

## **BUSINESS CASE**

### ***Purpose: Establish a Victim Support Scheme on St Helena including provision for witness care service at the criminal courts***

The purpose of the Business Case is to establish mechanisms' and provide the optimum mix of information to judge whether a project is desirable, viable and achievable as a means to support decision making in its investment.

#### **Executive Summary**

The business case is to establish a Victim Support Scheme on St Helena to include a provision for witness care and support at Jamestown Magistrates and Supreme Court.

This is a recommendation from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary report that was published on 25/09/2020 which was an independent review of the St Helena Police Service as commissioned by HE Governor.

Within the report it details a victim care policy should be produced which outlines a victim's entitlements that are achievable on St Helena and references the Victims Code of Practice for Victims of Crime which was introduced in the UK in 2015 to comply with the European Union's Victim Directive.

The code outlines a range of victim's entitlements which includes a referral to an organisation that supports victims of crime which is currently not possible on St Helena as there is no such organisation. The HMIC report states this is a cause for concern.

The Victim Support Scheme in the UK is an independent charity which works towards a world where people affected by crime or traumatic events get the support they need and the respect they deserve. The scheme helps people feel safer and find the strength to move beyond crime. The support is free, confidential and tailored to individual needs.

This business case would look to replicate this independent scheme on St Helena within the Equality and Human Rights Commission Offices as supported by the CEO by the appointment of a VSS Coordinator who will manage the scheme and oversee a cohort of volunteers.

The VSS Coordinator would ensure support is provided to victims and significant witnesses at court which is an identified gap as raised at the Court User Group meetings especially with regard to Supreme Court where cases can be heard over a number of days and due to the complexities it is difficult to find an independent individual from agencies to provide the necessary time and support to undertake this task.

The VSS Coordinator would for example support applications for 'Special Measures' at court to help vulnerable or intimidated witnesses give their best evidence.

Where required post-conviction the VSS Coordinator will work with the Probation Service engaging victims prior to the release of any offenders from prison whether on day release or at the end of their sentence.

The impact of crime can be life-changing and the VSS will provide long-term support to victims of crime and traumatic events for as long as they are needed, so together they can move beyond crime.

Phase One would be to appoint a VSS Coordinator and establish the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) with the St Helena Police Service to receive referrals and appoint a cadre of suitable volunteers providing the necessary training.

Phase Two would be establish a witness care scheme at the courts working in partnership with the judiciary and to produce literature articulating the standards of victim care and support that can be expected on St Helena as a victim of crime and attending court to give evidence.

The benefits will include:

- Free and confidential support for victims
- Independent information and advice
- Immediate emotional and practical help
- Longer term emotional and practical help
- Advocacy
- Peer support and group work
- Restorative justice support
- Personal safety advice
- Help in navigating the criminal justice system (who's who)
- Court visits
- Support pre-trial, during and post trial
- Special Measures guidance
- Promote the welfare and best interests of all people to keep them safe and to carry out VSS work in ways that protect them
- Ensure that VSS Service Users and staff are protected from harm

Capital Investment

- Secure funding for training and equipment
- Appropriation of office space within EHRC
- Furnishings
- Computer

Revenue Investment

- VSS Coordinator (part time or auxiliary)
- Cadre of volunteers bus/mileage expenses
- Training programmes on island

#### Return on Investment

- Help and support victims to move beyond crime together
- Independent advocacy for victims
- Be the victims champion on St Helena to ensure policy and procedures are written and followed meeting victims expectations
- Adopting the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime
- SHG recognises the importance of supporting victims
- Provide rationale and support to recommending legislative changes on St Helena
- Provide a seven day a week confidential VSS
- Be a VSS drop in centre pre and post court

#### Reasons

The 10 Year Strategic Plan has an aim to make everyone 'Altogether Safer'. The introduction of a VSS will further support this strategy putting the victim at the heart of everything we do in the criminal justice system.

The VSS will support the safety of our Island Communities and visitors alike.

#### Business Options

##### Do Nothing

- Victims provided adhoc support and not valued or managing their expectations. Left to each agency to offer support which is likely to be an inconsistent service and not independent.

##### Do Minimum

- Positives – low cost, no additional resources such as VSS Coordinator i.e. staff within current resources available within Police Directorate.
- Negatives – inefficient provision of service, increases threat to victim by becoming a repeat victim of crime, reputational risk for SHG, significant increased financial liability. Criminal cases do not achieve criminal justice outcome. Permits high tolerance of dissatisfaction. Concern at the lack of a VSS has already been identified by recent HMIC Inspection.

##### Do Something

- Positives – Meets HMIC Inspection recommendation. Provides confidential independent support to victims including peer support. Modernises the provision of victim care services on St Helena. Reassures the public that SHG recognises the impact of crime on victims and addresses their safety. Enhances the safety and security of the wider community
- Negatives – increased cost and resource.

### **Expected benefits/dis-benefits**

#### Benefits.

- Establishment of a VSS.
- Reduced number of victims of crime and fear of crime (confidence survey).
- Provide a witness care service at court
- Reduced financial cost of ineffective court trials.
- Increased effectiveness of victim support and response through referrals.
- Clear and effective VSS policy and procedure, structure and increased number of staff who are able to help protect victims against harm and abuse.

#### Dis-benefits.

- Increased recurrent costs.
- Less trust and confidence in SHG if victims are not supported and valued.

### **Project Team**

Safeguarding Board  
 Appointment of VSS Coordinator  
 Appointment of VSS volunteers

### **Costs and Timescale**

To be implemented asap but by 01/08/2021 (as per HMIC recommendation)

Year 1 VSS salary & volunteer expenses (To be determined)

Year 2 VSS salary & volunteer expenses (To be determined)

Year 3 VSS salary & volunteer expenses (To be determined)

#### Outputs

- Maintaining cadre of volunteers who are trained
- VSS office identified and in operation
- Witness Care Service
- Number of referrals made
- Training delivered

**Risks**

See below

**Planning Requirements**

N/A

**Site Options**

The sites are:

- Within existing EHRC building/re-appropriation of office.
- Within or extension to SHPD building.

**Construction Options**

N/A

**Operational costs**

See Attached Estimated Costings

**Notes – training materials and online courses all free**

[https://www.ovcttac.gov/views/TrainingMaterials/dspOnline\\_VATOnline.cfm?nm=wbt&ns=ot&nt=vat](https://www.ovcttac.gov/views/TrainingMaterials/dspOnline_VATOnline.cfm?nm=wbt&ns=ot&nt=vat)

<https://www.nsvrc.org/elearning/2360>

[https://www.ovcttac.gov/saact/presenters\\_toolbox.cfm](https://www.ovcttac.gov/saact/presenters_toolbox.cfm)

# RISK REGISTER

# Appendix 1

Project Risk Log No	Description	Risk Category	Owner	Date of Last Update	Likelihood	Impact	Rating	Status	Mitigation (Outcome/Consequence)	Date Closed
Sequence Number of Risk	Describe the Risk	Enter a risk category from the list	Who raised the Risk	Date	Enter a letter from A-F	Enter a value of 1-4	Red, Amber, Green	Open, Closed, Under Review	Describe the action taken to resolve the risk	Enter Date Risk Closed
1	NO VSS	Rep	DCI Luke	24/11/2020	c	3	Green	open		
2										

### Impact

		4	3	2	1
Likelihood	A	Green	Green	Red	Red
	B	Green	Green	Red	Red
	C	Green	Green	Amber	Red
	D	Green	Green	Green	Green
	E	Green	Green	Green	Green
	F	Green	Green	Green	Green

**Impact:**  
 1 – Catastrophic  
 2 – Critical  
 3 – Marginal  
 4 – Negligible

**Likelihood:** A – Very High  
 B - High  
 C - Significant  
 D – Low  
 E – Very Low  
 F – Almost Impossible

### Risk Categories:

Soc – Social Fin – Financial  
 Tec – Technical  
 Eco – Economic  
 Env – Environmental  
 Inst – Institutional/Political  
 Man – Management  
 Rep – Reputational

Leg – Legal/Legislative  
 Con – Contractual