

Provide initial support to victims, survivors and witnesses and assess their need for further support

Overview

This standard is about providing initial contact and support to victims, survivors and witnesses affected by offending or anti-social behaviour. In the case of bereavement this may also include the family and friends of the victim. The support that is provided at this stage will depend on the needs and wishes of the individual, but is likely to include preparing for the meeting(s) and talking with victims, survivors and witnesses in such a way that builds trust. It also involves assessing with individuals any further support that they or their family may need. In some circumstances it may be necessary to balance the rights of the individual to make their own decisions with any risk of harm to the individual and others, for example, those with parental responsibility should be involved if the individual affected by crime or anti-social behaviour is a child.

The term 'victims, survivors and witnesses' is taken to refer to the people to whom you are providing support, and may include the family and friends of a victim, especially in the case of bereaved families.

There are two elements

1. Provide initial support to victims, survivors and witnesses
2. Assess the needs and wishes of victims, survivors and witnesses for further support

Target group

This standard is intended for those acting as the initial point of support for victims, survivors and witnesses. It is designed to be relevant to within a range of justice services.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

Provide initial support to victims, survivors and witnesses

1. introduce yourself and take the relevant actions towards welcoming victims, survivors and witnesses and towards encouraging them to be at ease
2. explain your organisation's policy relating to confidentiality
3. explain the range of services which you and your organisation can offer, and of other organisations that may be able to assist
4. check that all persons accompanying victims, survivors and witnesses understand their role
5. invite victims, survivors and witnesses to explore their personal circumstances relevant to dealing with the nature and consequences of the offence
6. listen and respond to the points made, communicating using techniques which suit the needs and ability of the victims, survivors and witnesses
7. treat victims, survivors and witnesses with dignity and respect, accepting what they say without making judgements
8. allow victims, survivors and witnesses to progress at their own pace
9. seek advice and support from an appropriate person if you are unable to meet the needs of the individual or are unsure about the action that should be taken
10. assess needs of victims, survivors and witnesses in line with organisational requirements

Assess the needs and wishes of victims, survivors and witnesses for further support

11. encourage individuals to express their views and feelings about their need for further support
12. review with victims, survivors and witnesses possible ways forward which address their needs, welfare and safety and that of any dependents, in line with your organisation's procedures
13. take necessary steps to safeguard the safety and wellbeing of victims, survivors and witnesses where this is under threat
14. assist individuals to identify which of their needs are priorities, and to explore options to address these
15. seek, where needed, the consent of the victims, survivors and witnesses to their agreed requirements and proposed actions to address their requirements
16. maintain records of points discussed and the outcomes of your decisions, in line with your organisation's requirements
17. maintain confidentiality in line with your organisation's policies and

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procedures

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

Legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements

1. legal and organisational requirements which relate to providing initial support to victims, survivors and witnesses and assessing their needs for further support, and their impact for your area of operations
2. legislation, policies and procedures relating to data protection, health and safety, diversity and their impact for your area of operations
3. the role of your organisation and its services and the services which it provides in supporting victims, survivors and witnesses
4. organisational policy and procedures regarding confidentiality of information and the disclosure of information to third parties, and the specific circumstances under which disclosure may be made
5. organisational requirements related to allowing others to be present in discussions with victims/survivors, and the relative benefits and disadvantages that the presence of others can create
6. the limits of your authority and responsibility, and the actions to take if these are exceeded

Working with victims, survivors and witnesses

7. good practice communication techniques relevant to the situation and how to apply them
8. the impact of crime on victims, survivors and witnesses and their need for protection, respect, recognition, information and confidentiality
9. how to assess needs of victims, survivors and witnesses and determine the type of services that are necessary to address them, including procedures and tools used within your organisation
10. the ways in which stereotyping and discrimination might affect the assessment of the needs of individuals, and how to guard against this
11. reactions to the experience of crime, and the factors which affect how individuals react to and recover from their experience
12. the organisation's procedures relating to safeguarding, including the needs of those who have experienced crime and who may be particularly vulnerable
13. why it is important to involve those with parental responsibility in work with children who have been affected by crime and/or anti-social behaviour
14. the options for supporting individuals and the reasoning processes used in determining the most appropriate options for the individuals concerned

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