

14 July 2014

David Nicholas

fyi-request-1745-45888921@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Nicholas

Thank you for your email to the Ministry of Social Development dated 14 June 2014, requesting the following information about the Victims Charter:

“When was the Charter last reviewed?”

How many complaints have been received about organisations not following the Victims Charter?

What organisations are not covered by the Victims Charter?”

As the Ministry of Justice administers the Victims’ Rights Act 2002, and the Victims Charter, your request was transferred to us for response.

The Victims Charter was last reviewed in 2012 when the Victims of Crime Reform Bill was developed. As a result of consultation with key stakeholders and the general public, the Victims of Crime Reform Bill (which received Royal assent on 6 June 2014) required the Ministry of Justice to develop and implement a ‘Code for victims’. The Code replaces the Charter, and will outline victims’ rights and services, and the duties and responsibilities of justice sector agencies when dealing with victims.

The Ministry of Justice is unable to provide information about breaches of the Charter by other justice sector agencies. Within the Ministry of Justice, complaints are currently dealt with at a regional level, with local Courts processing and responding to them. The Ministry of Justice head office does not collate information on these complaints. This will change shortly, due to changes introduced by the Victims of Crime Reform Bill. Starting in the 2015/16 financial year, all justice sector agencies will be required to record specific information on the services provided to victims, complaints received about potential breaches of victims’ rights, and how they were resolved. Agencies will be required to include this information about complaints in their Annual Report to Parliament.

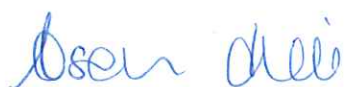
The Victims Charter is a statement about the standard of service victims can expect to receive from government agencies only. This means that not-for-profit and other charitable organisations funded to provide services to victims are not subject to the Victims Charter. The new Code is consistent with this, as only government agencies will be required to uphold the rights of victims as defined in the Code, and be required to report to Parliament on breaches. However, all service providers must comply with the principles of the Code.

The principles of the Code are a guide only, and are not legal rights. The principles of the Code are:

- safety;
- respect;
- dignity and privacy;
- fair treatment
- informed choice;
- quality services;
- communication; and
- feedback.

Further information about the Charter and Victims Code, and updates on the progress of the Victims Code, is available on the Victims Information website, www.victimsinfo.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely



Alison Hill
General Manager, Provider and Community Services