



ANNUAL REPORT

June 2020-May 2021



The Guernsey Charity for the support of Victims and Witnesses

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL INFORMATION _____	3
Vision _____	3
Purpose _____	3
Operating Highlights _____	4
Training _____	7
Looking Ahead _____	8
Chairperson's Summary _____	9
STATISTICAL INFORMATION _____	11

GENERAL INFORMATION

Vision

The vision of the Bailiwick of Guernsey Victim Support and Witness Service (VS&WS) is to ensure that victims and witness 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 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 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. The Service also supports witnesses who have been granted 'Special

Measures' to give their evidence, i.e. via video link or from behind a screen, as well as people attending the Family Court.

Operating Highlights

Volunteers

Two new volunteers have joined us this year and five have left the service so our volunteer pool currently stands at 23 (6 male and 17 female). Our volunteers form the backbone of our services and, in an attempt to quantify their financial value to the community, we now record the time they spend on VS&WS related work. Even at a relatively conservative rate of £13 per hour, the monetary value of the services provided by our volunteers during 2020 exceeded £7,000.

We have produced three Volunteer Newsletters and held two volunteer meetings in the past twelve months. Our newsletters provide an overview of what has been happening at VS&WS and allow us to keep our volunteers informed of project progress, fund-raising events and training opportunities. Our meetings provide an opportunity for volunteers to speak with other volunteers and to discuss any ideas or concerns they may have with staff. These meetings usually include a guest speaker and this year we have heard from:-

- Andrew Ozanne, OBE, who spoke about Creative Learning in Prison (CLIP), Les Nicolles Prison Education and Employment Strategy and The Offender Deposit Assistance Scheme
- Healthy Minds, previously the Primary Care Mental Health & Wellbeing Service, who gave presentations to two groups of volunteers about the short-term therapeutic interventions that are available for adults with mild to moderate anxiety and depression

Other Highlights

June/July 2020 and March 2021 – media coverage

Following States' approval of an amendment to local sexual offences legislation and the publication of the Justice Review report, VS&WS have been interviewed or provided written statements on numerous occasions over the past year. Staff have spoken about the support available to victims of sexual crime and the need for a Bailiwick Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC).



VS&WS were invited by Bailiwick Express to be their 2021 Charity Partner. This entails preparing six articles for publication in their Connect Magazine. In the February/March issue we provided an overview of the services we offer whilst in the April/May issue we took a more in-depth look at Victim Support. Future articles will cover the Witness Service, funding, our team and our hopes for the future of VS&WS.



August 2020

We were delighted to be nominated for the Angel of the Year category of the Pride of Guernsey awards.



September 2020

VS&WS were fortunate enough to receive a donation from the Saffery Rotary Walk 2020, despite the event not actually taking place due to the pandemic.



Training

Training Delivered

VS&WS volunteer training modules are currently being reviewed and will be updated where applicable. We are also exploring the online training that is available through organisations such as NAPAC (The National Association for People Abused in Childhood), Victim Support UK and Safelives and, cost permitting, some of our training modules which have previously been developed and delivered in-house, may be replaced by online alternatives.

Training delivered this year has included:-

- Two SAFER training day carousels. These help to raise awareness of the support that is available and promote appropriate signposting of clients by attendees
- Presentations to six groups of sociology students during their visits to the court building
- Presentations to two groups of sixth form students in the Sixth Form Centre lecture hall
- Assisting in the delivery of the Guernsey Community Foundation's Volunteer Recruitment event
- Attending the College of Further Education's 'Opportunities Breakfast' at the Delancey campus
- Discussing our work with three groups of Bailiwick Law Enforcement probationers, both Police and Customs officers, as part of their initial training

Training Received

Training events attended by staff and volunteers have included:-

- Health Connections - Community Connector - one member of staff
- Mental Health First Aider - two members of staff and two volunteers
- Marketing, PR and Advertising (online) - one member of staff
- Healthy Minds - fifteen volunteers and three staff members



Looking Ahead

VS&WS has campaigned for the development of a Bailiwick Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) for a number of years and we are delighted that this is now a priority in the States of Guernsey's Government Work Plan for 2021-2025. We anticipate that having access to a SARC will encourage more victims of sexual crime to seek support and it is therefore essential that we have a sufficient number of appropriately trained volunteers that can be called upon. As stated in the Training section above, we are exploring options to replace our specialized childhood sexual abuse training module to one which will incorporate all types of sexual offence. Cost permitting, this training will be offered to all staff and volunteers in due course.

In line with our desired outcome that 'criminal justice and social policy development addresses the needs of people affected by crime', we are extremely keen to see the introduction of a Bailiwick Victims' Code, similar to that already in place in the UK. This document will set out the information and services that victims of crime can expect from all agencies and organisations within the criminal justice system. Some of the initial work involved in producing the Victims' Code is currently being undertaken by Bailiwick Law Enforcement and we are liaising with them to ensure that our considerable experience in this area can be utilised effectively. Similarly, VS&WS would also like to see the development of a Witness Charter, a document also already available in the UK, which will detail how people can expect to be treated if they witness a crime or incident and are required to give evidence in a criminal court.

Since the end of the financial year our Deputy Manager, Hannah Robilliard, has moved on to pastures new and her replacement is due to commence work in early September 2021. A key focus of the forthcoming year will therefore be ensuring that the new Deputy Manager, Jenny Murphy, receives a full and thorough introduction to our services.

Finally, as always, 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.

Chairperson's Summary

In my Summary that accompanied last year's Report I drew attention to the difficulties that the Charity had faced during the initial period of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. At the time of writing that Summary I was confident that we were resuming our normal service. Unfortunately, events overtook us and we endured a further lockdown during the period covered by this Report. Hopefully we have seen the last of such lock-downs as we adapt to "living with" Covid.

Inevitably the second period of lockdown impacted upon our activities, especially that of witness support. Fortunately, the second lockdown period was shorter than the first and, as the statistics show, the number of witnesses to whom we have provided support has virtually returned to pre-Covid levels. The statistics also show the significant levels of contact that we have had with those witnesses.

In common with similar charities, and as demonstrated in the statistics produced by Bailiwick Law Enforcement, the Charity experienced a significant increase in the number of victim referrals during the period covered by this Report. In part this increase might be explained by the stress levels experienced during periods of lock down. However, in our case the increase is also due, in no small part, to the very pro-active approach taken by our very dedicated team in making the public aware of the support that we can offer to victims of crime. As stated elsewhere in this Report we welcome the decision of the States of Guernsey to prioritise the establishment of a Bailiwick Sexual Assault Referral Centre during this current political term and we very much look forward to assisting with its development. We also welcome the attention given to the implementation of the Island's Domestic Abuse Strategy. Both of these initiatives show the greater focus on the needs of victims of crime, as called for in the Justice Review published at the end of the last political term.

This Report demonstrates the high level of activity undertaken by the Charity during the past twelve months, notwithstanding the problems associated with Covid-19. Debbie, Hannah and Sharon have been kept fully occupied, not only in delivering the Victim Support and Witness Service, but also in maintaining regular contact with our wonderful team of volunteers, participating in an active training programme, and engaging with our fund-raising activities. Sadly, we said farewell to Hannah at the end of July, but we welcome the arrival of our new

Deputy Manager, Jenny Murphy, to our team and look forward to her contribution to our activities.

Having announced our regret at the retirement of Anna Guilbert as a director of the Charity in our last Report, we were absolutely delighted to welcome her back as a director following her retirement from the Probation Service.

My gratitude as always to the team of Debbie, Hannah and Sharon for keeping the Charity running so smoothly during another challenging year, to our dedicated group of volunteers, without whom we would not be able to deliver our services, and last, but not least, to my fellow directors and other members of the Management Committee for their continued and valuable support.

Peter Harwood
Chairperson

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

VICTIM SUPPORT

Average number of victims contacted each month:

Year ended May 2017 = 26.83

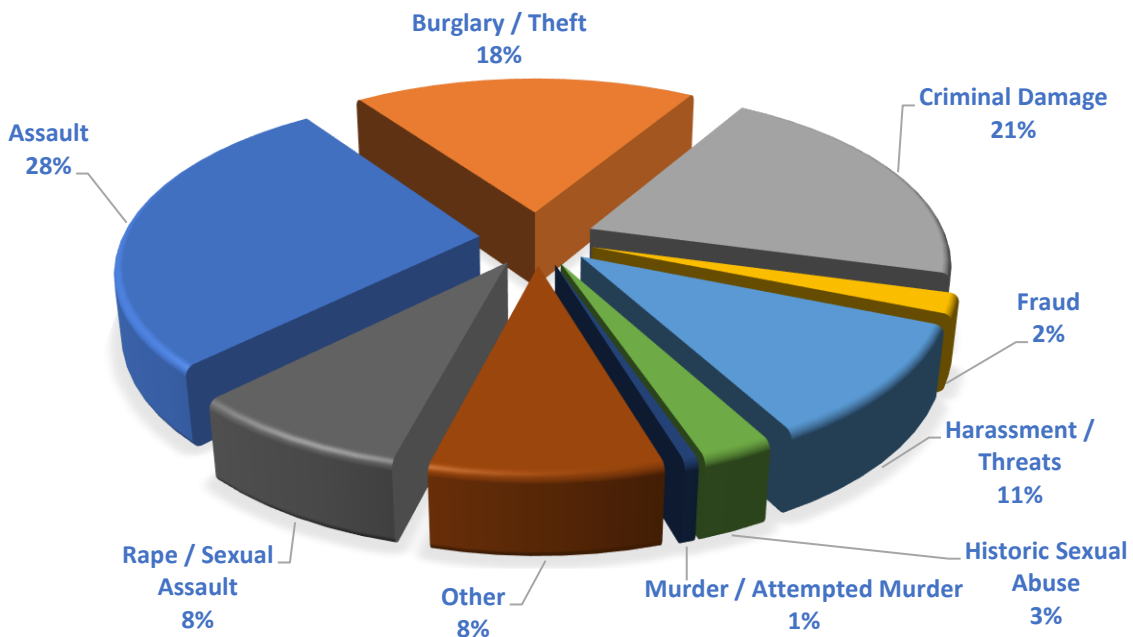
Year ended May 2018 = 28.50

Year ended May 2019 = 28.67

Year ended May 2020 = 29.60

Year ended May 2021 = 41.42

VICTIMS CONTACTED Y/E MAY 2021 - NATURE OF CRIME



Victim Contact Types- y/e 31 May 2021

Email, Letter, Telephone Call, Text = 2,327

Home or Office Visit = 237

WITNESS SUPPORT

Average number of witnesses contacted each month:

Year ended May 2017 = 38.33

Year ended May 2018 = 36.66

Year ended May 2019 = 38.92

Year ended May 2020 = 29.42

Year ended May 2021 = 33.92

Witness Contact Types - y/e 31 May 2021

Email, Letter, Telephone Call, Text = 1,389

Home or Office Visit (incl. Pre Trial Visits) = 387

The chart below shows the courts in which VS&WS volunteers have supported witnesses during the year ended 31st May 2021.

