



# **POLICY ON VICTIMS**

## **Status:**

Screened and Proofed – 25 March 2005

Approved by Board – 23 September 2005

# **POLICY ON VICTIMS**

## **CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Application</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Background</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. Definition</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4. Policy Aim</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>5. Policy Objective</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>6. Policy Outcome</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>7. Policy Statement</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>8. Linkages</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>9. Guidance</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>10. Complaints</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>11. Review</b>	<b>3</b>

## **1. Application**

The Board has a wide range of policies which may apply to different categories of people.

An employee is any person under a current contract of employment with PBNI, including temporary and fixed term contracts.

An agency worker is any person supplied to work with PBNI through an employment agency.

A secondee is any person working with PBNI under a formal secondment agreement between the Board and another organisation.

A student is any person working with PBNI on the basis of a formal agreement between the Board and his/her university, college or other course provider.

A volunteer is any person working with PBNI under the Board's Volunteering Policy.

A partnership worker is any person working with PBNI on the basis of a formal partnership agreement between the Board and another organisation.

The application of this policy to any of the categories above who are not employees of the Board does not in any way confer on them employee status.

In addition to employees this Policy on Victims applies to all the categories given above and to Board Members.

Except where the context otherwise requires, references in this policy to an employee should be read as referring also to the other categories to whom the policy applies.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Probation Board for Northern Ireland recognises that victims have needs at all stages in the criminal justice system, including that of post sentence, and understands the effect that crime can have on victims and those close to them. While tasked with the role of working with offenders, the Board has a key priority in the area of public protection, which is to ensure that the needs of victims informs its practice. **(Corporate Plan 2005-08).**
- 2.2 The Review of Criminal Justice (2000) makes a number of Recommendations regarding victims that require PBNI action.

Rec 228 - The interests of victims should feature in the Codes of Practice and Plans of all Criminal Justice Organisations that interface with them.

Rec 231 – In order to ensure consistency of support to victims ... The Agency which has lead responsibility for working with victims at particular points in the Criminal Justice Process should be clearly delineated.

Rec 232 – To ensure the provision of information and explanation to victims ... where a non-custodial sentence was imposed and the victim has an interest in being kept informed, the Probation Board would take the lead.

This Policy Paper outlines the high priority the Probation Board for Northern Ireland attaches to victim issues.

## **3. Definition**

There is no one universally agreed definition of a victim. For the purpose of the Criminal Justice Review the definition was **“anyone who has suffered as a result of violation of criminal laws, regardless of whether a perpetrator has been identified or is being dealt with by the criminal justice system.”** PBNI includes (for the purposes of information provision) those who were the actual victim of the offence; those who were directly affected by the offence, eg the next of kin or immediate family of a victim who has died as the result of an offence; or, where appropriate, a third party acting on behalf of a victim.

## **4. Policy Aim**

To ensure that the highest quality of service is provided to the victims of Probation Board supervised offenders.

## **5. Policy Objective**

To ensure that Probation Board for Northern Ireland, in partnership with other Criminal Justice Agencies and Groups implements the Recommendations of the Review of Criminal Justice in relation to victims.

## **6. Policy Outcome**

Victims' perspective will be integral to Probation Board for Northern Ireland Practice.

## **7. Policy Statement**

- a) PBNI recognises the importance of victims in the criminal justice system and the effect that crime can have on victims and those close to them.
- b) PBNI is committed to playing a key strategic role, and linking with, the range of bodies, both statutory criminal justice agencies and voluntary organisations, who have a role to play in providing services to victims.
- c) PBNI will seek to ensure that staff include the victim's perspective in all work with offenders. This will be at all stages of risk assessment, supervision, programmes and in our contribution to the setting of requirements for licences.
- d) PBNI will support and facilitate those victims who choose to engage in restorative practices, in order to redress the harm caused to them by the offender.
- e) PBNI staff will have access to appropriate training to enable them to be fully skilled both in this work with offenders and in direct contact with victims.
- f) PBNI will meet the requirements of the Review of Criminal Justice in relation to the provision of information to victims. PBNI will provide information in relation to offenders on Probation supervised sentences.

## **8. Linkages**

This policy links to the following Policies:

- ◆ Restorative Justice;
- ◆ Health and Safety Operations;
- ◆ Complaints;
- ◆ Bullying and Harassment;

This Policy is aligned with The Victims Charter.

## **9. Guidance**

This policy is supported by a separate procedures document.

## **10. Complaints**

Complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the Board's Complaints Policy, Guidance and Procedures.

## **11. Review**

PBNI will review this policy one year after implementation.