.17 The VSNI 2005-06 Satisfaction Survey (sample size of 498) provides the following age breakdown of respondents:

Age 0-17	4%	Age 46-55	15%
Age 18-25	19%	Age 56-65	11%
Age 26-35	21%	Age 66+	7%
Age 36-45	19%	Unknown	4%

4.18 While VSNI services are available to all, it is clear that they deal with a small proportion of child victims of crime. This would mainly be because of the involvement of social services and other specially trained organisations such as NSPCC and Barnardos who are called in at an early stage by the police. **While the services of Victim Support are open to all regardless of their age, there is likely to be a positive differential impact on adult victims of crime.**

Marital Status

4.19 The Northern Ireland 2001 Census shows that 48% of the population were married, 33% were single and 8% were separated/divorced.

4.20 The 2004 Deloitte and Touche Research into Victims and Witnesses Views of their treatment in the CJ System found that out of the 82 people interviewed, 48% were married, 37% were single/never married, 6% were separated, 7% were divorced and 2% were widowed.

4.21 There is no reliable data available on the marital status of victims referred to VSNI, however as VSNI services are made available to all regardless of marital status, **CSU has no reason to believe that there is any adverse differential impact on those with differing marital status in the delivery of this policy.**

Sexual Orientation

4.22 No data is available on the sexual orientation of victims using the services of VSNI so it is difficult to assess the likely impact of the policy on this category. VSNI services are open to all regardless of their sexual orientation, **therefore, CSU has no reason to believe that there is any adverse differential impact on those with differing sexual orientation in the delivery of this policy.**

Gender

4.23 The Northern Ireland 2001 Census shows that 49% of the population were male and 51% were female.

4.24 PSNI recorded violent offences statistics for 2005-06 shows 58% of victims to be male and 42% were female.

4.25 Deloitte and Touche 2004 Victim and Witness Research found that out of the 82 victims/witnesses interviewed 49% were male and 51% were female.

4.26 VSNI Section 75 information gathered on referrals during the period 11 April 2005 to 30 November 2005 found that out of the referrals received 40% were male and 42% were female with 18% being unrecorded. VSNI 2005-06 Satisfaction Survey results recorded 43% as male, 45% as female and 12% unrecorded. The slight increase in the number of females offered VSNI services compared to males would be consistent with the Census and Deloitte and Touche figures but would not be consistent with PSNI recorded violent offences gender breakdown. There is not enough evidence to demonstrate a significant gender imbalance in the services provided by VSNI, **therefore, CSU has no reason to believe that there is any adverse differential impact on those with differing gender in the delivery of this policy.**

Disability

4.27 No data is available on the numbers of victims with disability or those using the services of VSNI so it is difficult to assess the likely impact of the policy on this category. VSNI services are open to all regardless of disability, **therefore, CSU has no reason to believe that there is any adverse differential impact on those with disability in the delivery of this policy.**

Dependants

4.28 No data is available on the dependency of victims or those using the services of VSNI, therefore, it is again difficult to assess the likely impact of the policy on this category. As VSNI services are available to all victims of crime and can be provided at a victim's home, thus removing the need for the victim to obtain childcare, **CSU has no reason to believe that there is any adverse differential impact on those with dependants in the delivery of this policy.**

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 From the limited amount of Section 75 data available on victims this Equality Impact Assessment has found that although the services of VSNI are open to all victims of crime, there is likely to be a positive differential impact for adult victims of crime, mainly due to the fact that child victims receive assistance from others such as social services, specialist organisations and are not therefore routinely referred to VSNI. CSU considers this positive differential as justified.

5.2 Where there is an adverse differential impact identified as a result of this consultation, the CSU will review and take appropriate action to mitigate the impact of this policy where possible.

6. FORMAL CONSULTATION

6.1 The Community Safety Unit now wishes to consult as widely as possible on the findings of this Equality Impact Assessment. To achieve this objective:

- The report will be made available to all of the consultees listed in Appendix 1 and to any member of the public on request;
- The report will be posted on the CSU Website at: www.communitysafetyni.gov.uk and the NIO Website at: www.nio.gov.uk; and
- The report may be made available, on request, in alternative formats including Braille, large print, audio cassette, signed video cassette, computer disk and in minority ethnic language formats.

6.2 All enquiries about this consultation should be made to:-

Voluntaries Branch
Community Safety Unit
Millennium House
19-21 Great Victoria Street
Belfast
BT2 7AQ

Tel: 028 90 828 564
Fax: 028 90 828 556

Email: vols.consult@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk

6.3 If you have any complaints or comments about this consultation please contact the NIO Consultation Co-ordinator:-

Miss Donna Knowles
Central Management Unit
Northern Ireland Office
Stormont House
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SH

Tel: 028 90 527 015

E-mail: donna.knowles@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk

6.4 The closing date for responses is 27 July 2007.

7. PUBLICATION OF THE RESULTS OF THIS IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 The outcomes of this Equality Impact Assessment will be made publicly available at the completion of the consultation process on the CSU Website on www.communitysafetyni.gov.uk. Responses will also be available in printed form and, on request, in alternative formats as detailed in para 6.1.

7.2 Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

7.3 If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

7.4 The Department will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and in the majority of circumstances; this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

7.5 For further information about confidentiality of responses, please contact the Information Commissioner's Office or visit their website: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk.

8. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

8.1 The NIO, including the CSU, will establish a system to monitor the impact of the policy outlined in this Equality Impact Assessment. Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the funding provided to VSNI is an integral part of the administration of the grant and consideration will be given as to how monitoring against the Section 75 categories can be incorporated into this.

8.2 The compilation of this consultation document has illustrated a lack of quantitative and qualitative data in respect of many of the Section 75 categories. Systems of monitoring which allow for the routine collection of data in relation to the nine equality categories will enable effective monitoring for adverse impact in the future.

APPENDIX 1

9. CONSULTATION LIST

Age Concern NI
Alliance
Amnesty International
Baptist Church
Barnardos
Belfast Hebrew Congregation
Belfast Islamic Centre
British Deaf Association NI
British Irish Rights Watch
Carers Northern Ireland
Catholic Church
Chief Electoral Office
Chinese Welfare Association
Christian Scientists
Church of Ireland
Coalition on Sexual Orientation
Committee of Administration of Justice
Conservative Party
Council on Social Responsibility
Disability Action
DUP
Equality Commission for NI
FDA
Free Presbyterian Church
Gay Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland
Gingerbread Northern Ireland
Green Party
Help the Aged
Human Rights Watch
Irish Congress of Trade Unions
IRSP
Indian Community Centre
Labour Party
Liberal Democrats
Liberty
Mencap
Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
Nexus
NI Association for Mental Health
NI Community Relations Council
NI Council for Ethnic Minorities
NI Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)
NI Deaf Youth Association

NIGRA
NI Inter Faith Forum
NIPSA
NIUP
NI Womans Coalition
Northern Ireland African Cultural Centre
NSPCC Divisional Office
Office of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland
PBNI
Policing Board
Presbyterian Church in Ireland
PSNI
PUP
RNIB Northern Ireland
RNID (Northern Ireland)
Samaritans
SDLP
Secretary to Parades Commission
Sinn Fein
The Police Ombudsman
Traveller Movement NI
UKUP
Unison
UUAP
UUP
Victims and Survivors Trust
Victim Support NI
Womans Forum NI
Womens Aid NI
Workers Party
Youth Council for NI

