

Standard 4: Ensuring support through the justice process is both independent and survivor-centred

4.1 Criteria:

The organisation:

1. **Formal Independence Agreements:** Establish Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with police and other justice agencies to formalise the independence of the Victim Navigator Programme and to clarify working relationships.
2. **Embedded Support Structures:** Provide co-located services within justice settings to facilitate seamless access and support whilst ensuring survivor representation and the amplification of survivor voices on decision-making committees of these services.
3. **Employment Clearance and Vetting:** Ensure all staff undergo appropriate vetting and clearance processes to maintain safety and trustworthiness within the support framework.
4. **Defined Lines of Responsibility and Boundaries:** Clearly articulate roles, responsibilities, and boundaries for support staff and justice partners to avoid overlap and maintain independent support.
5. **Justice Process-Specific Data Sharing:** Develop and implement data sharing agreements that are specific to the justice process and systems, ensuring survivor confidentiality, informed consent and disclosure.
6. **Unconditional Support and Care:** Provide support services regardless of the survivor's ability or willingness to engage with the police or other justice agencies.
7. **Strategic Advisory Role of Victim Navigators (VN):** Define and recognise the role of VNs in offering strategic advice on cases, ensuring their perspective informs justice process decisions but remains boundaried to protect independence and professionalism.
8. **Support in Police Engagement:** Outline the VN's role in supporting survivors during police interactions, including assistance with Achieving Best Evidence (ABE)¹ interviews, prosecution support, and witness statement provision. For example, Victim Navigators do not seize hard/digital evidence but can provide information on why police are asking a survivor to share their phone handset/liase to have it returned in a timely manner. Share this in MoUs and the Survivor Charter.
9. **MoUs for Key Relationships:** Establish MoUs with the Single Competent Authority (SCA), National Referral Mechanism (NRM) first responders, Organised Immigration Crime (OIC), Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), and VCC/SVMS (Victim Care Contract/Support for Victims of Modern Slavery) service providers to formalise all collaborative relationships.
10. **Knowledge of Criminal Justice System (CJS):** Ensure staff possess a thorough understanding of the CJS, including survivor-centred intelligence collection and planning, to provide effective support.

¹ Victim Navigators are integrated into policing teams yet maintain independent operations. They deploy on warrants and support victims from the initial point of identification. Evidence gathering includes the Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) protocol, a national standard for interviewing children and vulnerable adults in criminal investigations. Although Victim Navigators do not participate in these interviews, they assist victims in attending and comprehending the process. Remaining independent of the criminal investigation, Victim Navigators bridge the gap between victims' rights and their journey through the criminal justice system.

11. **Understanding of Court Witness Services:** Define and require key knowledge of court witness services for staff, so they can effectively support survivors throughout the justice process.
12. **Training Provision:** Provide ongoing training for, and with staff, partners, and survivors to ensure best practice and continuous improvement in survivor-centred support.
13. **Conflict of Interest Policy:** Develop and implement a clear conflict of interest policy, including definitions and processes for managing conflicts. This should address whether a VN can work within a police force they have previously been employed by and establish safeguards to maintain independence.
14. **Right to review and to complain:** Ensure staff know how to, and provide practical support, to survivors wanting to complain about the criminal justice process including their rights to review and the roles of the Crown Prosecution Service, the Independent Office for Police Conduct, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner.

4.2 Sample Evidence Table:

Criterion	Sample Evidence
Formal Independence Agreements	Signed MoUs with police and relevant justice agencies; meeting minutes referencing independent status.
Embedded Support Structures	Photos or records of co-located support spaces; committee meeting attendance lists that include survivor representatives.
Employment Clearance and Vetting	HR records of vetting outcomes; staff induction checklists; audit reports on employment clearance processes.
Defined Lines of Responsibility and Boundaries	Organisational charts; written role descriptions; policy documents outlining boundaries and escalation pathways.
Justice Process-Specific Data Sharing	Copies of data sharing agreements; documentation of data handling procedures; records of staff training on data confidentiality.
Unconditional Support and Care	Service access policies; anonymised case studies showing support independent of police engagement; survivor feedback forms.
Strategic Advisory Role of VN	Terms of reference for advisory roles; records of VN input in case reviews; examples of advice provided.
Support in Police Engagement	Procedures for ABE and witness support; case files documenting VN involvement; feedback from police and survivors.
MoUs for Key Relationships	Signed agreements with SCA, NRM, OIC, GLAA, VCC/SVMS; review logs of collaborative meetings and outcomes.
Knowledge of Criminal Justice System (CJS)	Training attendance logs; staff competency assessments; evidence of participation in CJS-related workshops.

Understanding of Court Witness Services	Training materials; case support summaries; survivor feedback on witness support provided.
Training Provision	Training calendars; certificates of completion; evaluation reports from staff and partner organisations.
Conflict of Interest Policy	Published policy documents; records of conflict of interest declarations and management; documented assessments for staff with prior police employment.
Right to review and to complain	Third party complaints policy; staff awareness and evidence of support provided via case files.