

NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE HAMPSHIRE AREA

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

This "Equality Impact Assessment Form" documents the outcome of a full impact assessment on the specified function, policy or procedure, addressing the equalities strands of: Race, Gender, Disability, Sexuality, Faith and Age. It is to be completed, published as specified, and appended to policy and/or strategy documents.

1. Function Name, Policy or Procedure: Victim Empathy Module

2. Aims and Approach of Function/Policy/Procedure

"The aim of this module is to provide probation staff with a tool to use with offenders, either individually or in groups, to address their attitudes and develop empathy towards their victims"

The Victim Empathy Module is a tool designed in Hampshire in 2004 to provide probation staff with a framework through which they can work with offenders in developing victim empathy. The tool consists of 6 sessions: Looking at the Offence in Detail; Effects of the Offence on Self and Others; Offender's experience of being a Victim of Crime; How does it feel to be a Victim; Review Session.

The Module uses a video and case studies to highlight the experiences of victims and the impact crime has on them, and a range of worksheets. It is designed to be completed over six sessions and although it can be adapted according to crime, risk and need, it is suggested that the exercises are used in the order that they appear in the pack that has been produced.

3. What data/information is available & does it suggest differential impact for any of the groups identified as part of the impact assessment process?

Following the launch of the Victim Empathy Module in 2004 the decision was made to undertake a review of its usage in value amongst Probation Staff and give consideration to a range of equalities issues. An evaluation questionnaire was sent out to all staff, asking for those who had used the tool to respond. 27 questionnaires were returned. The questionnaire did not expressly ask staff to comment about how well the module met the needs of diverse groups or ask for any background information on the offenders on whom it was used. This has made it difficult to use the evaluation for the purpose of this impact assessment, although any future evaluation will ensure the diversity and equalities issues will be addressed.

Overall though, the feedback from Staff on the usability and value of the tool was very good. The opportunity to comment freely on the tool also highlighted the need to assess its ability to meet the needs of offenders with low levels of literacy, but otherwise no comments were made that drew attention to it not being relevant or effective with any specific group of offender in terms of their background.

4. What consultation has been undertaken and what are the results of this?

The tool was developed through collaborative work with HPA Staff, including its Victim Contact Unit and Victim Support. At the review stage, as well as asking staff for feedback, the tool has been given to the Diversity Adviser for comment and the Essential Skills Manager.

5. What changes are needed to remove any adverse impact (either approach or implementation considerations)?

The tool was considered to require some adaptations to make it accessible to those with literacy needs and dyslexia. Guidance was provided for the Working Group that developed the tool in order that any necessary alterations could be put in place.

In relation to wider diversity issues, it was felt that consideration needed to be given to how to ensure that practitioners were able to draw on the diversity issues relevant to offender's own experiences of victimisation generally or as victims of crime. In order to develop victim empathy a sensitivity of how one's own personal background can lead to victimisation is crucial. Developing and exploring this understanding ensures the

module is relevant to offenders from all backgrounds and assists in helping develop an understanding of the victimisation of others.

The module does not explicitly aim to address hate crime through providing a framework to develop victim empathy among offenders whose offences may have been motivated or aggravated by racism, sexism, homophobia etc. The guidance leaves it up to the practitioner as to whether they wish to use the module for these types of offences, but it was felt that if the module is to be used in this way, further material needs to be supplied that is relevant. It was suggested that material from MURMUR to Murder on victim empathy be adapted and integrated into the module for this purpose

6. What decisions have been taken on the basis of the impact assessment and what measures have been put in place to implement?

The module is to be adapted to improve access in terms of literacy and dyslexia.

The working group that developed the tool will give consideration to increasing awareness amongst staff of the diversity issues in relation to offender victimisation and the need to include further exercises relevant to hate crime.

7. Monitoring arrangements and review process

The monitoring arrangements established will not enable an evaluation of the effectiveness of this tool and so a further evaluation through questionnaire of Probation Staff will need to be undertaken in the next review cycle.

8. How results will be published

.Results of this impact assessment will be published on the Diversity Database and through HPA website.

Signature of Policy Lead

Position

Date