

Victims Forum

Minutes of meeting held on 10 November 2022

- **Opening and welcome by the co-chairs**

The co-chairs welcomed the attendees and gave a brief overview of the running order of the meeting. The members were informed that the Forum would be operating under the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Transparency Code and as such the membership of the Forum and minutes of the meeting would be published.

The co-chairs reiterated that the guiding ethos of the Forum is to facilitate a conversation between the department and NGOs and encouraged the members of the forum to suggest themes or agenda items for future meetings. To encourage this, it was suggested that the next meeting of the Forum could be made up of focus groups or workshops to identify the key issues and concerns for organisations that work with other victims of crime and to exchange ideas on how the Forum, as a platform, can be used to work through those.

- **Address to the forum by the Minister**

Apologies were expressed on behalf of the Minister who was called to the Oireachtas on business.

- **Presentations**

The CEO of the Parole Board Cairín de Búis, Naomi Coonan from the Legal Aid Board, Chief Superintendent Colm Noonan from An Garda Síochána and Peter Whelan from GSOC all presented to the Forum in respect of their areas of work and the services provided to victims of crime.

This was followed by a questions and answer session that was open to the floor.

In response to questions related to legal aid, the Forum were informed that a public consultation on legal aid would be opening on Monday November 14th and all members were encouraged to engage with this.

- **Brief update on the work of the subgroup and of ongoing initiatives to raise awareness of the rights of VoC**

A brief overview was given of the work underway to raise awareness of the rights of victims of crime including work promoting the victims' charter both online and offline, work ongoing with IOM, and work to create court familiarisation videos. On foot of some research on the reach of the work undertaken to date, it has been agreed with the Subgroup that a TV and radio ad will be created, which are inclusive by design, and which are aimed at informing all of society that the charter is for them. Work to create more targeted material tailored to specific communities will be further explored by the Subgroup.

- **AOB**

There were no additional points. It was agreed the Forum would meet again in the Spring.