



Publication Scheme

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1.0	CEO	30.09.14	August 2015
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. In April 2012 the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) was established to provide support and services for all victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict. In October 2020, the VSS was appointed to provide health and wellbeing support services to all survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA). Hereafter, any reference to victims and survivors relates to victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict and survivors of HIA.
- 1.2. This Publication Scheme sets out the types of information held by the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) which it will routinely publish and make available to the public. It is important to the VSS that this Scheme meets your needs. It has been designed to help you find all of the information published by VSS. It will be reviewed at regular intervals, and VSS staff will monitor how it is operating. This Publication Scheme appears on the VSS web site www.victimsservice.org and can be made available on request in large print.
- 1.3. Under Section 8 of the [Freedom of Information Code of Practice](#), the VSS has a duty to adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme which details the information relating to its functions, structure, and services.

The Freedom of Information Code of Practice aims to promote greater openness by public authorities and does not change the right of individuals to confidentiality in accordance with Article 8 of the Human Rights Act (1998) and the Data Protection Act (2018). Maintaining confidentiality is an important commitment on the part of the VSS.

- 1.4. Responsibility for the Publication Scheme lies with the VSS Governance and Data Protection Officer. Any questions about this Scheme or its Operation should be sent in writing to the Governance and Data Protection Officer at:

Victims and Survivors Service
1st Floor, Seatem House
28-32 Alfred Street
Belfast
BT2 8EN

Tel: 028 9027 9100
Email: enquiries@vssni.org
Website: www.victimsservice.org

2. Background to Freedom of Information

- 2.1. The VSS is fully committed to compliance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 (the Act). The aim of the Act is to promote a culture of greater openness and accountability and to facilitate better understanding of how organizations carry out their duties, why and how they make decisions and how public money is spent.
- 2.2. The VSS has a Freedom of Information Policy that ensures the observation of these requirements on an operational basis. The policy is available on the VSS website (www.victimsservice.org) and on request.
- 2.3. The VSS' commitment to publish information excludes any information which can legitimately be withheld under the exemptions set out in the [Freedom of Information Code of Practice 2018](#). Where individual classes are subject to exemptions, the main reasons are the protection of commercial interests and personal information under the [Data Protection Act 2018](#). This applies to most classes within the Publication Scheme.

3. The Classes of Information that VSS Holds

- 3.1. The information held by the VSS is grouped into broad categories:
 - Category 1: Who we are and what we do
 - Category 2: What we spend and how we spend it
 - Category 3: What our priorities are and how we are doing
 - Category 4: How we make decisions
 - Category 5: Our policies and procedures
 - Category 6: Lists and Registers
 - Category 7: The services we offer
- 3.2. Please refer to [Annex 1: A Guide to Information Published by VSS](#) for more details on the information available in each of these categories, and how you can obtain it.

4. Accessing Information

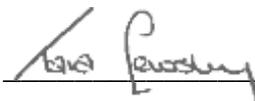
- 4.1. The VSS does not apply a charge to those requesting records and information where a reasonable staff resource can deliver this.

5. Variation

5.1. VSS reserves the right to vary this Publication Scheme as it deems appropriate to include compliance with any legal requirements.

6. Scheme Review

6.1. This policy will be reviewed in 3 years' time, or sooner, if required.

Approved:  _____ Date: 23/11/20
Head of Corporate Services

Annex 1: A Guide to Information Published by VSS

Class 1: Who we are and what we do

Document / Information	Description	Availability	Cost
VSS Annual Report and Accounts	<p>Report published annually detailing the work of the VSS during the previous financial year.</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role and responsibilities of the VSS, including purpose, mission and vision. • The legislative requirement for the existence of the VSS. • The names of the current VSS Board Members. • The relationship between VSS and its sponsor Department, The Executive Office (TEO). • The working relationship between VSS and the Commission for Victims and Survivors. 	<p>See VSS website: www.victimsservice.org in the 'About Us' / 'Publications' section.</p> <p>Available in hard copy on request.</p> <p>Information is also available on the web pages in the 'About Us' section of the VSS website.</p>	Free
Funding allocated under the Victims Support Programme	The list of organisations funded by the VSS through the Victims Support Programme and the amount of money awarded to each organisation for the funding period.	See VSS website: www.victimsservice.org in the ' List of Funded Organisations ' section and hard copy published leaflet on request.	Free
Contact details	The location, address, telephone, email and website details of the VSS.	See VSS website: www.victimsservice.org . These details will also appear on various	Free

		corporate material such as, letterhead, business cards and leaflets.	
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Class 2: What we spend and how we spend it

Document / Information	Description	Availability	Cost
VSS Annual Report and Accounts	<p>Report published annually detailing the work of the VSS during the previous financial year.</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audited Accounts, • The organisational structure of the VSS, • The names of current VSS senior staff and their post titles, • Relevant financial information about the VSS, and • The VSS Freedom of Information Request Disclosure record. 	<p>See VSS website: www.victimsservice.org in the 'About Us' / 'Publications and Corporate Documents' section.</p> <p>Available in hard copy on request.</p>	Free
VSS Management Statement and Financial Memorandum	<p>Document that details the relationship between the VSS and its Sponsor Department TEO, including Responsibilities and Accountability; Planning, Budgeting and Control; and a detailed financial memorandum.</p>	<p>See VSS website: www.victimsservice.org in the 'About Us' / 'Publications and Corporate Documents' sections.</p>	Free

Class 3: What our priorities are and how we are doing

Document / Information	Description	Availability	Cost
VSS Annual Report and Accounts	<p>Report published annually detailing the work of the VSS during the previous financial year.</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed review of the VSS Principal Activities for the Year and Performance against Objectives. 	<p>See VSS website: www.victimsservice.org in the 'About Us' / 'Publications and Corporate Documents' section.</p> <p>Available in hard copy on request.</p>	Free
VSS Corporate Plan	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning document identifying corporate objectives and priorities for the VSS financial year ahead. • Annual plan for the delivery of services and setting of organisational targets for the year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available when agreed and approved by our Sponsor Department, TEO. • See VSS website: www.victimsservice.org in the 'About Us' / 'Publications and Corporate Documents' section. 	Free

Class 4: How we make decisions

Document / Information	Description	Availability	Cost
<p>Minutes and Terms of Reference for all VSS Board business</p> <p>Minutes and Terms of Reference for all Audit and Risk, Health and Wellbeing Committee Meetings</p>	Minutes of all meetings held by the VSS Board, Audit and Risk Committee and Health and Wellbeing Committee.	<p>See VSS website: www.victimsservice.org in the 'About Us / Board Minutes' section – or contact us directly</p> <p>See VSS website: www.victimsservice.org in the 'About Us / Health and Wellbeing' section</p>	Free
Victims Support Programme	A range of Guidance Notes applicable to the Victims Support Programme, including all of the procedures that must be followed by the groups who obtain awards.	See VSS website: www.victimsservice.org in the ' Funding for Organisations / Information for Funded Organisations ' section	Free
Individual Needs Programme	Details of what programmes are currently available, and the eligibility criteria and procedures required to access them.	See VSS website: www.victimsservice.org in the ' Support for Individuals / What Assistance Can We Offer ' section	Free
Public consultations	The details of public consultations carried out by VSS, and any responses issued by VSS to external public consultations.	See VSS website: www.victimsservice.org in the ' Latest Events and News ' section on the homepage.	Free

Class 5: Our policies and procedures

Document / Information	Description	Availability	Cost
<p>Funding Programmes:</p> <p>- Victims Support Programme guidance notes</p> <p>- Individual Needs Programme information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of Guidance Notes relevant to the Victims Support Programme, including how to apply to the Programme, the process adopted by VSS for making awards and reviewing award decisions, as well as the procedures that must be followed by the groups who obtain awards. Details of the Individual Needs Programme Schemes are currently available, and the eligibility criteria and procedures for applying for them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See VSS website: www.victimsservice.org in the 'Information and useful downloads for Funded Organisations' section. See VSS website: www.victimsservice.org in the 'What assistance can we offer?' section 	Free
Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The VSS Complaints Policy and Procedure and leaflet. The VSS website Service Standards section, which includes the VSS Policy on handling Unacceptable Behaviour from Members of the Public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See VSS website: www.victimsservice.org in the 'Contact Us' / 'Complaints and Feedback' section See VSS website: www.victimsservice.org in the 'Service Standards' section. 	Free
Records Management and Personal Data Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The VSS Publication Scheme. The VSS Freedom of Information Policy and Procedures. 	Available on request and on VSS website.	Free

<p>The VSS observes the 6 Data Protection Principles and handles all records relating to its individual clients, funded organisations, and staff according to these principles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The VSS Data Protection Policy and Procedures.		
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