

SFJ DE4

Inform and update victims 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' 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, 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 identify their wishes regarding further contact
- 2 Maintain contact with victims to update them on offenders' progress through custodial sentences
- 3 Consult with victims regarding the conditions of release of offenders

SFJ DE4

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

Performance criteria

Establish contact with victims and identify their wishes regarding further contact

You must be able to:

- P1 establish contact with victims, and agree arrangements if they wish to proceed with further contact
- P2 introduce yourself and take the relevant actions to welcome and encourage victims to be at ease
- P3 provide victims with information about the offender to which they are entitled
- P4 inform victims about the steps that will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of any information that they provide
- P5 inform victims about the likely timescale for the release of the offender from custody, including post-release supervision and the appeal process
- P6 listen actively and respond constructively and with empathy to the points made, communicating in a manner which suits the needs and abilities of victims
- P7 explain accurately to victims their right to express their views regarding the conditions of release of the offender and include them in a written report
- P8 clarify with victims 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
- P9 agree with victims the information that can be made available to the offender and those involved in management and representation of the offender
- P10 offer victims information about services of other organisations where appropriate, including assistance in making contact
- P11 record accurately the victim's wishes about being consulted regarding the conditions of release of offenders
- P12 explain to victims their right to change their mind at any time

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

You must be able to:

- P13 maintain contact with victims in accordance with the agreed arrangements
- P14 update victims on the progress of offenders through their custodial sentence, providing victims with information about the offender to which they are entitled
- P15 offer victims the opportunity to ask questions and confirm their understanding of the information provided, and explain to victims their right to change their mind at any time
- P16 maintain accurate and up to date records of the points raised, in line with your organisation's requirements

SFJ DE4

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

Consult with victims regarding the conditions of release of offenders

You must be able to:

- P17 provide victims with accurate and up to date information about the intended release of offenders and encourage them to ask questions and confirm that they have understood the information
- P18 explain to victims only that information about the offender to which they are entitled, and why there are limits to this information
- P19 discuss with victims the factors that are considered by decision-makers and why it may not always be possible to act on victims' views
- P20 provide victims with the range of possible conditions that could be attached to the offender's release and those that are being considered
- P21 encourage victims to comment on any proposed conditions attached to the offender's release, and suggest any additional, reasonable conditions that they feel are needed
- P22 record the views of victims accurately in the report, in line with your organisation's requirements
- P23 assess any potential risk to the victim or the offender and record this accurately in the report, in line with your organisation's requirements
- P24 offer victims 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
- P25 distribute the report to those who are responsible for making recommendations and decisions regarding the release of the offender
- P26 advise victims 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

SFJ DE4

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

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

Legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements

- K1 legal and organisational requirements which relate to communicating and engaging with victims in relation to the progress of offenders through custodial sentences, and their impact for your area of operations
- K2 legislation, policies and procedures relating to data protection, health and safety, diversity and their impact for your area of operations
- K3 the role of your organisation and the services which it provides in support of victims/survivors
- K4 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
- K5 organisational requirements relating to allowing others to be present in discussions with victims/survivors, and the relative benefits and disadvantages that the presence of others can create
- K6 the limits of your authority and responsibility, and the actions to take if these are exceeded

Working with victims

You need to know and understand:

- K7 the impact of crime on victims/survivors, and their need for protection, respect, recognition, information and confidentiality
- K8 methods for tracing victims/survivors, including why it is important to make contact with victims as soon as possible
- K9 the importance of checking for significant anniversaries in any contact with victims, and what these might be
- K10 your organisation's procedures relating to safeguarding, including the needs of those who have experienced crime and who may be particularly vulnerable
- K11 the variety of custodial sentences that may be passed, what these mean in terms of the location and duration of custody, under what circumstances temporary release may be granted and the meaning and implications of release under license
- K12 the ways in which it is necessary to alter communication when working with different individuals and representatives of different organisations
- K13 ways of explaining and promoting your organisation and the aims of its work with victims, and that of other relevant organisations
- K14 procedures and tools for assessing the risks to victims/survivors, and the ways in which stereotyping and discrimination might affect risk assessment, and how to guard against this
- K15 the limits on information about the offender that is possible to disclose to the victim
- K16 ways of presenting information in reports fairly and accurately but without

SFJ DE4

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

- attributing specific comments to individuals
- K17 relevant inter-agency agreements and arrangements that are in place involving your organisation and how to use these in safeguarding vulnerable individuals, including children
- K18 methods of handling situations where there is the potential for conflict
- K19 the options for supporting individuals and the reasoning processes used in determining the most appropriate options for the individual

SFJ DE4

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

Developed by Skills for Justice

Version number 2

Date approved January 2013

Indicative review date January 2018

Validity Current

Status Original

Originating organisation Skills for Justice

Original URN SFJ DE4

Relevant occupations Probation Officers; Probation Support Officers

Suite Community Justice

Key words Victim; victim contact; custodial sentences; offender
