

Mandated Services for Delivery of Victim Service Program

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General has established both community-based and police-based victim service programs throughout British Columbia to provide services to victims of crime and their families. These victim service programs provide services to victims of crime who may or may not have reported the crime to police or been involved with the criminal justice system. The objectives of a victim service program are:

- a) to lessen the impact of crime and trauma on victims and their families and to assist in their recovery;
- b) to increase victim safety and to help reduce the risk of further victimization;
- c) to increase the level of participation and sense of empowerment for victims throughout their participation in the criminal justice system; and
- d) to increase the effectiveness of a victim while acting as a witness in court proceedings.

1. PROGRAM DETAILS

PROGRAM TYPE: Police-based Victim Service Program

SERVICE AREA: The service area of this victim service program (the “program” includes the policing area of the Oliver R.C.M.P. Detachment.

2. REQUIRED SERVICE

The Program will provide the following services:

a) EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Victim service workers will provide victims with emotional support to assist them in their recovery from the effects of crime and trauma. The program does not provide counseling services to a victim; however, victim service workers will refer a victim to an appropriate resource for those services. Under the terms of this Agreement, victim service workers must not refer to themselves as counselors or therapists.

b) GENERAL INFORMATION

Victim Service workers will provide victims with information including, but not limited to: the justice system; relevant federal and provincial legislation and programs pertaining to victims of crime; crime prevention; safety planning; and community, government, justice, health and other resources available.

c) **JUSTICE-RELATED INFORMATION**

Victim service workers will provide, or facilitate victim access to, case-specific information which may include, but is not limited to:

- i) the status of the police investigation, charges laid against the offender, protective orders, outcome of court appearances, the custodial status of the convicted offender, and length of sentence/parole information; and
- ii) witness orientation, courtroom etiquette and procedures.

Under the terms of this Agreement, victim service workers will not provide legal advice to victims.

d) **PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT**

Victim Service workers will:

- i) Assess the needs of victims for additional supports and/or services and make appropriate referrals to community, government, justice, health and other resources;
- ii) Assist victims in completing applications for the Crime Victim Assistance Program;
- iii) Facilitate/coordinate safety planning including liaison with justice system personnel, the Ministry's Victim Safety Unit, and/or local community partnerships (where they exist) established to provide safety assessments and protective devices including cell phones and home alarms for high-risk victims; and
- iv) Provide other types of practical support and assistance as appropriate.

Under the terms of this Agreement, victim service workers do not provide crime scene clean up.

e) **ACCOMPANIMENT**

In cases of serious crime and/or where the victims are particularly vulnerable, victim service workers will, at the request of the victim, provide or facilitate their accompaniment to police, Crown counsel, or court.

f) COMMUNITY RELATIONS

In providing services to victims as outlined above, the program must establish and maintain working relationships with local community, government, justice, health and other service providers to facilitate coordination, minimize service duplication, and maximize effective referrals across agencies.

g) REFERRAL BETWEEN VICTIM SERVICE PROGRAMS

All victim service workers, when assessing an appropriate referral, will take into consideration: the individual circumstances of the victim such as age, gender, ability, and cultural needs; the necessity of the timeliness of an effective referral; and local protocol referral procedures. In communities with both community-based and police-based victim service programs:

- i) Police-based victim service workers will refer victims identified as: victims of violence in relationships (adult, youth, or child), victims of sexual assault, victims of criminal harassment, victims of child abuse/assault (both physical and sexual), and child witnesses of family or sexual violence to the appropriate community-based victim service program.
- ii) Community-based victim service workers will refer victims that are identified other than victims of violence in relationships (adult, youth or child), victims of sexual assault, victims of criminal harassment, victims of child abuse/assault (both physical and sexual), adult survivors of childhood abuse (both physical and sexual), and child witnesses of family of sexual violence to the police-based victim service program.
- iii) In exceptional cases, where a victim service worker determines that the procedure outline in i) or ii) above is not appropriate, the rationale must be documented in the file.
- iv) In situations where the involvement of both police-based and community-based victim service programs is identified, the Programs should coordinate an approach to service delivery and jointly develop victim-centered support plans.

h) COORDINATION AND PROTOCOL

In communities with both community-based and police-based victim service program, Programs shall develop and adhere to a local victims service program protocol which must contain the following provisions:

- i) Regular meetings with other local victims service program(s);
- ii) Consistent referral procedures; and
- iii) Detailed procedures for handling disputes/grievances.

3. OPTIONAL SERVICES

The victim service program may provide the following services if resources permit:

a) **POLICE CALL-OUTS**

Response to requests by police for assistance at crime/accident scenes or other locations identified by police or accompaniment to assist police with next of kin accident or death notifications.

b) **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation services include, but not limited to, the transport of a victim and/or family members to hospital, court, police, transition house, and/shelters.

c) **PUBLIC EDUCATION**

Public awareness and education programs in the local community on victimization, victim services, and crime prevention.

d) **AFTER HOURS SERVICES**

Required or optional services as described above may be provided after regular program hours.