

Inform and update victims and survivors on the progress of offenders through custodial sentences

Overview

This standard is about establishing and maintaining contact with victims and survivors, explaining the custodial process, and identifying the views and concerns of victims and survivors in relation to the release of the offender.

The term 'victims' includes survivors and is taken to refer to the people to whom you are providing support, and may include those against whom an offence was committed, and/or the family and friends of a victim or survivor, especially in the case of bereaved families.

The term 'offenders' refers to those who may be held in custody, or who are within secure hospital care.

There are three elements

1. Establish contact with victims and survivors and identify their wishes regarding further contact
2. Maintain contact with victims and survivors to update them on offenders' progress through custodial sentences
3. Consult with victims and survivors regarding the conditions of release of offenders

Target group

This standard is for those who work with victims and survivors and their families.

Inform and update victims and survivors on the progress of offenders through custodial sentences

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

Establish contact with victims and survivors and identify their wishes regarding further contact

1. establish contact with victims and survivors, and agree arrangements if they wish to proceed with further contact
2. introduce yourself and take the necessary actions to welcome and encourage victims and survivors to be at ease in line with their needs
3. inform victims and survivors about the steps that will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of any information that they provide
4. inform victims and survivors about the likely timescale for the release of the offender from custody, including post-release supervision and the appeal process
5. listen and respond to points made, communicating using techniques which suit the needs and abilities of victims and survivors
6. explain to victims and survivors their right to express their views regarding the conditions of release of the offender and to have these views recorded
7. clarify with victims and survivors their right to request that information is not disclosed to the offender, and explain who may have access to reports of their views, including the steps that can be taken to protect their anonymity
8. agree with victims and survivors the information that can be made available to the offender and those involved in management and representation of the offender
9. offer victims and survivors information about services of other organisations where appropriate, including assistance in making contact
10. record the victim's wishes about being consulted regarding the conditions of release of offenders and any other points raised in line with organisational requirements
11. explain to victims and survivors their right to change their mind at any time

Maintain contact with victims and survivors to update them on offenders' progress through custodial sentences

12. maintain contact with victims and survivors in accordance with the agreed arrangements
13. update victims and survivors on the progress of offenders through their custodial sentence, providing victims and survivors with information about the offender to which they are entitled
14. offer victims and survivors the opportunity to ask questions and confirm their understanding of the information provided, and explain to victims and survivors their right to change their mind at any time

Consult with victims and survivors regarding the conditions of release of offenders

15. provide victims and survivors with up to date information about the intended release of offenders, encourage them to ask questions and confirm that they have understood the information
16. explain to victims and survivors only that information about the offender to which they are entitled, and why there are limits to this information
17. discuss with victims and survivors the factors that are considered by decision-makers and why it may not always be possible to act on victims' and survivors' views
18. provide victims and survivors with the range of possible conditions that could be attached to the offender's release and those that are being considered
19. encourage victims and survivors to comment on any proposed conditions attached to the offender's release, and suggest any additional, reasonable conditions that they feel are needed
20. record the views of victims and survivors and update records with any new or differing information, in line with your organisation's requirements
21. assess any potential risk to the victim or the offender and record this in line with your organisation's requirements
22. offer victims and survivors the opportunity to read parts of the report that relate to them or which are intended to reflect their views prior to its distribution, and invite them to suggest changes and make necessary amendments
23. distribute the report to those who are responsible for making recommendations and decisions regarding the release of the offender, in line with organisational requirements
24. advise victims and survivors once conditions of release have been set, of any conditions which are relevant to them and their family, and advise them of what they should do if these conditions are breached

Inform and update victims and survivors on the progress of offenders through custodial sentences

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

Legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements

1. legal and organisational requirements which relate to communicating and engaging with victims and survivors about the progress of offenders through custodial sentences, 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 the services which it provides in support of victims and survivors
4. your organisation's 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 relating to allowing others to be present in discussions with victims and 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 and survivors

7. the impact of crime on victims and survivors, and their need for protection, respect, recognition, information and confidentiality
8. methods for tracing victims and survivors, including why it is important to make contact with them as soon as possible
9. the importance of checking for significant anniversaries in any contact with victims and survivors, and what these might be
10. your organisation's procedures relating to safeguarding, including the needs of those who have experienced crime and who may be particularly vulnerable
11. the variety of custodial sentences that may be passed, including:
 - 11.1 what these mean in terms of the location and duration of custody
 - 11.2 under what circumstances temporary release may be granted
 - 11.3 the meaning and implications of release under license
12. the ways in which it is necessary to alter communication when working with different individuals and representatives of different organisations
13. ways of explaining and promoting your organisation and the aims of its work with victims and survivors, and that of other relevant organisations
14. procedures and tools for assessing the risks to victims and survivors
15. the ways in which stereotyping and discrimination might affect risk assessment, and how to guard against this

Inform and update victims and survivors on the progress of offenders through custodial sentences

16. the limits on information about the offender that is possible to disclose to the victim
17. ways of presenting information in reports fairly and accurately but without attributing specific comments to individuals
18. relevant inter-agency agreements and arrangements that are in place involving your organisation and how to use these in safeguarding vulnerable individuals, including children
19. methods of handling situations where there is the potential for conflict
20. the options for supporting individuals and the reasoning processes used in determining the most appropriate options for the individual

Inform and update victims and survivors on the progress of offenders through custodial sentences

Developed by	Skills for Justice
Version Number	3
Date Approved	August 2015
Indicative Review Date	July 2020
Validity	Current
Status	Original
Originating Organisation	Skills for Justice
Original URN	SFJDE4
Relevant Occupations	Public Service and Other Associate Professionals; Public Services; Probation Officers; Probation Staff; Probation Support Officers; Community justice workers
Suite	Community Justice
Keywords	Victim; victim contact; custodial sentences; offender; VSW; transforming rehabilitation