



Victims of Domestic Violence Journey Map

1 INTRODUCTION

NICTS is committed to working with partner justice organisations to improve the experience of victims and witnesses at court, and victims of domestic violence are one of the key groups that have been identified for particular attention. To this end a customer journey map exercise was undertaken to ascertain in detail the experiences of victims of domestic violence throughout their involvement with the criminal (and civil and family) justice system.

2 JOURNEY MAPPING

Customer journey mapping aims to develop understanding through a process of tracking and describing all the practical and emotional experiences that a group have as they encounter a service or set of services.

2.2 Journey mapping is a tool which asks participants how they felt at a particular stage of a process and their response is plotted on a chart representing a scale of emotions from negative to positive. Journey maps may either be used to show the complete experience of one individual or assimilated into one chart which uses the average scores of all of the participants. In the latter case the average response of the sample group selected is used to offer an overview of the reactions experienced. Direct quotations are also included on the chart to add detail and impact.

3 AIMS

NICTS uses journey mapping exercises as a means of improving customer insight for various groups of court and tribunals users. In previous similar exercises action plans have been produced where necessary so that improvements might be made to make the experiences of future users more positive. NICTS has also shared results with other agencies.

4 METHODOLOGY

A proposal to undertake the exercise was brought to the Belfast Domestic Violence Partnership Protection & Justice Committee; it was agreed to proceed with the exercise using the Partnership as a reference group. Initial question drafts were shared with Partnership colleagues including a focus group of outreach support workers¹. The questions were also shared with the MARAC co-ordinator, Jackie Gaskin. The questions or statements were phrased so that a number could be assigned to the level of agreement/disagreement on a scale of 1 – 10; 1 being negative or disagreement and 10 being positive or agreement. Participants were also invited to explain their response or to make comments on their experiences at each stage. As far as possible the questions follow the timeline through the average person's experience of contact with organisations and agencies following their report of domestic violence.

- 4.2** Women's Aid staff very kindly agreed to assist with the fieldwork by providing questionnaires to a range of their clients. 28 completed questionnaires were submitted back to NICTS.

¹ Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid

4.3 Average scores for each question or statement were calculated and the results plotted on a simple line graph. Representative statements or comments were added to the chart at appropriate points in the journey. Many more comments are available than could be included on the final document and these may be sought from the authors. To assist in contextualizing the results and comments a full set of the questions is also included on the chart. Question number 1 is not included as it was to establish the first 'port of call' for the victim (which organisation they initially reported the domestic violence to) and therefore is not suitable for plotting on a scale. Similarly, the last question, number 38, asks participants for their opinion on what single improvement they would suggest for the justice process. Again responses to this cannot be plotted on a chart but comments are available.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The authors of the report were extremely pleased with the level of response to the survey and the frankness of the comments. We were conscious of the difficulties facing those with these experiences and grateful for their participation. While many of the comments are critical of the processes and attitudes of those with whom they came into contact with, the average scores are not actually very negative. The results line is well above neutral for much of the chart and the average score for all of the questions is 5.79. The lowest scores relate to the length of time spent waiting at court and the overall impression of the justice system. NICTS is already working with partners to see what can be done about reducing waiting times at court and the comments received will add value to that endeavour.

5.2 NICTS is also aware that the participants in this particular exercise were all women and living in the same geographical area. In order to give a wider picture, NICTS will consider whether the survey might be conducted in other areas and with different groups of victims of domestic violence including men. Suggestions

for further work in this area or any feedback on the exercise may be directed to the authors.