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VicTory

Restorative and victim-centred approach to mitigate hate and (violent) extremism

Cooperation with Justice Institutions

Insights Brief

What have we learned about cooperation with justice institutions, and how does this apply in practice?

Why is cooperation important?

Complex challenges = Complex and integrated solutions

Victim support, in general, rarely depends on a single organisation. In practice, victims and survivors interact with multiple actors, including law enforcement, judicial authorities, civil society organisations and community members themselves.

Potential consequences of poor cooperation:

- Fragmented support
- Inconsistent information
- Secondary victimisation and enhanced trauma

In short, it jeopardises a victim-centred approach. Consequently, effective cooperation helps to:

- Ensure that responses are more coordinated
- Information and procedures are clear
- Support mechanisms are understood and easier to access

Understanding cooperation in practice

Cooperation involves more than formal communication. It requires regular interaction, clear roles and a shared understanding of how victims move through the system.

In practice, this means aligning procedures, exchanging relevant information and ensuring that victims are guided without unnecessary complexity. A coordinated approach reduces confusion and improves the overall support experience.

What does effective cooperation require?

Effective cooperation is usually based on a few key elements:

- **Clear roles and responsibilities**, so that services complement rather than overlap
- **Regular communication**, to ensure consistent and timely information
- **Structured referral pathways**, so victims are guided from one service to another
- **Shared understanding of victim needs**, including sensitivity to trauma

According to field practitioners:[1]

> Victims of hate crime need multidisciplinary support (…) you should not be working alone.

> Cooperation, especially information sharing, is a delicate issue, especially in the security context. However, it needs to be adopted, across all levels, starting from managerial positions down to local settings.

What challenges exist in practice?

Cooperation is often affected by practical constraints, such as limited communication between institutions, unclear responsibilities or different working approaches.

Additional barriers may include a lack of shared tools, data protection limitations and inconsistent coordination mechanisms. These factors can lead to delays and gaps in support.

[1] These insights were adapted from VicTory's Handbook on Multi-agency cooperation (Link)

Why does this matter?

When cooperation between institutions is fragmented, the legal system becomes harder to navigate. Victims may receive conflicting information, feel passed from one service to another, or struggle to understand what comes next. **Over time, this can reduce trust and limit access to support.**

When cooperation works well, the experience is more structured and predictable. Information is clearer, services are connected, and victims are guided more smoothly through the process.

Cooperation, therefore, directly affects how accessible and effective support is in practice.

Moving forward: What is needed

1. Improve and maintain consistent communication
2. Establish a shared commitment across sectors
3. Develop clear coordination mechanisms, ingrained in a legal and institutional cooperative culture

A more connected system makes it easier for victims to access support and reduces the burden of navigating complex structures.

Effective cooperation is essential for building a response that is both comprehensive and victim-centred.

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Mitigating Hate to Restore Justice: Elevating Victims' Voices

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