

## Response ID ANON-ZTNN-FMGP-M

Submitted to **Consultation on Improving the Victims' Code**

Submitted on **2020-05-13 11:13:06**

### Personal details

#### a What is your name?

**Name:**

Gail McGreevy

#### b What is your email address?

**Email:**

lisa.maginnis@probation-ni.gov.uk

#### c Job title or capacity in which you are responding to this consultation exercise (e.g. member of the public etc.)

**question c:**

Head of Communications

#### d What is your organisation?

**Organisation:**

Probation Board for Northern Ireland

#### e If you are a representative of a group, please tell us the name of the group and give a summary of the people or organisations that you represent.

**group:**

### Improving the Victims' Code

#### 1 Do you think our proposal to restructure the Code into 12 overarching rights is the correct one?

**Please give reasons for your response.:**

Yes

PBNI are of the opinion that the proposal to restructure the Code renders it much clearer, and that it is better to have different sections. The document refers to 'Victim Support Service', and we would suggest this should be changed to 'Victim Services'. There is already an agency called Victim Support and this may be confusing for service users i.e. victims. PBNI Victim Information Unit, N. Ireland, like the 'opt out' scheme as this leads to automatic referral of victims to a Victim Liaison Officer.

#### 2 Do you agree that the rights we have identified cover the most important needs of victims?

**Please give reasons for your response.:**

Yes

Enhanced Rights, Page 6. Domestic abuse should be included along with sexual exploitation. Domestic abuse is mentioned in the paragraph below but it should also be mentioned in this sentence.

#### 3 Do you agree that these rights cover the key stages of a victim's journey in the criminal justice system?

**Please give reasons for your response.:**

Yes

The rights as stated are very clear. The time standards and what victims can expect are especially good. PBNI are of the opinion that this holds all professionals to account. However, we do have a concern about civil orders, for example Non-Molestation Orders/Restraining Orders. Where there is evidence that a crime has been committed (Victim Advocate could assist with this), all victims should be able to apply for a NMO, for example via a solicitor, without having to pay for it. It should be free to all victims.

### Information

#### 4 We have included more practical advice and information in the draft revised Code, do you agree with our proposed approach?

**Please give reasons for your response.:**

Yes

#### 5 Is there any important information that you feel we should also include?

**question 5:**

It is useful to have the information in one place. The Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI), support the Restorative Practice references, and it is important that it is specified as another route, not a lesser one.

PBNI would like to see the possibility of Restorative Practice being offered as a first diversionary option in relevant cases. This would represent a move away from crime and punishment and more about what can be done restoratively to make amends.

The fact that there is a direct communication pathway between victims' and the Parole Commissioners for both reassurance and an explanation as to why a certain condition is not on an 'offender's' Licence is beneficial. It helps to make the process more transparent and clarifies decision making for victims/service users.

**Impact Assessment and Equalities Statement**

**6 Are you aware of any evidence or sources of information that would help us to understand and assess equality and economic impacts in greater detail? Please supply.**

**question 6:**

N/A

**6a If you are aware, what do you believe would be the effect of this evidence/ information on our proposals?**

**question 6a:**

**The Draft Revised Code**

**7 Do you have any further comments about the draft revised Code?**

**question 7:**

No