

Information bulletin

Victim Services and Crime Prevention

July 2014

We Want to Hear from You!

If you have feedback about this bulletin or would like to submit information about an innovative project to be featured in a future bulletin, please contact us at victimservices@gov.bc.ca.

Please consider the environment before printing this e-bulletin.

Thank you!



Victim Services and
Crime Prevention
Community Safety and
Crime Prevention Branch
Ministry of Justice



this issue

Restitution Program Now Available to Assist Victims Experiencing Financial Loss	2
VictimLink BC Awareness Campaign Targets Rural Communities	2
New Victim Impact Statement Guide and Form	2
Program Spotlight: Sophie's Place	3
Live-in Caregiver Project Complete	3
Working with Grief and Traumatic Loss: Training Opportunity	4
Online Training Still Available!	4
Canadian Victims Bill of Rights	5
Elder Abuse Awareness Day	5

Message from the Executive Director



Welcome to the June 2014 Information Bulletin. This edition covers a variety of topics, from program announcements to pending legislative changes and training opportunities.

Restitution is financial compensation offenders may be ordered to pay to victims of crime. Restitution not only assists in addressing the financial impacts of crime, but provides a unique opportunity

for victims to participate in the criminal justice process and feel that their concerns have been heard.

To enhance victim services regarding restitution, I am very pleased to announce the launch of a new Restitution Program, which will provide information and support to victims regarding unpaid restitution orders. The program has released a [new brochure](#). See page two for more information.

This Bulletin also contains a program spotlight on Sophie's Place, a Child Advocacy Centre in Surrey. Child Advocacy Centres co-locate police, child protection workers and victim services in child-friendly environment to investigate and respond to physical and sexual child abuse. Congratulations to

Gerard and his team on the launch of the newly expanded Sophie's Place.

Other articles include information about the VictimLink BC rural awareness campaign, the Live-in Caregiver Project, and the proposed Victims Bill of Rights.

Thank you for your valuable contribution to assisting victims of crime and women and children impacted by violence. I hope that all of you have an opportunity to take time to relax this summer with family and friends.

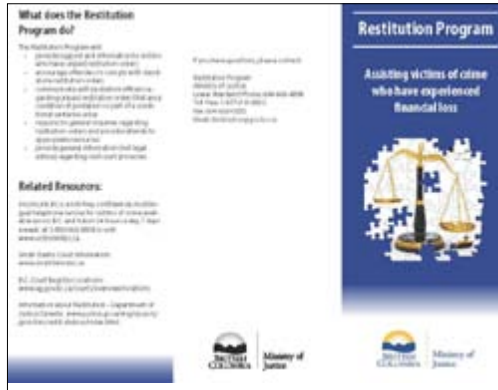
Executive Director
Victim Services and Crime
Prevention
Community Safety and Crime
Prevention Branch
Ministry of Justice

Restitution Program Now Available to Assist Victims Experiencing Financial Loss

The Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch has implemented a new Restitution Program to assist victims of crime who have experienced financial loss. The program assists victims to receive payment of restitution orders and works with offenders to encourage their compliance with restitution orders. The program is modelled on similar programs currently operating in Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan.

The Restitution Program:

- provides support and information to victims who have unpaid restitution orders
- encourages offenders to comply with stand alone restitution orders
- communicates with probation officers regarding unpaid restitution orders that are a condition of probation or part of a conditional sentence order
- responds to general inquiries regarding restitution orders and provides referrals to appropriate resources
- provides general information (not legal advice) regarding civil court processes



The program has developed a brochure that provides general information about restitution, how and when to request it, types of financial losses compensated, and other topics. The brochure can be [downloaded electronically](#) or paper copies can be ordered through our [order form](#).

If you, or a victim you are working with, would like more information or have questions, please feel free to contact Michele Matthews, Restitution Program at 604-660-4898, or by email restitution@gov.bc.ca.

VictimLink BC Awareness Campaign Targets Rural Communities

Through funding from the federal Department of Justice, in March 2014, the Branch launched an awareness campaign for VictimLink BC focusing on rural B.C. communities. The campaign included advertisements in rural B.C. newspapers, online ads on Facebook and Google, and radio public service announcements. The project resulted in an unprecedented 8176 visits to the VictimLink BC website during the week of the campaign (more than 14 times the number of visits over the previous week and more than 19 times the weekly average of visits since May 2012).

The success of the recent campaign follows a similar campaign from last year (also via federal funding) that helped to raise awareness of VictimLink BC in major urban centres across B.C. The 2013 VictimLink BC awareness campaign, which included advertisements on transit and in major B.C. newspapers, resulted in a 50% increase in visitors to the VictimLink BC website during the month of March 2013.

New Victim Impact Statement Guide and Form



The Ministry of Justice has recently updated the Victim Impact Statement Form. The new Victim Impact Statement Form replaces all older versions, and will now be the only form that is used, regardless of the offence type. As a result, victims will only need to fill out the portions of the form that are relevant to them. The Victim Impact Statement Guide has also been updated.

The Victim Impact Statement Form and Guide are now available in ten languages, including English, Chinese, Filipino, French, Hindi, Korean, Persian, Punjabi, Spanish and Vietnamese. Please visit the [Ministry of Justice website](#) to access the form and guide.

Program Spotlight: Sophie's Place



Photo: Surrey Major Diane Watts cuts ribbon at Sophie's Place grand re-opening on June 18, 2014

Sophie's Place is a Child Advocacy Centre in Surrey that provides specialized services for physically, mentally, or sexually abused children in a child-friendly setting. Sophie's Place is a partnership between the Centre for Child Development, the RCMP, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and the City of Surrey. The collective team of specialists includes victim services, a counsellor, police, and child protection workers. Possible instances of child abuse are investigated, and support is provided to children and their families.

Child Advocacy Centres (CACs) integrate multiple service providers to provide an accessible "one-stop-shop" where child and youth victims and their non-offending family members can receive necessary supports and services in a safe, child-centred environment. Research shows that CACs offer promising practices for improving families' experiences during child abuse investigations. For example, a study conducted out of the Crimes against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire found that parents whose children receive services from CACs are more satisfied with the investigation process and interview procedures, and that those children who attend CACs are generally satisfied with the investigation and are more likely to state they were not scared

during the forensic interviewing process¹. In addition, a study completed by the National Children's Advocacy Centre concluded that investigations conducted by CACs are cost-effective and can expedite decision making by Crown prosecutors laying criminal charges².

"The whole idea of Sophie's Place is to provide something that is welcoming and supportive to teams of people who are working with very vulnerable children," says Gerard Breault, Chief Executive Officer of the Centre for Child Development, the Child Development Foundation of British Columbia, and Sophie's Place. Sophie's Place was launched after a letter of agreement was signed between the partners in summer 2012. Gerard notes that the agreement was a big step, demonstrating the partners' enduring commitment.

"I think one of the greatest successes that we hear from the partners as we do our monthly reviews and hear back from the specialty teams is their feeling of being able to work a little bit more closely together in collaboration," says Gerard. "I think there's a lot of optimism that is greatly enhanced by team members being co-located—and that is helping them to reduce trauma to the children."

The facility at the Centre for Child Development and Sophie's Place is currently undergoing a \$1.7 million renovation, which will increase the space for Sophie's Place and allow for a team of a dozen specialists on-site. In addition to office space for the team members, the renovation includes interview rooms, a play room for children, and a youth room. Building standards at the facility will also meet sound requirements to ensure privacy and security for recording child testimony.

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Live-in Caregiver Project Complete

The Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons, in partnership with West Coast Domestic Workers Association (WCDWA), has completed a year-long project funded by the Government of Canada, through WelcomeBC, called "Preventing Labour Exploitation and Trafficking of Live-in Caregivers". As part of the project, WCDWA delivered legal education sessions to more than 200 live-in caregivers and service providers in 14 B.C. communities. WCDWA also created a [website](#) providing information on labour exploitation for live-in caregivers and their networks of support.

The project included the development of the "Do you feel trapped?" poster to raise awareness about the labour trafficking of temporary foreign workers. The poster is available in English, Filipino, Spanish, Punjabi and Chinese. To order hard copies of the poster, please complete the [order form](#).

The project also included a comprehensive update of the People's Law School Booklet "Human Trafficking in Canada", and translation of the booklet into five languages.

For more information about this project, please contact Victor Porter at Victor.Porter@gov.bc.ca.

1. Lisa M. Jones et al., "Do Children's Advocacy Centers Improve Families' Experiences of Child Sexual Abuse Investigations?" *Child Abuse and Neglect* 31 (2007): 1069 -1085, <http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/pdf/cv124.pdf>

2. Amy Shadoin et al., "Executive summary: Findings from the NCAC cost-benefit analysis of -community responses to child maltreatment," (National Children's Advocacy Center, 2006), <http://www.nationalcac.org/professionals/research/CBA%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

Sophie's Place (cont'd)

"Sophie's Place is a recognition of the expertise of the parties involved," says Gerard. "Our role at the Centre for Child Development and our intent with Sophie's Place is simply to enhance the great work that is already being done, to configure some of it in a way together with partners—a way they believe may be of additional help to children—and to work together with all the community partners that are doing such a terrific job within a resource constrained environment for children. We'll be continuing to

do that to push the boundaries of how we can provide more with what we have and get the best for kids. We're here to work with everybody to find that way to keep enhancing services and we hope that Sophie's Place in a small way can do that."

The grand opening of the newly renovated centre was on June 18, 2014. For more information about Sophie's Place and the Centre for Child Development, please visit [their website](#).

Working with Grief and Traumatic Loss: Training Opportunity



BC Victims of Homicide (BCVOH) delivers ongoing emotional support, professionally facilitated eight-week and monthly drop-in homicide grief support groups, and referral services for individuals bereaved by homicide throughout British Columbia. BCVOH operates the British Columbia Bereavement Helpline, which offers support to individuals who are living with the loss of a loved one due to homicide. The BC Bereavement Helpline, the umbrella organization, is a leader in providing education, resources, support and advocacy for the bereaved, their caregivers and professionals.

BCVOH offers training opportunities for group facilitators, victim service workers, and other professionals who deal with grief and traumatic loss. They have partnered with the Victim Services and Crime Prevention Division to offer training

sessions across the province to enhance skills around supporting family members of missing and murdered persons. Funding is being provided by the B.C. Government through a financial contribution from the federal Department of Justice Victims Fund. These training sessions are being offered in Kelowna, Nelson, Merritt, Prince George, Dawson Creek, Terrace, Nanaimo and Surrey. More information about the training can be found on our [training page](#).

For more information about BC Victims of Homicide or to register for one of their free training sessions or support groups please contact Asya at bcvoh@telus.net or 1-877-779-2223, or visit their website at www.bcvictimsofhomicide.com.

Online Training Still Available!

Domestic Violence Safety Planning Online Training
Seats for staff and volunteers with our Branch-funded programs are still available for the Domestic Violence Safety Planning Online Training. The training is a practical resource to assist front-line service providers working with women, children, and families impacted by domestic violence. For more information about the training, please visit our [training page](#).

Human Trafficking: Canada is Not Immune

Human Trafficking: Canada Is Not Immune is a free and accessible online training program for anyone who wants to learn more about human trafficking in Canada. The training provides information about the indicators of human trafficking and ways to meet the unique needs of trafficked persons. For more information about the training, please visit the [OCTIP training webpage](#).

Canadian Victims Bill of Rights

On April 3, 2014, Federal Justice Minister Peter MacKay introduced Bill C-32: An Act to enact the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and to amend certain Acts. The bill will create a new Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and amends other related legislation.

If passed, the bill will:

- create a new Victim Impact Statement Form that will be used across Canada, which includes space for victims to prepare a drawing, poem or letter
- require judges to indicate that they have considered the safety and security of every victim of the offence when making decisions around bail
- require judges to inquire of prosecutors whether reasonable steps were taken to inform victims of plea agreements for serious personal injury offences (and for other offences where the maximum punishment is five years or more if victims request)
- permit victims or other persons to present a photograph taken before the offence when the victim impact statement is presented
- create a new Community Impact Statement form for all offences

Some of the rights provided to victims under the new Canadian Victims Bill of Rights include:

- the right to information, on request, about the criminal justice system and the programs and services that are available to victims of crime
- the right to information, on request, about the status of investigations and criminal proceedings
- the right to information, on request, about reviews while the offender is subject to the corrections process, or about hearings after the accused is found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder or unfit to stand trial

The bill has not been passed and is currently at second reading stage before Parliament.

For more information and a copy of the bill, please visit the [Parliament of Canada website](http://www.parliament.gc.ca).

Elder Abuse Awareness Day



June 15 was Elder Abuse Awareness Day in B.C. Elder abuse is a serious issue that undermines the health, independence and dignity of older adults. British Columbians took a stand against elder abuse and demonstrated their support by wearing purple on June 15. To learn more about recognizing, responding to and preventing elder abuse, please visit SeniorsBC.ca. If you need information, advice or support, you can call the Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL) line at 1-866-437-1940 or visit SeniorsBC.ca.



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