



SafeLives' response to Scotland's consultation on improving victims' experiences of the justice system

Contents

Chapter One: A Victims' Commissioner for Scotland	3
Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Victims' Commissioner should be independent of the Scottish Government?.....	3
Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Victims' Commissioner should be a statutory role?	3
Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Victims' Commissioner should be accountable to the Scottish Parliament?.....	4
Question 4: How do you think the Victims' Commissioner should be held accountable? Please select all that apply.	4
Question 5: In your view, what should the main functions of the Victims' Commissioner be? Please select all that apply.	5
Question 6: What do you think should be within the remit of a Victims' Commissioner for Scotland? Please select all that apply.	7
Question 7: What powers do you think the Victims' Commissioner should have? Please select all that apply.	8
Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Victims' Commissioner should be required to consult with victims on the work to be undertaken by the Commissioner?.....	10
Question 9: How do you think that engagement with victims should take place? Please select all that apply.	12
Question 10: Are there any specific groups of victims who you think the Victims' Commissioner should have a specific duty to engage with? If so, who are they and how should that engagement take place?	13
Question 12: Are there any other relevant bodies or organisations that may have an interest in the work to be undertaken by the Victims' Commissioner?.....	15
Question 13: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Victims' Commissioner should not have the power to champion or intervene in individual cases?	15
Question 14: Are there any other matters relating to the proposal to create a Victims' Commissioner for Scotland you would like to offer your views on?	16



Ending domestic abuse

Chapter Two: Options to underpin trauma-informed practice and person-centred approaches	17
Question 15: Bearing in mind the general principles which are already set out in the 2014 Act, to what extent do you agree or disagree that a specific legislative reference to 'trauma-informed practice' as an additional general principle would be helpful and meaningful? ...	17
Question 16: To what extent do you agree or disagree that a specific reference to trauma-informed practice within the current legislative framework for the Standards of Service would be useful and meaningful?.....	17
Question 17: To what extent do you agree or disagree that a legislative basis for the production of guidance on taking a trauma-informed approach would be useful and meaningful?.....	18
Question 18: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Court should have a duty to take such measures as it considers appropriate to direct legal professionals to consider a trauma-informed approach in respect of clients and witnesses?.....	19
Question 19: Should virtual summary trials be a permanent feature of the criminal justice system?.....	20
Question 20: If you answered yes to the previous question, in what types of criminal cases do you think virtual summary trials should be used?.....	22
Question 21: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the recommendation of the Virtual Trials National Project Board that there should be a presumption in favour of virtual trials for all domestic abuse cases in the Scottish summary courts?.....	22



Chapter One: A Victims' Commissioner for Scotland

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Victims' Commissioner should be independent of the Scottish Government?

- **Strongly agree**
- ~~Somewhat agree~~
- ~~Neutral~~
- ~~Somewhat disagree~~
- ~~Strongly disagree~~

Please give reasons for your answer

The Office of the Victim's Commissioner should function as an **independent accountability mechanism** for scrutinising legislation, policy and practice that affects victims and survivors. Maintaining the independence of this position is key to ensuring the role is not subject to **changing political tides**, and allows the Commissioner to be a **critical friend** to the government – holding it to account and challenging it where necessary.

The Victim's Commissioner must be **impartial** and represent victims and survivors' voices **transparently and independently**. Effective leadership must be built on strong foundations of **trust** with victims and survivors, and it is therefore important that the Commissioner is not regarded as part of, or an extension to, the Scottish Government.

Lessons can be learned from England and Wales, where in 2018 the first Anti-Slavery Commissioner resigned **citing concerns about the level of independence** the organisation had in relation to the Home Office.¹ The Scottish Government should be transparent about the **recruitment and appointment process** for this role, and set out clearly how the Commissioner's independence will be safeguarded.

Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Victims' Commissioner should be a statutory role?

- **Strongly agree**
- ~~Somewhat agree~~
- ~~Neutral~~
- ~~Somewhat disagree~~
- ~~Strongly disagree~~

Please give reasons for your answer

For the Victim's Commissioner to be effective and legitimate, the role **must be on a statutory footing**. This gives the Commissioner's office the power to **compel** the resources and information needed to ensure all victim's voices are heard and represented, to **challenge**, and to **create** meaningful, lasting change.

Although this may affect how quickly the first Commissioner can be appointed due to legislative implications, it is important that the role is **conceived in the right way, and for the long-term**. Without a constitutional foundation, the role could be removed or diluted **without parliamentary oversight**. Consideration could be given to appointing an interim, non-



Ending domestic abuse

statutory Victim's Champion, while the necessary legislation is developed for a statutory Victim's Commissioner.

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Victims' Commissioner should be accountable to the Scottish Parliament?

- Strongly agree**
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

In order to be **independent** and **democratic**, it is critical that the Victim's Commissioner is **accountable to the Scottish Parliament**, rather than the government or one department. This keeps the structure consistent with Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People, and gives a clear set of objectives to progress and be held accountable for before Parliament.

Question 4: How do you think the Victims' Commissioner should be held accountable? Please select all that apply.

- Annual report to be published and laid in the Scottish Parliament**
- Multi-year strategic plan to be published and laid in the Scottish Parliament**
- Other – please provide details**

All of the above.

Please give reasons for your answer

An **annual report** to be published and laid in the Scottish Parliament is key to the Commissioner being **democratically accountable**, and **measuring and reporting on progress** in a transparent way.

A **multi-year strategic plan** laid before the Scottish Parliament **should shape the reporting requirements**. The objectives of the plan should be **developed in partnership** with victims/survivors, as well as drawing on robust quantitative data to identify strategic priorities. The plan should be **reviewed annually** to ensure outcomes are being met, and that the strategic priorities and activities are the right ones. The Commissioner should have the option to apply for and access **further resources** if required.

Other – There should be a **scrutiny panel** of independently selected people with lived experience of 'victimisation'ⁱ, representing all groups, communities, and forms of 'victimisation' - to hold the Commissioner to account. The **independent scrutiny panel** should oversee the

ⁱ We refer to the term 'victimisation' to mirror the language of the Scottish Government, but place the term in inverted commas to reflect that while some victims/survivors of domestic abuse do describe their experiences in this way, it is not universally applicable or appropriate. In some circumstances the term may be disempowering when imposed on a person who does not choose to define their experiences in this way. Equal consideration should be given to the terms 'victim' and 'survivor'. The Victim's Commissioner and their staff should listen to and respect how individuals choose to identify themselves and their experiences.



Ending domestic abuse

strategy, operational work and progress delivering it (discussed further in response to Question 9).

Question 5: In your view, what should the main functions of the Victims' Commissioner be? Please select all that apply.

- **Raising awareness/promotion of victims' interests and rights**
- **Monitoring compliance with the Victims' Code for Scotland, the Standards of Service for Victims and Witnesses and any relevant legislation**
- **Promoting best practice by the criminal justice agencies and those providing services to victims, including championing a trauma-informed approach**
- **Undertaking and/or commissioning research, in order to produce reports and make recommendations to the Scottish Government, criminal justice agencies and those providing services to victims**
- **Other – please provide details**

All of the above.

Please give reasons for your answer

In **raising awareness / promoting of victims and survivors' interests and rights**, the work of the Commissioner should also include a strategic focus on specific forms of 'victimisation', as victims and survivors are not a homogenous group. We would expect to see at least one strand of work focusing on and developing **expertise in domestic abuse and VAWG** (drawing on data, practice and lived experience), as has been done in England and Wales through the appointment of a 'VAWG Policy Manager' in the office of the Victim's Commissioner.

Monitoring compliance with the Victims' Code for Scotland, the Standards of Service for Victims and Witnesses and any relevant legislation **and undertaking a review** of the operation of the Code and any relevant standards and legislation.

Promoting best practice by the criminal justice agencies and those providing services to victims, including championing a trauma-informed approach, **and to** these agencies. This might include through providing or contracting to provide **training and guidance** to agencies on **delivering** high-quality services structured by a set of standards, and best practice in **commissioning** services.

Good practice: DACAA - Domestic Abuse Court Advocacy Accreditation

In April 2022, SafeLives, in partnership with [ASSIST](#), began the Scottish Government-funded 'Domestic Abuse Court Advocacy Accreditation' programme. The programme will implement a national accreditation framework for domestic abuse court advocacy services.

The first phase of this work involves **establishing standards for court advocacy in Scotland**. These will be jointly derived from an academic literature review of international jurisdictions, consultation with multiple stakeholders in Scotland, and engagement with SafeLives' Authentic Voice Panel, to hear from those with lived experience of the court systems.

The development and establishment of domestic abuse court advocacy standards will act to **guide services working with victims navigating the court process** and, going forward, **services will be assessed against the established standards**, and **supported to achieve accreditation** via coaching, support and training.

Undertaking and/or commissioning research, in order to produce reports and make recommendations to the Scottish Government, criminal justice agencies and those providing services to victims. This is **essential for identifying good practice as well as issues, gaps and where the system is failing**.

Other:

- **Embedding victim/survivor voice.** One of the most important functions of the Victim's Commissioner's Office is to meaningfully engage with victims and survivors. It should be explicit that engaging with lived experience must be embedded across the Victim Commissioner's work. This must include reaching victims and survivors who have not engaged with the criminal justice process, whose experiences are equally important in determining what the barriers are to seeking justice
- **Overseeing, mapping and monitoring provision of victims' services**, including domestic abuse services.
- **Overseeing, mapping and monitoring provision of perpetrator interventions and disposals.** 'Victimisation' is not inevitable, and the Victim's Commissioner's remit should also include mapping the availability and effectiveness of responses to people committing these crimes – both in terms of deterring and reducing crime, as well as assessing the implications for victims. Nothing will reduce the number of victims like proper impact on the number, severity and enduring nature of perpetrators of crime.ⁱⁱ
 - To ensure interventions are high-quality, part of the Victim's Commissioner's remit should involve **monitoring and/or supporting the development of accreditation for perpetrator interventions**. The Caledonian System is a good example of a Scottish approach that has been quality assured around domestic abuse perpetration to ensure intervention is safe for women and children, but we'd like to see more examples of gender-aware approaches to those who commit different types of crime in Scotland. Work is currently being done in England and Wales to develop national standards for perpetrator interventions,ⁱⁱⁱ which the Scottish Government should learn from to develop its own. Early findings from the research underpinning these standards point to the importance perpetrator interventions having a **gendered analysis** with a focus on **cultural competency** and **anti-racism**.

ⁱⁱ The importance of provision for perpetrators to tackle VAWG is a view shared by members of SafeLives' Authentic Voice Panel (survivors of domestic abuse in Scotland who work alongside us), as well as a number of external organisations who are part of the *Safer, Sooner Domestic Abuse Network* – [as set out in our response](#) to the Scottish Government's call for evidence for the Independent Strategic Review of Funding and Commissioning of Violence Against Women and Girls Services.

ⁱⁱⁱ Professor Nicole Westmarland and Professor Liz Kelly have been funded by the Home Office to work with Respect, SafeLives, and other partner organisations to draft a new, overarching set of standards for domestic abuse perpetrator interventions. They have hosted a series of roundtables for professionals working with perpetrators across a range of harm and risk levels as part of developing their recommendations for these standards.



Good practice: *Drive in England and Wales

[Drive](#) was developed in 2015 by Respect, SafeLives and Social Finance – the Drive Partnership – to address the gap in work with high-harm perpetrators of domestic abuse. Drive works with high-harm, high-risk and serial perpetrators of domestic abuse to prevent their abusive behaviour and protect victims. ‘High-risk, high-harm’ perpetrators are those who have been assessed as posing a risk of serious harm or murder to people they are in intimate or family relationships with.

Drive challenges and supports perpetrators to change and works with partner agencies – like the police, social services and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (Idvas) – to disrupt abuse and support victims and families. As part of this approach, where appropriate Drive supports perpetrators to address behaviours and needs that intersect with their abusive behaviour, such as homelessness, mental ill-health, and substance use.

The Drive Project launched in April 2016 and was piloted in three areas across England and Wales (Essex, South Wales and West Sussex) from 2016-2019. During this time it underwent a three-year independent evaluation conducted by the University of Bristol. The University of Bristol concluded that Drive **reduces abuse and the risk perpetrators pose**.² Key findings show that:

- **physical abuse** reduced by **82%**;
- **sexual abuse** reduced by **88%**,
- **harassment and stalking** behaviours reduced by **75%**;
- and **jealous and controlling behaviours** reduced by **73%**.

Following the pilot, there are now Drive sites across West Mercia, South Wales, West Midlands, London, Avon and Somerset, The Wirral, Derbyshire, Northumbria, Dorset and Greater Manchester.

“The Scottish Government seriously needs to take a look at Drive which is operating in England and Wales. It’s a game-changer and clearly the way forward in helping to prevent and protect victims of abuse by disrupting the perpetrator’s behaviour. We need this here in Scotland: it could save lives.”

- **Authentic Voice Panel member**

“For the first time, someone’s holding him to account, it’s not just me.”

- **Victim/survivor [talking about a Drive service-user](#)**

Question 6: What do you think should be within the remit of a Victims' Commissioner for Scotland? Please select all that apply.

- **The experience of victims in the criminal justice system**
- **The experience of victims in the civil justice system**
- **The experience of victims in relation to the Children's Hearings system**
- **The experience of victims resident in Scotland, but where the crime has taken place outside of Scotland**



Ending domestic abuse

- ~~Other – please provide details~~

Please give reasons for your answer

To avoid the remit of the role of the Victim's Commissioner becoming unmanageably broad, we recommend prioritising experiences of 'victimisation' in the **criminal and civil justice systems**, and in the **Children's Hearings system where it relates to cases of domestic abuse**.

The experiences of victims who are resident in Scotland, but where the crime has taken place outside of Scotland, should only be included within the remit of the Victim Commissioner **if the office is adequately resourced** to carry out this work. Navigating foreign justice systems and diplomatic relations is inevitably more complex than domestic cases, and would require a specialist role within the office of the Victim's Commissioner. If it is considered beyond the means of the Victim's Commissioner, **there must be clear accountability** for victims' welfare abroad – with a named Minister held responsible.

Question 7: What powers do you think the Victims' Commissioner should have? Please select all that apply.

- The power to carry out investigations into systemic issues affecting victims of crime
- The power to require persons to give evidence in the course of an investigation
- The power to make recommendations to the Scottish Government, criminal justice agencies and those providing services to victims
- The power to require persons to respond to any recommendations made to them (by the Victims' Commissioner)
- Other – please provide details

All of the above.

Please give reasons for your answer

The power to carry out investigations into systemic issues affecting victims of crime, including conducting investigations **without seeking prior permission from the Scottish Government**, is central to enabling greater autonomy in determining the focus of the Commissioner's work, and in identifying problems and potential policy changes.

The power to require persons to give evidence in the course of an investigation is essential for guaranteeing that public authorities, voluntary bodies and others **cooperate with an investigation** in a transparent and timely manner. This power must include the **power to collect relevant data** to inform an investigation, such as data on prevalence of 'victimisation', responses and criminal justice outcomes, and to further question the information submitted. It should include the **power to gain access to criminal justice agency records** where necessary.

"It is not unreasonable, for example, to impose a statutory duty on criminal justice agencies to cooperate with the Victims Commissioner. Most do already, but it should be a legal requirement and not a favour."

- Baroness Newlove, Victim's Commissioner for England and Wales 2012-2019³



Ending domestic abuse

The power to make recommendations to the Scottish Government, **local government**, criminal justice agencies, those providing services to victims, **and other public bodies** is key to giving investigations and research *teeth*, and enabling the Commissioner to draw on evidence and authentic voice^{iv} to develop creative solutions and practical steps to respond to issues identified. These recommendations may include possible **law change** and **practice change**.

The **power to require persons to respond to any recommendations** made to them (by the Victims' Commissioner) **and receive a response within an agreed timeframe**. This ensures the Scottish Government and other relevant agencies are accountable to any recommendations made.

Scotland can learn from England and Wales about the importance of ensuring Commissioners are given **the power to report and make recommendations**. In the pre-legislative scrutiny for the [Victim's Bill](#) in England and Wales, there was clear support for increasing the powers of the Victim's Commissioner, to bring them in line with the Domestic Abuse and Children's Commissioners:

"I want to reiterate the point that the Victims' Commissioner role and the ability to make recommendations and individual reports would bring the powers in line with my office, which came into effect in November, and how useful it has been to be able to publish reports that are quite individual in nature and that have specific recommendations in them where they have to be responded to within 56 days. It makes a lot of sense."

-Nicole Jacobs, Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales ⁴

Other:

- The power to **allocate resources** to determine/address key gaps and failures (at national levels and in line with the agreed multi-year strategy).
- The power to **undertake effective review of the operation of the Victim's Code** and any relevant standards and legislation.
- The power to **require changes to and expand the Victim's Code** if it is found to be inadequate and any relevant standards and legislation.
- The power to **ensure compliance with the Victim's Code** and any relevant standards and legislation.
- In the last resort and if necessary to clarify the law in the public interest, **the power to bring, or join, appropriate legal proceedings** against bodies are found not to be complying with the Code and any relevant standards and legislation.
 - At present, the duties set out under the Victim's Code are not enforceable in law and there is very limited scope to ensure that the Code is respected in practice. These powers would **create a legal mechanism** for ensuring that

^{iv} Authentic Voice is the voice of a survivor of domestic abuse who has chosen to share what they have learned from their experience. How, when and what a survivor shares is always their choice.

Authentic Voice is an essential part of a high-quality response to domestic abuse. It requires services and professionals to highly value the expert knowledge, perspectives, skills and strengths survivors bring. It is not an optional extra, or something that is achieved by only listening to voices that agree with you. It is embraced by organisations and individuals aiming to end domestic abuse as it ensures responses to domestic abuse are rooted in lived experience.



Ending domestic abuse

- victim's rights are respected and upheld, and service-providers and government are held to account.
- Such power would only rarely be needed. As good practice, the Victim's Commissioner would **always need to provide justification** that exercise of these powers is **necessary and proportionate**, with regard to factors including the need to respect the independence and integrity of the criminal justice system and focus on matters of public or strategic importance.
 - The power to hold the Government to account in relation to its **Equally Safe strategy**, including any new guidance and standards developed as part of **the independent strategic review of funding and commissioning of violence against women and girls services**.
 - **The power to undertake effective review and quality assurance of approaches to those who commit crime**, in particular how it impacts on the Victim's Code and victims' experiences of justice, and any potential system-generated risks. For example, the Victim's Commissioner should be responsible for ensuring initiatives like Restorative Justice are safe for victims/survivors of domestic abuse and VAWG.^v They should also monitor other unintended consequences of interventions, such as the potential for unfair criminalisation of women who have experienced domestic abuse and VAWG.
 - Any review by the Commissioner of approaches to those who commit crime **must be gender- and trauma-informed**.
 - The power to **require changes to approaches to those who commit crime** if it is found to be inadequate and harmful to victims and survivors – including compromising their safety, wellbeing and sense of justice.

Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Victims' Commissioner should be required to consult with victims on the work to be undertaken by the Commissioner?

- **Strongly agree**
- ~~Somewhat agree~~
- ~~Neutral~~
- ~~Somewhat disagree~~
- ~~Strongly disagree~~

Please give reasons for your answer

To truly transform victims and survivors' experiences of the justice system, a victim/survivor-centred approach which places their voices and **lived experiences at the heart and start of policy and services** is critical. Meaningful engagement with victims and survivors through

^v SafeLives acknowledges the full range of types of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), which fall along a continuum of gender-based violence. Any references to '**domestic abuse and VAWG**' recognise that domestic abuse is a type of VAWG, and is often experienced alongside other forms of gender-based violence. This consultation response gives particular consideration to experiences of 'victimisation' and perpetration of domestic abuse (DA), including coercive control and non-physical forms of abuse, to reflect our organisational expertise and evidence base.



Ending domestic abuse

structured and informal forums should be seen as **fundamental to this role**, and not as 'nice to have' or an afterthought.

The importance of embedding survivor voice is recognised in the Scottish Government's Violence Against Women and Girls strategy ***Equally Safe***, including through the Embedding Lived Experience programme in its [Short Term Delivery Plan for 22/23](#). The Government's ***Vision for Justice*** also prioritises putting victims and survivors at the centre of the justice system, committing to share power with those with lived experience of trauma through service co-design and active collaboration.

Engagement with victims and survivors must be **inclusive, trauma-informed, transparent, and appropriately remunerated**. Many of these principles are set out in SafeLives' Authentic Voice Strategy (2017) which has led to the creation of our [Authentic Voice Panel](#) and [Embedding Lived Experience](#) project in Scotland, the latter in conjunction with our partners in the Improvement Service and Resilience Learning Partnership.

Good practice: SafeLives' Authentic Voice

SafeLives launched its Authentic Voice strategy in 2017, to set out our commitment to centring the unmediated voice of those with lived experience through all our research, projects, and practice. This is a priority across the organisation and in Scotland it has led to the creation of:

- **Authentic Voice Panel**
- [Authentic Voice: Embedding Lived Experience project](#) in conjunction with our partners in the Improvement Service and Resilience Learning Partnership.

Co-facilitated by a domestic abuse expert with extensive experience working in the VAWG sector, our 10-woman strong Authentic Voice Panel represents the breadth of diversity and experience of Scottish survivors. The Panel brings insight spanning topics such as service access, mental health, rurality, children and culture. In the short time since its inception, the **Authentic Voice Panel has actively contributed to a wide range of work**, including supporting both SafeLives and external organisations to review their policies, procedures and outputs through a survivor lens, ensuring victims' voices are heard and listened to. Agencies who have consulted with the AV Panel include Social Security Scotland, Police Scotland, the Improvement Service, the Scottish Government, and Inspiring Scotland.

"I wanted to become a part of the Authentic Voice Panel as I feel that no one is better equipped than someone with experience of domestic abuse, to be able to give a real-life point of view on things that survivors experience during and after leaving an abusive relationship. By taking part and being involved in this panel I am helping to make our voice heard and if my voice can help change things for others, I know that my struggle was not in vain."

- Authentic Voice Panel member

As well as having the direct oversight from the panel, the Embedding Lived Experience programme aim is to help ensure that local authorities and other community planning organisations have the knowledge, confidence, and tools they need to **embed survivor voice into local system and service design** processes in a robust, trauma-informed and meaningful way. It will do this by:



Ending domestic abuse

- Supporting women with experience of domestic abuse and other forms of complex trauma to use their experiences to help shape the pathways to support and service delivery.
- Enabling professionals working across a wide range of policy areas to embed survivor voice and lived experience into system and service design processes in a high quality, sustainable and trauma-informed way.
- Helping decision-makers to see how meaningful change can be achieved, and compelled to act, through seeing living examples, having access to evidence and hearing diverse voices of people with lived experience.

Consideration should be given to **resourcing a specific role** in the Victims Commissioner's Office to hold these relationships, in reflection of the distinct skills and expertise involved with engaging victims and survivors in this way. An example of this role is the '**Lived Experience Engagement Lead**' in the office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales.⁵ The remit of the role includes:

- Establishing a range of mechanisms **for engaging with victims and survivors**, considering in particular the **diverse and intersectional needs** of different people and ensuring engagement is accessible;
- Establishing a formal Victims and Survivors **Advisory Panel**;
- Establishing formal mechanisms for **compensating victims and survivors** for their expertise, negotiating with Home Office and wider civil service processes and systems to secure fair and proportionate remuneration.

"We need organisations to listen at the grassroots and high up. They don't get it yet. Organisations need to change the narrative, otherwise we [as survivors] don't feel empowered... 'No them and us'."

- **Authentic Voice Panel member**

Question 9: How do you think that engagement with victims should take place? Please select all that apply.

- ~~Advisory board, including victim representatives~~
- ~~Victims' reference group – see below~~
- **Focused consultations with victims**
- ~~Ad hoc engagement with victims~~
- **Other – please provide details**

Please give reasons for your answer

Independent Scrutiny Panel: Victims with lived experience must be engaged from the outset as part of systems design to define the role. Rather than an Advisory Board or Victim's Reference Group, we believe that an independent scrutiny panel should be appointed to oversee the remit, operational work and progress of the Victim's Commissioner, to guarantee engagement is meaningful, independent and victim/survivor-led.

The independent scrutiny panel should have transparent and representational participation which includes the widest range of experiences, both people who have and have **not engaged** with criminal and civil justice systems, and representing all of Scotland's communities. This



Ending domestic abuse

independent scrutiny panel **must be self-chaired and self-governed**, and should **not** include victims' representatives or advocates where they have no lived experience of 'victimisation'. As set out in response to Question 11, organisations working with victims, including victims' representatives and advocates, should be engaged and consulted with as part of the Victims Commissioner's work, but **this should sit separately** to engagement with victims/survivors on the independent scrutiny panel.

Focused consultations with victims: For particular investigations and pieces of research, it may be necessary, alongside consulting the scrutiny panel, to **reach out to a wider group** of victims and survivors, or victims and survivors with particular identities or experiences of 'victimisation'. This consultation should be focused, with clear objectives, and lived experience best practice upheld to provide a safe and ethical approach that enables meaningful participation. The independent scrutiny panel can advise where it is appropriate and necessary to consult more widely - and the best way to, and provide oversight about whether engagement best practice is upheld. Where a victim or survivor requires support or advocacy to engage, **it may be appropriate** for a representative / advocate to attend too (rather than *instead of* the victim / survivor).

Question 10: Are there any specific groups of victims who you think the Victims' Commissioner should have a specific duty to engage with? If so, who are they and how should that engagement take place?

- **Yes – please provide details**
- ~~No~~
- ~~Unsure~~

Please give reasons for your answer

The Victim's Commissioner should have a specific duty to engage with **victims and survivors of domestic abuse (DA) and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)**. This is to reflect the high prevalence of these crimes, and the importance of a gender-, age- and trauma-informed response to victims and survivors. Even where the Victim's Commissioner is not working specifically on DA/VAWG, all workstreams, activities and recommendations must be **DA/VAWG-informed**. This is particularly **salient in the absence of a Scottish Domestic Abuse / VAWG Commissioner**. Among the functions of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales is mapping and monitoring domestic abuse service provision, and overseeing the **Domestic Homicide Review**^{vi} Quality Assurance process, including reviewing any potential changes implemented and feeding lessons learned into their recommendations.

The Commissioner's Office should engage with VAWG and DA survivors through **existing platforms and forums**, such as SafeLives' Authentic Voice Panel, and through the proposed **independent scrutiny panel** and **victim engagement forums** (Question 9). The Commissioner should also establish strong working relationships by engaging with all the varied services who are part of the **DA and VAWG sectors**, drawing on the decades of expertise they have developed through responding on the frontline.

^{vi} There is ongoing work to introduce **Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)** in Scotland, which currently lacks a multi-agency DHR process, as set out in the [Equally Safe Delivery Plan](#). The Scottish Government, ASSIST, and Police Scotland should consider if and how the Victim's Commissioner will be involved in this process.



Ending domestic abuse

The Victim's Commissioner should also have a specific duty to engage with victims and survivors from **marginalised and minoritised communities**, such as Black, Asian and racially minoritised victims/survivors, LGBT+ victims/survivors, deaf and disabled victims/survivors, older victims/survivors, migrant and refugee victims/survivors – including those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), and victims/survivors with complex needs – including mental health, addiction or involvement with the criminal justice system. Despite experiencing distinct and often disproportionate types of 'victimisation', including hate crimes, domestic abuse, and other types of VAWG such as so-called 'honour'-based abuse, victims and survivors from these communities are often obscured in national data sets because of the way data is collected and services are set up. Rather than perpetuating this process of marginalisation and minoritisation, the Victim's Commissioner must be proactive and creative in finding ways to reach and engage marginalised groups. **Specialist services run 'by and for' the communities they serve**^{vii} must be recognised as fundamental to this aim, and adequately resourced to support any engagement with the Victim's Commissioner. The Commissioner should also seek to engage with more informal community, faith and activist groups which are embedded in their local communities.

Question 11: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Victims' Commissioner should be required to consult with organisations that work with victims, on the work to be undertaken by the Commissioner?

- **Strongly agree**
- ~~Somewhat agree~~
- ~~Neutral~~
- ~~Somewhat disagree~~
- ~~Strongly disagree~~

Please give reasons for your answer

The Commissioner needs to be compelled to listen to all voices, including organisations that work with victims and survivors. Our response to this consultation has highlighted in particular the importance of the Commissioner developing strong working relationships with **the full range of services working across Scotland as part of the domestic abuse and VAWG sectors, including specialist 'by and for' services.**

It is important also that the Commissioner engages with **organisations who challenge and change perpetrator behaviour**, in particular those who are victim-centred and work within an accredited quality assurance framework. The Caledonian System is a good example of this kind of approach within the VAWG sector.

However, this is a difficult task to undertake fairly with limited resources. There is a risk that only a selection of organisations will be meaningfully consulted - with smaller, specialist services that deliver immensely valuable support most likely to be excluded.

^{vii} This term refers to **specialist services that are designed and delivered by and for the users and communities they aim to serve.** This can include, for example, services led by and for Black, Asian and racially minoritised survivors, LGBT+ survivors, deaf and disabled survivors, and migrant and refugee survivors. These organisations provide tailored support to meet the specific needs of their communities, who may often face barriers and discrimination when trying to access mainstream and generic services



Ending domestic abuse

To ensure the Victim's Commissioner does not only hear from larger, generic organisations with Government contracts, there should be a **formal mechanism for consultation** that **guarantees representation** of smaller, specialist services and gives them equal voice. This could take the form of an **Advisory Group**, with rotating membership which organisations can apply for - and permanent allocated spaces for organisations representing particular victim/survivor groups, communities and regions.

Question 12: Are there any other relevant bodies or organisations that may have an interest in the work to be undertaken by the Victims' Commissioner?

- **VAW Partnerships** - the multi-agency mechanism to deliver on Equally Safe at a local strategic level.
- **COSLA**

Question 13: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Victims' Commissioner should not have the power to champion or intervene in individual cases?

- Strongly agree
- **Somewhat agree**
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

The role of the Victim's Commissioner is to maintain a national, systems-wide remit – pushing for **institutional change, not individual action**. There is a risk that championing or intervening in individual cases transforms the office into a victim support organisation, stretching capacity and potentially becoming biased by individualised or localised issues.

However 'individual' cases and complaints **can be illustrative of wider systemic issues**, helping to **build the evidence base** to define the remit and focus of the Commissioner's work. Single rulings in courts on individual cases also have the potential to create an important legal precedent for future cases, which can help or hinder addressing system-wide issues. In an appeal for increased powers for her office, the Victim's Commissioner for England and Wales makes the case for the value of receiving individual complaints in identifying systemic problems:

"The VC [Victim's Commissioner] may not have the resources necessary to handle a significant number of complaints and more extensive legal powers would be needed to enable the VC to investigate and respond to individual complaints. However, complaints may be an important resource for the VC in identifying systemic problems and compliance issues with particular service providers. The ability to receive them and direct the complaint to the appropriate service provider would be a significant addition to the VC's powers, increasing the visibility of the VC and the consistency for victims in pursuing complaints."

-Dame Vera Baird, Victim's Commissioner for England and Wales⁶



Ending domestic abuse

For this reason, there **may be some instances** where it is appropriate and proportionate for the Commissioner to champion or intervene in individual cases. This would only be when intervening or championing an individual case **has the potential to drive institutional change in the public interest**. With the view to keeping the remit of the Victim's Commissioner manageable, there should be **only special circumstances** where the Commissioner exercises this power.

Question 14: Are there any other matters relating to the proposal to create a Victims' Commissioner for Scotland you would like to offer your views on?

In the absence of a Domestic Abuse or VAWG Commissioner, the Victim's Commissioner needs to have a **strong and credible remit for DA and VAWG-specific 'victimisation'**. It is also important that the Commissioner's remit includes the impact of domestic abuse on victims/survivors and their children, including experiences of both the criminal and civil courts.

In recruiting for the role, the personal specification should be clear that a successful candidate must be someone that victims from all communities and backgrounds **respect and feel they can trust**. It should also specify that **expertise in issues affecting victims** is essential, including expertise through personal experience.

The Scottish Government must also ensure that the office of the Victim's Commissioner is **adequately resourced** to be able to perform its role effectively. Without an appropriate budget and team to deliver a meaningful programme of work, the Commissioner role will be only symbolic.

The Commissioner should also have regular meetings and access to all relevant Ministers and officials, including attendance at the **Violence Against Women and Girls Joint Strategic Board** chaired jointly by the Scottish Government and COSLA, and the Scottish Government's Victims Taskforce.



Chapter Two: Options to underpin trauma-informed practice and person-centred approaches

Question 15: Bearing in mind the general principles which are already set out in the 2014 Act, to what extent do you agree or disagree that a specific legislative reference to 'trauma-informed practice' as an additional general principle would be helpful and meaningful?

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

The explicit inclusion of 'trauma-informed practice' in the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014 would signal the Scottish Government's **commitment to being trauma-informed**, and would compel justice organisations to embed trauma-informed practice.

To be more than a buzzword, and avoid misinterpretation, an accepted **definition of 'trauma-informed' needs to be developed**. The legislative change should also be accompanied by statutory guidance which sets out clearly a benchmark for what trauma-informed working looks like in practice in different justice settings, and how it can be evaluated – bringing together important work already done in this area.⁷ This definition and guidance must be developed in **consultation with survivors, and services** supporting victims and survivors.

Question 16: To what extent do you agree or disagree that a specific reference to trauma-informed practice within the current legislative framework for the Standards of Service would be useful and meaningful?

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

The explicit inclusion of 'trauma-informed practice' in the legislative framework for the Standards of Service would also be a helpful **signifier of the importance of this approach** in key justice agencies' ways of working with victims and survivors, and **help to drive consistency** across different justice agencies.

The Standards of Service are an important mechanism for translating the term 'trauma-informed' into practice. As the intended audience of this document is victims, it should sit alongside / be informed by / be complementary to **statutory guidance on trauma-informed**



Ending domestic abuse

practice (which would be primarily aimed at service-providers and key agencies working with victims and survivors). Any statutory guidance will be helpful for developing and/or refreshing the Standards of Service framework, including through providing a **clear definition** of ‘trauma-informed practice’, and what this looks like in different justice settings.

When services fall short of the trauma-informed standards set out in this framework, they must be held to account. The **new office of the Victim’s Commissioner** could play an important role in holding services accountable, including through giving the Commissioner powers to enforce compliance with Standards of Service and bring legal proceedings where necessary and proportionate (see Question 7).

Question 17: To what extent do you agree or disagree that a legislative basis for the production of guidance on taking a trauma-informed approach would be useful and meaningful?

- **Strongly agree**
- ~~Somewhat agree~~
- ~~Neutral~~
- ~~Somewhat disagree~~
- ~~Strongly disagree~~

Please give reasons for your answer

Any guidance published to accompany the updated wording on ‘trauma-informed practice’ in the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014 and Standards of Service **must be placed on a statutory footing**. There is already plenty of robust guidance on trauma-informed practice in existence, but without the obligation to embed these ways of working, change is not happening consistently or fast enough in Scotland.

In the development of new statutory guidance on trauma-informed practice in justice services, the Scottish Government should **build on and bring together important work done in this area to date**. Examples include NHS Education for Scotland’s [National trauma training programme](#).

As with any statutory guidance, its power to effect change will be contingent on the Scottish Government’s **commitment to effectively resourcing training and awareness-raising activities**. Without a proper culture change programme to accompany the new statutory guidance, it is not realistic that trauma-informed practice will be embedded consistently across justice agencies. This culture change programme should be designed and delivered in partnership with survivors, and practitioners working with victims and survivors.

Culture change good practice: SafeLives’ DAMS - DA Matters Scotland

[DAMS: DA Matters Scotland](#) is a culture change programme that has involved training nearly 14,000 officers and staff in identifying controlling and coercive behaviour and embedding a national Champions’ network to improve the institutional response to victims of domestic abuse. The programme was written and developed by SafeLives and the College of Policing in response to HMIC findings around police officers’ understanding of domestic abuse, and in particular, coercive control. DA Matters Scotland builds on the successful delivery of SafeLives’ [DA Matters programme in England and Wales](#). It is



Ending domestic abuse

bespoke to the unique needs of Scotland, in particular around the introduction of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act in April 2019 and accompanying statutory guidance.

We worked collaboratively with Police Scotland and our partners [ASSIST](#), [the Caledonian System](#), [Sacro](#) and [Scottish Borders Safer Communities](#) team to develop common understanding and awareness around the dynamics of abuse, coercive control and the tactics used by perpetrators.

The approach included:

- An interactive e-learning package that was accessed by over 18,000 officers and staff.
- In-room training to almost 14,000 officers/staff, and a further session for 700 DA Champions, using a dual-delivery model that paired local DA trainers with police trainers.
- A Sustaining the Change workshop with the senior leadership team.

The evaluation⁸ of DA Matters Scotland shows that after training:

- **95%** of participants had a strong understanding of the tactics perpetrators use to coercively control victims (an **increase of 75%** compared to before the training);
- **94%** have a strong understanding of the stages of coercive controlling behaviour and how it may influence whether a victim appears to support police involvement (an **increase of 82%**);
- **94%** of participants saying that the training helped them understand the impact of domestic abuse and coercive control on children (an **increase of 58%**).

Police Scotland continue to embed their Champions' programme, by investing in Champions' continued professional development and embedding systems designed to highlight areas for development and best practice.

"I was initially resistant and didn't want to go on DAMS, but it has been the most valuable training I've been on in my 29 years of service. I have since told the other sergeants in the station to keep an open mind and that they'll enjoy it too."

- Police Scotland sergeant

"DAMS is a good example of how a large-scale change programme supported Police Scotland to prepare for and embrace new DASA legislation, by providing impactful awareness of coercive control and creating Domestic Abuse Champions – for which there is an ongoing legacy."

-SafeLives Scotland practitioner

Question 18: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Court should have a duty to take such measures as it considers appropriate to direct legal professionals to consider a trauma-informed approach in respect of clients and witnesses?

- **Strongly agree**
- ~~Somewhat agree~~
- ~~Neutral~~



Ending domestic abuse

- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

Staff throughout both the criminal and civil courts system and parts of the judiciary play a **pivotal role** in the response to survivors of traumatic experiences, including domestic abuse and VAWG. Courts and related agencies, such as the Crown and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and Victim Information and Advice (VIA), **must champion a trauma-informed approach** to working with victims and survivors.

SafeLives has been working in partnership with COPFS since 2015 to **deliver a tailored training programme** for Deputes on domestic abuse, and COPFS have long been a valuable contributor to the Idaa accredited training. We also plan to engage extensively with COPFS and other criminal justice partners to shape and inform the service standards for domestic abuse court advocacy services.

Despite some great examples of joined-up working between criminal justice and specialist VAWG services, **more is needed** to create a unified improvement in the way our justice partners respond to domestic abuse. At the very least, each part of the criminal justice system, including our Courts and the judiciary, should have **access to the same training opportunities** to ensure there is a common level of awareness and understanding, including legal mechanisms and provisions available to victims and survivors, such as special measures, and **trauma-informed ways of working** with victims and survivors.

"I was a DA Advocate in Court for years, and the conversations I was having with prosecution (who had been trained) and defence lawyers was clearly indicative that the fundamental understanding of controlling and coercive behaviour was lacking. I would say that every single day I spent in court I had at least one conversation with a lawyer or a sheriff about why a victim may have contact with a perpetrator in spite of bail conditions. The understanding that it is often safer to know what a perpetrator is doing, or that there is greater risk in cutting off contact, was completely lacking."

- SafeLives Scotland practitioner

Courts and the judiciary should implement a **cultural change programme** designed and delivered in partnership with internal staff, VAWG and domestic abuse specialists and survivors (similar to the successful Domestic Abuse Matters culture change programme for Police Scotland) for everyone involved in the criminal and civil court process, including the judiciary, lawyers, and court staff. Courts should also implement **the new national standards for domestic abuse court advocacy services**, currently in development by SafeLives and ASSIST, funded by the Scottish Government, to ensure **trauma-informed principles are upheld**.

Question 19: Should virtual summary trials be a permanent feature of the criminal justice system?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure



Ending domestic abuse

Please give reasons for your answer

The option to have virtual summary trials for domestic abuse cases should, based on emerging evidence, be **further rolled out and kept under review**. This should take the form of a **hybrid** model, with victims and survivors^{viii} of domestic abuse given the choice to either be supported to give evidence remotely or in-person in a court setting. Evidence from the virtual summary trial pilots in Aberdeen and Inverness Sheriff Courts show clear benefits of offering virtual trials to victims and survivors.⁹ Attending court is often **re-traumatising** – for both adult and child victims, particularly when special measures are not taken to avoid the victim/survivor having to see the perpetrator^{ix} or their family. Evidence from abroad shows that virtual trials **improve the attendance levels** of both victims and perpetrators^x – which is a particular challenge in domestic abuse cases.¹⁰ In evidence given to the Criminal Justice Committee during the passage of the Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) (Scotland) Bill, voluntary sector organisations made the case that virtual trials can offer a **more trauma-informed approach** to supporting victims and survivors to engage in criminal justice proceedings, which not only **reduces attrition**, but also improves the **quality of evidence** given in the trial.¹¹ Furthermore, evidence from the pilots in Aberdeen and Inverness did not find that the **jury's ability to assess witness credibility** was compromised, with many courts already making use of remote arrangements for vulnerable witnesses.¹²

There are also a number of **practical barriers** that virtual summary trials can help to overcome. Often victims and survivors, as well as other witnesses, have to **travel long distances** to attend court. They may be called to give evidence more than once, which can be **disruptive and impact negatively on attendance**. For victims and survivors with children, attending court can involve **additional costs for childcare**. Appropriate measures and adjustments to support **disabled victims and survivors** to engage with the legal process are also often not made. Findings from a survey of criminal justice professionals in Scotland by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) finds that a majority (36 out of 52 respondents) think impairments of a defendant or accused person are missed.¹³ While there are **also challenges to inclusivity around digitalisation** – particularly for disabled victims and survivors with communication support needs,¹⁴ with the right **needs assessment, support and adjustments in place** to help people access technology, virtual summary trials have the potential to remove many practical barriers that can hinder engagement with the justice system.

Further rollout of virtual summary trials needs to be accompanied by a **robust planning and implementation process**, including **data collection** and monitoring to measure which victims/survivors are opting for virtual trials, and their experiences of the process. A **thorough needs assessment** for victims and survivors is essential for establishing where there may be additional support needs. The practical details of running a virtual summary trial should be kept under review to ensure the most effective and fair arrangements are adopted, including training for courts staff to support this process. The Scottish Government and Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service must **work in partnership with the DA and VAWG sector** to provide appropriate, alternative safe spaces for victims and survivors to give evidence in every sheriffdom.

^{viii} Or 'complainers' or 'witnesses'

^{ix} Or 'the accused'

^x Or 'witnesses and the accused'



Ending domestic abuse

Question 20: If you answered yes to the previous question, in what types of criminal cases do you think virtual summary trials should be used?

Based on our organisational expertise, we are advocating for **domestic abuse cases** to have the option of virtual trials. The Scottish Government should work with the VAWG sector to determine which (other) VAWG crimes might also be appropriately tried through virtual arrangements. Lady Dorrian's review, for example, recommends that pre-recording the whole of a victim's evidence should be the default method of presenting their evidence in sexual offence cases.¹⁵

Question 21: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the recommendation of the Virtual Trials National Project Board that there should be a presumption in favour of virtual trials for all domestic abuse cases in the Scottish summary courts?

- **Strongly agree**
- ~~Somewhat agree~~
- ~~Neutral~~
- ~~Somewhat disagree~~
- ~~Strongly disagree~~

Please give reasons for your answer

While the emerging evidence from a roll-out of Virtual Summary Trial supports a presumption of virtual trials in all domestic abuse cases, **this should be the default**. Victims and survivors of domestic abuse **must still be given the option** for in-person trials in a court, with clear information about how they can opt for this alternative. A presumption of virtual trials must (as highlighted in response to Question 19) be accompanied by **robust needs assessments**, to identify which victims and survivors have additional support needs around accessing virtual technology, and those for whom virtual arrangements may not be appropriate.

For further information, please contact:

Hermione Greenhalgh
Public Affairs and Policy Officer
hermione.greenhalgh@safelives.org.uk

¹ The Independent (2018) UK's first Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner resigns citing government interference <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/modern-slavery-uk-commissioner-resigns-interference-kevin-hyland-government-a8356601.html>

² Centre for Gender & Violence Research, University of Bristol (2019) Evaluation of the Drive Project – A Three-year Pilot to Address High-risk, High-harm Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse http://driveproject.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/DriveYear3_UoBEvaluationReport_Final.pdf

³ Victim's Commissioner for England and Wales (2019) 2018/19 Annual Report of the Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales <https://victimscommissioner.org.uk/document/annual-report-of-the-victims-commissioner-2018-to-2019/>



Ending domestic abuse

-
- ⁴ Justice Committee (2022) Justice Committee Oral evidence: Pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Victims Bill, HC 304 <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/10387/pdf/>
- ⁵ Domestic Abuse Commissioner (2022) Lived Experience Engagement Lead for the Domestic Abuse Commissioner [job advertisement] <https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/view/lived-experience-engagement-lead-for-the-domestic-abuse-commissioner-at-uk-home-office-3128149958/?originalSubdomain=uk>
- ⁶ Victim's Commissioner for England and Wales (2020) Constitutional powers of the Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales <https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/jotwpublic-prod-storage-1cxo1dnrmkg14/uploads/sites/6/2021/12/OVC-Constitutional-Powers-2020.pdf>
- ⁷ NHS Education for Scotland (2016) National trauma training programme <https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/trauma-national-trauma-training-programme/>
- ⁸ SafeLives (2020) Domestic Abuse Matters Scotland: Evaluation report <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Domestic%20Abuse%20Matters%20Scotland%20-%20Evaluation%20Report.pdf>
- ⁹ The Virtual Trials National Project Board (2022) Report to the Lord Justice General on Virtual Summary Trials https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/docs/default-source/default-document-library/reports-and-data/report-to-the-lord-justice-general-virtual-summary-trials-docx-final.pdf?sfvrsn=a5f62f35_4
- ¹⁰ The Virtual Trials National Project Board (2022) Report to the Lord Justice General on Virtual Summary Trials https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/docs/default-source/default-document-library/reports-and-data/report-to-the-lord-justice-general-virtual-summary-trials-docx-final.pdf?sfvrsn=a5f62f35_4
- ¹¹ Scotland Criminal Justice Committee (2022) Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) (Scotland) Bill: Evidence Hearing, Wednesday 23 February 2022 10AM <https://www.scottishparliament.tv/meeting/criminal-justice-committee-february-23-2022>
- ¹² The Virtual Trials National Project Board (2022) Report to the Lord Justice General on Virtual Summary Trials https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/docs/default-source/default-document-library/reports-and-data/report-to-the-lord-justice-general-virtual-summary-trials-docx-final.pdf?sfvrsn=a5f62f35_4
- ¹³ EHRC (2020) Inclusive justice: a system designed for all <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/inclusive-justice-system-designed-all>
- ¹⁴ EHRC (2020) Inclusive justice: a system designed for all <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/inclusive-justice-system-designed-all>
- ¹⁵ Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service (2021) IMPROVING THE MANAGEMENT OF SEXUAL OFFENCE CASES Final Report from the Lord Justice Clerk's Review Group <https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/docs/default-source/default-document-library/reports-and-data/Improving-the-management-of-Sexual-Offence-Cases.pdf?sfvrsn=6>