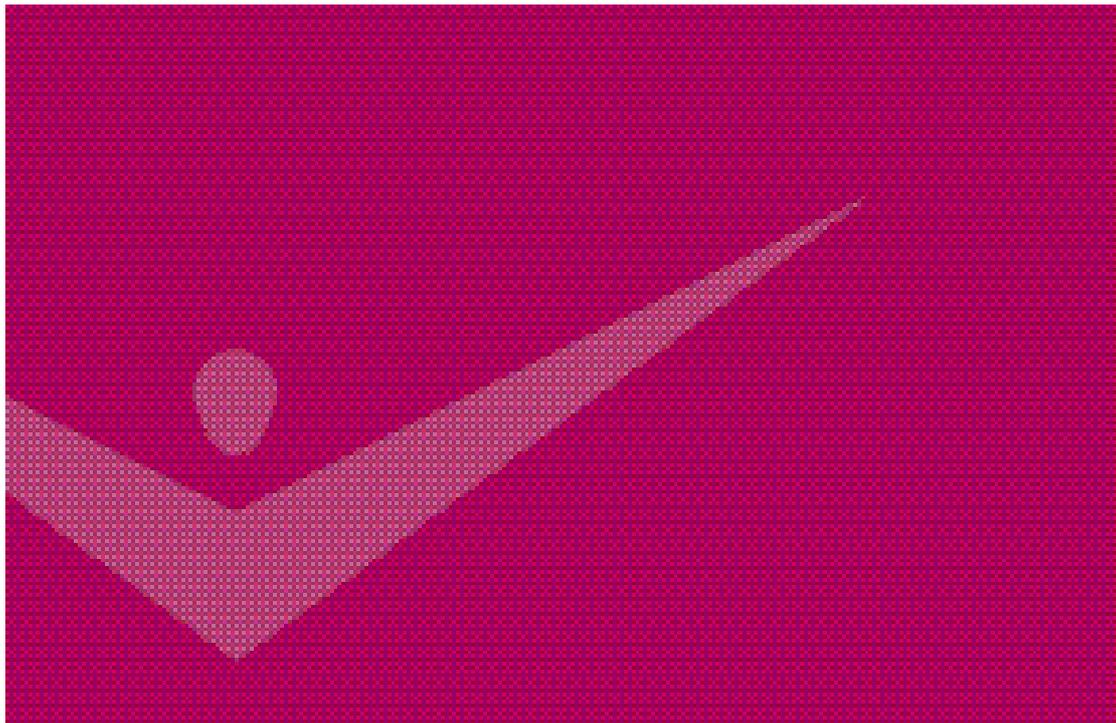


Commission
for the Support of

Victims of Crime

Annual Report 2008



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Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime

Report to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform

2008

Executive Summary

- The Commission was reconstituted in September, 2008.
- The Commission held 12 formal meetings between January and December 2008.
- Following public advertisements 56 applications in respect of funding for 2008 and 45 applications in respect of funding for 2009 were received by the Commission and examined in detail by them.
- €1,057,148 was distributed to 45 Non-Governmental Organisations providing front-line services to victims of crime in 2008. This represents almost a 12% increase over 2007 funding to NGOs.
- The Commission continued to work on developing a Support Framework for future structures and services for victims of crime and held an Information Day on the draft Framework Document in February, 2008.
- The Commission presented its final Framework Document to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform in April, 2008.
- The new reconstituted Commission and a Victims of Crime Office were established in September, 2008.
- The Minister met with representatives of the NGOs funded by the Commission in September, 2008
- Research was commissioned and commenced on behalf of the Commission in 2008, to explore the experience of victims of crime who had contact with voluntary sector organisations.
- The Co-Ordinator to the Commission visited a number of NGOs funded by the Commission during 2008.
- The Commission continued to review the Victims Charter in 2008.
- Funding decisions in relation to NGOs for 2009 were made in December, 2008 and the NGOs were notified.

1. Reconstituted Commission

The Commission was reconstituted in September, 2008. This Report, therefore, covers the work of the first Commission and the reconstituted Commission. (See 8 below for details)

2. Meetings

- 2.1** The Commission held 12 meetings in the period January to December 2008.
- 2.1** Following requests for meetings from a number of Non-Governmental Organisations, funded by them, the Commission met with a number of them throughout 2008.

3. Disbursement of Funding, 2008

- 3.1** €1,133,000 was made available to the Commission for the provision of services to victims of crime in 2008.
- 3.2** As in previous years, a public advertisement was placed in national newspapers on the 30th November, 2007 inviting applications for funding for 2008. The Commission again invited applications for funding from registered charities, voluntary/ community groups and other bodies who provided or who had proposals for the provision of victim services/ assistance. A detailed application form was forwarded to each of the applicants. Organisations being funded were required to be legal entities, to register with the Data Protection Commissioner, and to provide evidence of tax compliance in accordance with Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform financial procedures.
- 3.3** 56 completed applications for funding were returned to the Commission, the majority of them from organisations that had applied and received funding in previous years from the Commission. A copy of the advertisement is at Appendix C.
- 3.4** The Commission examined each application in detail and made recommendations in respect of each application. The Commission is entirely independent in its decision making and examines each application on its own merits.
- 3.5** The Commission sees one of its roles as ensuring the provision of a high quality service across the country to victims of crime. It is committed to ensuring maximum benefit for the victim from taxpayers' funds. It must make certain that basic conditions are met before it issues funding. Successful organisations are required, therefore, to accept certain conditions before monies are issued. This involved the completion of a Form of Acceptance, which sets out the terms under which funding is granted. These conditions include a commitment to

provide evaluation reports, financial statements and audited reports as required by the Commission.

- 3.6** The Commission prioritises the funding of activities at ground level that provide direct supports for victims of crime, rather than for example administrative structures or awareness raising campaigns. The Commission places particular emphasis on the necessity for support to be provided to victims when attending court. It is aware that courtrooms can be an extremely stressful environment for victims and their families. For this reason the funding of court accompaniment services is a priority for the Commission.

4. Applications received and granted funding by the Commission in 2008

- 4.1** The Commission received applications and granted funding to 45 organisations including the following:

- *National Crime Victims Helpline [1850-211-407]*

The Commission supports and promotes the National Crime Victims Helpline as a central point of contact for all victims of crime. The Helpline began operating in September 2005 and was formally launched by the Minister for Justice and Law Reform on 14th November 2005. It is manned by volunteers and operates from 10.00am to 7.30pm on Monday. From Tuesdays to Thursday the service is available from 10am – 5pm and on Saturdays from 2pm to 4.00pm.

The Helpline provides the opportunity for people who are victims of crime to find emotional support on the phone, while it also provides information on the criminal justice system and on local services. As well as providing information and emotional support for victims of crime, the Helpline acts as a resource for other voluntary organisations and the Gardaí in helping to ensure that victims of crime can access the supports appropriate to their needs.

- *AdVIC* advocate for changes that will bring about a re-balancing of the criminal justice system, and increased recognition of the status of families of homicide victims within the system.
- *The Federation for Victim Assistance* offers emotional and practical support to all victims of crime.
- *The Irish Tourist Assistance Service* provides a support service to tourist victims of crime.
- *MISS (Missing in Ireland Support Service)* provides information and support to families and friends of missing persons through a phone helpline.
- *Support after Crime* provides emotional support and practical information to all persons affected by crime.

- *Support after Homicide* provides emotional and practical support for those bereaved by homicide.

4.2 Services to victims of Domestic Violence

The Commission approved 25 applications for funding from organisations providing services to victims of domestic violence, mainly for the provision of a court accompaniment service.

4.3 Services to victims of Sexual Violence and Human Trafficking

The Commission approved two applications for funding from organisations providing services to victims of sexual violence for the provision of a court accompaniment service. It provided funding to the *Sexual Violence Centre Cork*. It also approved funding for *Ruhama* towards the provision of services for women trafficked into Ireland for the purpose of exploitation within the commercial sex industry.

4.4 Services to children who are victims

The Commission funded *CARI* and *Barnardos* in 2008. *CARI* provides support to children who are victims of sexual abuse. The Commission provided €80,000 in funding to *CARI* in 2008 towards the development of their court accompaniment support service for children who have to attend court as a witness. *Barnardos* provides counselling to children who are bereaved because of homicide.

4.5 Summary of successful applications

45 organisations were successful in securing funding from the Commission in 2008.

Appendix A shows the list of the organisations that were allocated funding by the Commission in 2008.

5. Funding decisions for 2009

To ensure that the Non Governmental Organisations funded by the Commission would receive their payment as early as possible in 2009, the Commission placed an advertisement in the national newspapers in October, 2008 inviting applications for funding for 2009 (Appendix D). The closing date for receipt of applications was the 30th November, 2008. The Commission received 45 applications and made decisions in principle regarding these applications at its meeting in December, 2008 following which the applicants were notified of the decisions made.

6. Developing a Support Framework for Crime Victims

- 6.1** In addition to the disbursement of funds to organisations that support victims of crime, the Commission was established in 2005 to “devise an appropriate support framework for victims of crime into the future”.
- 6.2** Through its work, the Commission has gained considerable insights into the needs of victims, the supports and services available to them and the impact of the Criminal Justice system on victims of crime. The environment for crime victims has been changing rapidly. In the past decade, new victim support organisations were established. New legislation introducing victim-centred criminal reforms was passed. A culture began to emerge of striking a fairer balance between the rights of the community in general and those of victims of crime in particular on the one hand, and the traditional rights of the accused on the other hand.
- 6.3** To assist the Commission in informing itself on the development of policies for victims into the future, it commissioned research on the services provided by NGOs and others to victims of crime. The Research was carried out by Trinity College Dublin and completed in 2007.
- 6.4** In drawing up its Framework Document, the Commission also wished to take on board the interests and perspectives of all stakeholders. An Information Day was organised by the Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime on 27th February, 2008. The event was attended by 70 people, representing 48 organisations, including 35 NGOs that support victims of crime and are funded by the Commission and the remainder by representatives from the criminal justice agencies. It gave those who come in contact with victims of crime, and are, therefore, aware of their needs, an opportunity to express their viewpoints and visions for the future.
- 6.5** Through its work over the three years, the Commission came to realise the wide variety of victims, including victims of domestic violence, homicide, trafficking and sexual violence that existed, and the range of organisations offering support to these victims. These groups provide a diverse range of services to victims and the Commission was anxious to bring on board the interests and perspectives of all stakeholders.
- 6.6** The Commission also met with a number of the Criminal Justice Agencies as part of its ongoing consultations with interested parties.

7. Presentation of the Framework Document to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform

- 7.1** The *Framework Document: Recommendations for Future Structures and Services for Victims of Crime* looked at the situation in regard to the supports which are available to victims and outlined how these might be strengthened to

ensure that victims receive adequate assistance in the aftermath of crime. The Commission presented the Framework Document to the Minister in April, 2008. He accepted the recommendations of the Commission in full.

7.2 The following were the main recommendations made by the Commission in the Framework Document;

A new full time **Executive Office**, for the support of victims of crime, to be established in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

A **Chief Executive Officer** and dedicated staff (including a co-ordinator role) to be put in place.

The re-constitution of **The Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime**.

The Commission would be required to meet with NGOs twice yearly for consultation and briefing in a **Victims Consultative Forum**.

A copy of the Framework Document is available on the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform's website at www.justice.ie under Press & Publications/ Publications/ Crime and Law Enforcement (19/06/2008).

8. Setting up the new Commission, the Consultative Forum and the Victims of Crime Office

8.1 The reconstituted Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime was set up in September, 2008, with the following members:

Mr. Ray McAndrew, Chairman (former Assistant Commissioner of An Garda Síochána)

Mr. Sean Lowry (former Head of the Probation Service)

Ms Nora Owen (former Minister for Justice)

Mr. Michael Whelan (Gemini Consulting)

Mr Greg Heylin, Ex Officio (Director of the Victims of Crime Office)

The new Commission held its first meeting on the 7th October, 2008 at which they acknowledged the work of the retiring Commission members Mr. Jim McHugh and Ms Marian Finucane and thanked them for their invaluable contribution to the work of the Commission.

8.2 The first meeting of the Consultative Forum was set for January, 2009.

8.3 The Victims of Crime Office was established in September, 2008. Mr. Greg Heylin was appointed as Director of the new Office. The core mandate of the Victims of Crime Office is to improve the continuity and quality of services to victims of crime, by state agencies and non-governmental organisations throughout the country. It works to support the development of competent, caring and efficient services to victims of crime.

9. Co-operation and Co-ordination Between the Commission, the Criminal Justice Agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations

- 9.1** The Commission considers that a coherent strategy to support victims of crime is essential in order to deliver an efficient service to victims of crime. This can only be achieved through co-operation and co-ordination between all the criminal justice agencies such as the DPP, an Garda Síochána, the Court Service, and the Probation Service. The Commission continued to engage with these agencies, throughout 2008 as part of its ongoing work in ensuring that the victim has a central place in the criminal justice system and that their needs and concerns are addressed.
- 9.2** Similarly, good communication and co-operation between the Commission and the NGOs its funds is essential. The Commission aims to provide funded organisations with the best possible service it can. It is open to exchanging ideas and information with NGOs while at the same time it is glad to be able to provide guidance and advice to NGOs when requested. It is prepared to respond to requests for meetings by them whenever possible.

10. Justice for Victims Initiative

- 10.1** In September, 2008 The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Mr. Dermot Ahern T.D. met with representatives of the NGOs funded by the Commission. The Minister wished to hear first hand the experience of the organisations on the ground and their concerns in relation to victims of crime. The meeting also provided an opportunity for the Minister to outline his Justice for Victims Initiative to those who attended and to assure them that a legislative package was being progressed and was on course to be published in the Spring of 2009.

11. Research Document

The Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime needs to be fully apprised of the needs of victims of crime. Thus, following the issue of tenders, it commissioned University College Cork to carry out research on:

- the needs of victims of crime and their families
- the extent to which victims of crime seek support from the services available
- the extent to which those needs are met by organisations which provide support to victims of crime and the criminal justice agencies.

This is a follow up to the initial research completed for the Commission in 2007.

12. Work of the Co-Ordinator in 2008

Mr. Denis O'Neill, Co-Ordinator to the Commission continued to meet with funded organisations in 2008 in order to bring their concerns to the attention of the Commission itself and the criminal justice agencies.

13. Review of the Victims Charter

13.1 The Commission's remit includes reviewing the Charter entitled *Victims Charter and Guide to the Criminal Justice System*. The Charter was last updated in 1999. It sets out, from the victim's perspective, a general description of the overall criminal justice system, a concise summary of the role and functions of each of the main bodies/agencies involved, the entitlements of the victim in terms of standards of treatment, and complaints procedures in each area. A guiding principle of the Victims Charter is a commitment to giving victims of crime a central place in the criminal justice system.

The Commission continued with its work of updating the Charter in 2008. A revised draft was prepared and a series of meetings with criminal justice agencies began with a meeting with an Garda Síochána. The focus of these meetings is to improve implementation of the commitments in the Charter.

14. Accommodation for Missing in Ireland Support Service (MISS), the Crime Victims Helpline and Irish Tourist Assistance Service.

14.1 Missing in Ireland Support Service (MISS) is a non-denominational, non-political, non-profit, voluntary organisation. Its primary aim is to support families and individuals who have a relative, colleague or friend who is missing. MISS had no fixed accommodation for its helpline. Following negotiations with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform the Commission secured accommodation for the MISS helpline in 2008.

14.2 The Commission also secured accommodation for the Crime Victims Helpline from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The Commission notes that the Department also provided accommodation to the Irish Tourist Assistance Service in 2008.

15. 2008 Audit of Organisations Funded by the Commission

15.1 The Commission engaged the services of the Internal Audit Unit of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to carry out routine audits on two of the organisations it funds. This work was part of a rolling programme of audits of funded organisations. The internal audits are designed to offer the Commission reasonable assurances that there is an adequate system of internal financial controls in place in these organisations and that these are robust and operating. On the basis of the audit work carried out and evidence presented,

the Internal Audit Unit was satisfied that the systems of internal financial control operating in those organisations were reasonable.

15.2 On the basis of the work carried out by Internal Audit, and the implementation of a number of Internal Audit recommendations, the Commission was satisfied that there exists an adequate and effective system of internal financial control operating within the organisations audited.

16. Other Commission Activities in 2008

16.1 Members of the Commission attended the following events in 2008:

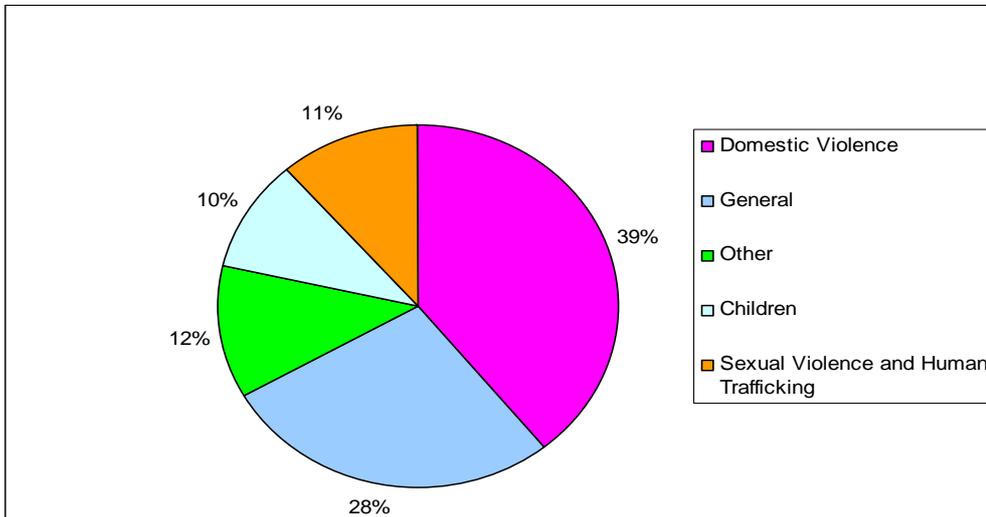
- Mr. Sean Lowry attended the Nordic Conference on Victims and Victims Support held in Helsinki in March, 2008.
- The Chairman, Mr. McHugh spoke at a Seminar held in April, 2008 by the Director of Public Prosecutions on his Discussion Paper on the giving of reasons for decisions not to prosecute. Two Members of the Commission also attended the Seminar.
- Ms Nora Owen and Mr. Denis O’Neill attended the COSC conference entitled “Stopping Domestic Violence: What Works” held in Waterford in May, 2008.
- The Chairman, Mr. McHugh, made a presentation at the Annual Conference of the International Society for the Reform of the Criminal Law held in July, 2008.
- Mr. Sean Lowry was a guest speaker at the launch of the Restorative Justice Services Tallaght Annual Report 2007 in September, 2008.
- Ms. Nora Owen and Mr. Greg Heylin attended a COSC consultation on a national strategy in relation to domestic and sexual violence in Dublin in November, 2008.
- The Chairman, Mr. Ray McAndrew and Mr. Sean Lowry attended a conference entitled “Lost in Translation” held by the Director of Public Prosecutions in conjunction with St. Louise’s Unit, Our Lady’s Hospital Crumlin and St. Clare’s, Temple St. Hospital in November, 2008. The conference addressed issues concerning child victims and witnesses.

Successful applicants for funding in 2008

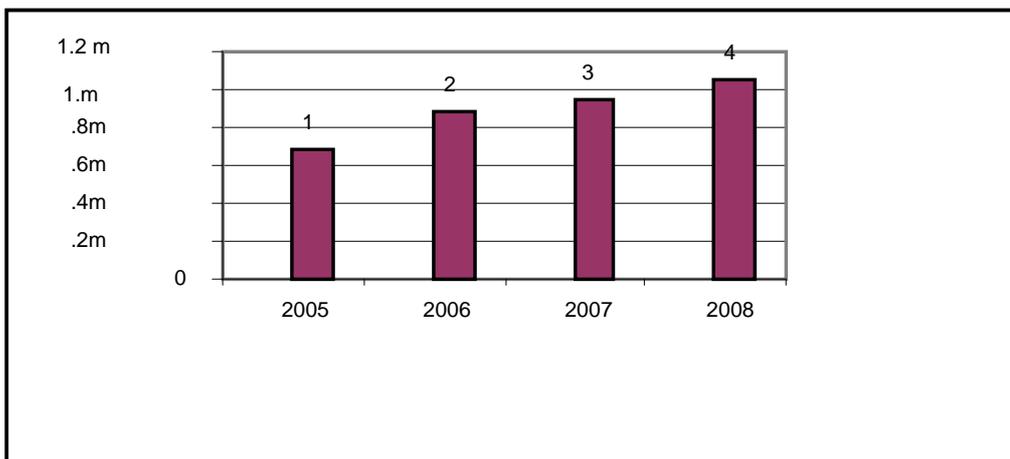
Organisation	Amount	Purpose of funding
Adapt (Kerry)	22,000	Court accompaniment
Adapt (Limerick)	40,000	Court accompaniment
AdVIC	15,000	Advocacy and support to families bereaved by homicide
Amen	30,000	Court accompaniment
Ascend	12,000	Court accompaniment
Barnados	25,000	Bereavement counselling to children affected by homicide
Beacon of Light Counselling Centre	15,000	Counselling services to victims of crime
CARI	80,000	Court support and accompaniment to children affected by crime
Carlow Women's Aid	10,000	Court accompaniment
Clare Haven Services	12,000	Court accompaniment
Court Support Service	40,000	Court accompaniment
Crime Victims Helpline	75,000	Helpline service to victims of crime
Cuan Saor Women's Refuge Ltd.	15,000	Court accompaniment
Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (Sligo)	7,000	Court accompaniment
Domestic Violence Response (Galway)	10,000	Court accompaniment
Donegal Domestic Violence Service	13,000	Court accompaniment
Drogheda Women's Refuge	15,000	Court accompaniment
Dundalk Counselling Service	5,000	Counselling services to victims of crime
Family Life Centre (Violence Against Women) (Roscommon)	15,000	Court accompaniment
Federation for Victim Assistance	45,000	Support service to victims of crime
Innishowen Women's Refuge	3,000	Court accompaniment
Irish Centre for Parentally abducted Children	2,000	Updating and printing booklets

Laois Support Against Domestic Abuse	15,000	Court accompaniment
Letterkenny Women's Centre (Counselling)	4,265	Court accompaniment
Living Life Voluntary Counselling Centre (Wicklow)	5,000	Counselling services to women affected by domestic violence
Longford Women's Link	22,000	Court accompaniment
Mayo Women's Support Service	17,000	Court accompaniment
Meath Women's Refuge	20,000	Court accompaniment
Missing in Ireland Support Services	20,000	Provision of helpline for families of missing persons
Mna Feasa	21,000	Court accompaniment
Offaly Women in Crisis	7,000	Court accompaniment
One in Four	30,000	Court accompaniment
Open Door Network	15,000	Support for network of organisations who assist victims of crime
Ruhama	70,000	Services to victims of human trafficking
Saoirse Housing Association	7,000	Court accompaniment
Sexual Violence Centre	20,000	Court accompaniment
South Kerry Branch for Victims of Crime	1,020	Support services to victims of crime
Support After Crime	90,000	Support services to victims of crime
Support After Homicide	36,000	Support services to families of bereaved by homicide
Tearmann Housing Association	15,000	Court accompaniment
Victim Support	11,863	Support services to victims of crime
Women's Aid Dublin	56,000	Court accompaniment
Women's Aid Dundalk	10,000	Court accompaniment
You Are Not Alone	3,000	Court accompaniment
TOTAL	1,057,148	

Funding granted by type of organisation providing services to victims of crime



Funding granted from 2005 to 2008



- 1 Funding in 2005 €85,750
- 2 Funding in 2006 €85,250
- 3 Funding in 2007 €46,125
- 4 Funding in 2008 €1,057,148



PUBLIC NOTICE
Commission for the
Support of Victims of Crime

2008 funding for provision of
Services to Victims of Crime

The Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime was established by The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform in March 2005 to –

- disburse funding to organisations who provide support and assistance to victims of crime and to
- devise an appropriate support framework for victims of crime into the future

The Commission is again inviting applications for funding for 2008 from registered charities, voluntary/community groups and other bodies who provide or who have proposals for the provision of victim services/assistance. Applicants for funding must be either a registered charity or a limited company.

Application forms can be downloaded from www.justice.ie or can be obtained from Anne O'Shea, Secretary to the Commission at the address below.

Application forms must be returned by Wednesday, the 31st January, 2008

Contact details:

Ms Anne O'Shea
Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime,
c/o Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform,
Pinebrook House
71/74 Harcourt St.
Dublin 2.
Tel: 01-6028681.
e-mail: csvc@justice.ie



PUBLIC NOTICE

**Commission for the
Support of Victims of Crime**

**2009 funding for provision of
Services to Victims of Crime**

The Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime was reconstituted by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform in September 2008 to –

- disburse funding to organisations who provide support and assistance to victims of crime
- assist in the development of strategies and policies to support victims of crime with a view to improving cohesion and consistency of service and information available to victims of crime.

The Commission is inviting applications for funding for 2009 from registered charities, voluntary/community groups and other bodies who provide or who have proposals for the provision of victim services/assistance. Applicants for funding must be either a registered charity or a limited company. Enquiries about joint applications between two or more groups would be welcome.

Application forms can be downloaded from www.justice.ie or can be obtained from Anne O'Shea, Secretary to the Commission at the address below.

**Application forms must be returned by Friday,
28th November, 2008**

Contact details:

**Ms Anne O'Shea
Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime,
c/o Department of Justice,
Equality and Law Reform,
Pinebrook House,
71 – 74 Harcourt Street,
Dublin 2**

Tel: 01-6028681. e-mail: csvc@justice.ie