

Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Bill

Open Secret/ In Care Survivors Service Scotland

Support for Participants

The number of participants mentioned was around 500 per annum. It was suggested that those participants have a choice of support. While we acknowledge the suggestion from Health in Mind that participants should have a choice of choosing their current support agency there will be many who do not have any current support in place. Costs of a private counsellor are around £45 per hour. For 500 participants having therapy for a year that would equate to £1,170,000. This is the cost of a private counsellor a psychiatrist or psychologist will be significantly higher in unit cost. The amount set aside in the budget is £60,000 per annum.

If this support has also to have the addition of independent advocacy from another agency that would have additional costs in setting up the advocacy service, training the staff in issues for survivors who have been abused in care and service running costs as this service would need to have specialist skills. Forth Valley Advocacy costs £345,000 to run per annum but this support would need to be Scotland wide.

We are concerned that the issue of support for participants in being discussed in an aspirational way with no structured discussion about how this will actually work in practice or how it will be funded. As this is an extremely important part of the process to avoid risk of further harm we feel that it should be carefully considered.

The In Care Survivor Service Scotland have put forward our own service as a suggestion as staff are already specialised in the areas of counselling and advocacy for care survivors, we have a Scotland wide presence and costs of additional hours to support the process would be minimal as the structures are already in place. Our unit cost is substantially lower than private work.

Our service would also enable a structured approach before, during and after the process.

ICSSS was established as the current services for survivors of abuse in care did not meet their needs and this was further emphasised by the external evaluation of the service conducted by Napier University. ICSSS have worked with over 750 survivors of abuse in care and have dealt with many more on our helpline and we feel the views being presented to the committee are not representative of the views of the vast majority of survivors.

Foster care

ICSSS and CELCIS will be further consulting on this area but survivors we work with who have been placed in foster care have expressed a need to have a forum to bring their experiences to and it is likely that the consultation process will reflect this.

Janine Rennie**Chief Executive Open Secret**

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