

**IN MEMORY OF DAVID MCKENNA  
(1958-2015)  
Chief Executive of Victim Support Scotland and President of Victim  
Support Europe**



The Chairman, Executive Board and management of Victim Support Scotland are sad to announce the death of David McKenna OBE, FRSA, Chief Executive of Victim Support Scotland and President of Victim Support Europe.

David McKenna was the iconic victim supporter of his time. A pioneer of the development of victim support services across the world and indefatigable in his pursuit of victims' rights.

In 1986 he led a small team pioneering the development of the first voluntary community based support services to victims of crime. He served as Principal Officer of Victim Support Strathclyde and became responsible for 46 local victim support services across Scotland as the Director of Operations. He oversaw the change of employment of all staff from local victims services management to the national responsibility.

In 2001 David took up the position of Chief Executive and became the third lead officer for Victim Support Scotland. During his time he had overall responsibility for 150 paid staff and 750 volunteers providing direct support services to now over 200,000 victims and witnesses of crime a year.

David was responsible for managing and influencing strategic relationships with partner agencies and stakeholders at the most senior level, including Parliamentary, Governmental and Ministerial. He championed the support VSS received through VSS President HRH The Princess Royal and was adamant that her visits should always be 'perfect'.

Through his energy and dedication he revolutionised the landscape for victims of crime, both nationally and internationally. In 2010 following his role as secretary and vice president, he became President of Victim Support Europe where he pursued the development of Victim Support Europe with a passion, from being a network of national members to becoming a key stakeholder in European justice matters. He established a head office in Brussels and built links with the EU parliament, the European Commission as well as individual Members of Parliament and partner agencies. He secured victims rights as a top priority in the European Union's Justice agenda. His skills as a negotiator ensured that incoming EU presidencies highlighted victim issues as part of their priorities during their terms, which carried the momentum forward.

David led the expert input into the development of new victims' rights legislation and was able to negotiate the adoption of the 2012 Victims' Rights Directive in 18 months from start to finish, the fastest any EU Directive has been agreed. Subsequently elements of that Directive have been included in the Scottish Government's Victims & Witnesses (Scotland) Act, a law which truly advances the rights of victims and witnesses in Scotland.

An eternal optimist, David never took no for an answer and never wavered in the face of challenges. His continuous enthusiasm and vision brought countries and continents together under the united banner of improving the lives of people affected by crime.

In 2012 David gathered leaders from the victim movement across the globe to create Victims of Crime International, the first time that international victim support organisations had come together to advance a global agenda in establishing rights and services for victims. In so doing, David created a vision and momentum in the victim movement that will live on for decades to come.

As President of VSE David travelled the globe, often in many countries in the same week. His countless stories of dreadful travel and horrendous hotel experiences are legendary. Always told for comedic value which left you speechless and crying with laughter!

A dapper dresser always looking the part with numerous changes of clothes and differing aftershave for day and night. He worked extremely hard but also had fun when work was over and was well known for dragging International colleagues on the dance floor.

People warmed to David because he cared about them and he cared about victims of crime which shone through all he did.

In 2011 David was awarded an OBE for his services on behalf of disadvantaged people. He will be remembered as a world-leading visionary and source of inspiration in the global development of victim support, with a lasting legacy in the development of victim support organisations.

Born in Glasgow David's parents were Edith and Matthew, a social worker. David is survived by a twin brother Tom and sisters Jane, Deana and Linda, eight nephews, three nieces and seven great-nephews and nieces.

He and George, his partner for 36 years, were married in Glasgow on March 31 this year, the ceremony witnessed by David's niece Sabrina and her husband Derek.

**Other appointments and professional memberships included:** David participated in a number of Ministerial bodies, including the National Advisory Board on Offender Management; the Sentencing Commission, the Summary Justice Review Group, the Youth Justice Implementation Group, the Victims Steering Group, the Bonomy Review and the Criminal Justice Forum. Audit Scotland, review of Police Call Handling Centres, Scottish Association for the Study of Offenders, United Nations Crime and Drug Commission, review of Norms and Standards in Criminal Justice Expert Group, Age Concern Elder Abuse National Reference Group, SACRO Board of Management (1999-2002), Scottish Consortium on Crime and Criminal Justice, Criminal Injuries Compensation UK Ireland Group, Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeal Panel Scottish Convention on Human Rights Group, Board member, Volunteer Centre for Scotland (1992-1997), Board member, Glasgow Council for Voluntary Services, (1990-1995), National Council, Gingerbread Scotland (1995-1997) Community Council Member (1980-1986).

David was educated at Queens Park Secondary School , Glasgow from 1969 -1974; Glasgow College of Commerce 1980-1981; Bell College, Hamilton 1981-1982, and Glasgow College of Technology 1983-1984.

Susan Gallagher,  
Acting Chief Executive,

Victim Support Scotland.