



# Putting Victims First



Crime / Incident number: .....

Offence: .....

Attending Officer: .....

Officer's email address: .....@cumbria.police.uk

Officer's phone number: .....

Call 101, option 2 extension: .....

Date: .....



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# Information for Victims of Crime

Becoming a victim of crime can be a distressing and upsetting experience. This leaflet explains what happens next and gives you information about organisations that provide support and advice. It also offers some practical tips on how you can protect your home and your property.



## What happens when you report a crime?

Now that you have reported a crime, a police officer will ask you for full details of what happened.

**Please give the officer as much information as possible about what happened and tell them:**

- If you are worried about the safety of yourself and /or others.
- If you have recently suffered from any similar crimes(s).
- If the crime was made worse because of abuse relating to race, faith, disability, sexual orientation, or any other factor.
- If you have any specific needs, for example a health problem.
- If you remember anything else about the offence after the initial report.
- If you change your contact details.

We are committed to doing our best for you.

At the back of this booklet, there is a page for you to record things that you have remembered, or questions you may wish to ask the next time we contact you.

The officer will carry out an initial investigation that could include statement taking, house-to-house enquiries and scene examinations. They will tell you if a crime investigation will take place and they will keep you updated on progress. If an investigation cannot be progressed they will give you a reason why.

If your crime involves injury, loss or damage, please retain any receipts, as you may be eligible for compensation.



## Dealing with your crime

If a suspect is identified, they will be questioned and a decision will be made about what will happen to them. Depending on the type and severity of the offence, the Police or the Crown Prosecution Service could make this decision.

Outcomes could include:

- No further action.
- Undertaking a community remedy.
- Being subject of an out of court disposal such as a caution.
- Receiving a penalty notice.
- Being charged or summonsed to court.

If the suspect is charged to appear before a court, the Witness Care Unit will contact you. They will inform you about the progress of the case, and if necessary arrange for you to attend court with their support.



# Community Remedy and Restorative Justice

Community Remedy is a process that gives victims of certain types of crime the opportunity to have a say in how the offender is dealt with. If the offender accepts responsibility for their behaviour, you can consider the options under three headings;

- **Reparation:** Asking the offender to pay for, or repair damage to property, clean graffiti, or undertake a community based activity like litter picking.
- **Restoration:** A facilitated, face-to-face meeting between the victim and the offender (Restorative Justice), allowing those affected to have an opportunity to explain the impact of crime, get answers to questions they may have, and / or obtain an explanation from the offender.
- **Rehabilitation:** Referral to an intervention programme (such as an- alcohol diversion scheme / Domestic Violence programme). Alternatively with youths, an intervention facilitated by the Youth Offending Service involving the youth and parent / guardian. All interventions aim to address the cause/s of the behaviour, and reducing the risk of re-offending.

**The police officer will tell you if your chosen options are enforceable, or voluntary arrangement. If any of the chosen options are unsuitable, the police officer will guide you and make the final decision.**

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Restorative Justice is all about helping people to communicate following a crime or incident. It provides victims with a chance to explain the impact of the offence and ask questions. It helps offenders to explain their actions and offer an apology.

Involvement is voluntary, confidential and free for those taking part.

If you would like to know more about Restorative Justice then speak to a police officer for advice or contact Victim Support and ask for Restorative Justice.



# Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

The Code sets out the services that the Police and other organisations must provide to victims of crime in England and Wales. For the purposes of this Code, a “victim” is:

- A person who has suffered harm, (including physical, or mental / emotional), or economic loss which was directly caused by a criminal offence.
- A close relative of a person whose death was directly caused by a criminal offence.

Please note: Legal persons Businesses are not included within the definition of a victim.

Enhanced entitlements are provided to victims of the most serious crime, persistently targeted victims, and vulnerable or intimidated victims. These three categories are explained in Chapter 1, paragraphs 1.1-1.12 of this Code.

## **EASY READ VICTIMS CODE**

This is an Easy Read guide to the [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime](#), which may be useful for victims who have learning or reading difficulties. This guide can be found at: [www.cumbria.police.uk](http://www.cumbria.police.uk)

## **REGISTERED INTERMEDIARIES**

Registered Intermediaries are specialists who help vulnerable victims and witnesses with an assessed communication difficulty to give their best evidence in court. They can also assist in the interview of victims to help them communicate their evidence to the police. The intermediary is approved by the court and can help to explain the questions and answers so far as necessary to help the witness, but without changing the substance of the evidence.

## **VICTIM PERSONAL STATEMENT (VPS)**

A VPS is a statement that victims can give to the police (or any agency/organisation assigned by the police to take the VPS on their behalf) if they have been a victim of crime. It is the victim’s way of telling the criminal justice system about the physical, emotional, psychological, financial impact of the crime. A VPS is important; it gives victims a voice in the criminal justice process and helps others to understand how the crime has affected them.

A VPS is different from a witness statement which mainly focuses on the crime and what happened. Questions may be asked at court about the content of your VPS and can be reported on by the media.

## **IMPACT STATEMENT FOR BUSINESS (ISB)**

The Impact Statement for Business (ISB) gives you the opportunity to say what impact that a crime has had on the business.



# Attending Court - Witness Care Services

## **WITNESS CHARTER**

The Witness Charter sets out the standards of care victims and witnesses can expect if they are a witness to a crime or incident in England and Wales and are required to attend court. This Charter applies to all witnesses of a crime, and to character witnesses, but not expert witnesses.

## **EASY READ WITNESS CHARTER**

This is an Easy Read guide to the Witness Charter, it explains what to expect if you are going to court to talk about something you saw or that happened to you. It tells you about the support you can get and how you should be treated from first telling the police about a crime, to after it has gone to court. These are called standards. Please click [here](#).

## **WITNESS CARE UNIT**

If you are a victim of crime or a witness for the prosecution and are required to attend court a witness care officer will let you know the date of the trial. Witness care officers work for the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Victims and witnesses can ask the witness care officer for any help they need going to court, e.g. with childcare or transport. The witness care officer can also provide information about the expenses associated with going to court, about reviewing statements and about the help and support that is available at court by the Witness Service.

Victims and witnesses should let the witness care officer know if they have any medical conditions or disabilities.

The court will provide an interpreter. They can translate what happens during the hearing but they cannot represent victims or witnesses or give legal advice.

## **PRE-TRIAL VISIT**

If victims and witnesses would like to visit the court before the trial (a pre-trial familiarisation visit) they can ask the Witness Care Unit to arrange this. Someone will show them around and explain where key parties might be sitting, and explain the process of what may happen on the day of the trial.





# Attending Court - Witness Care Services

## **SPECIAL MEASURES**

Special Measures is the term used to describe the measures a court can order to assist vulnerable or intimidated witnesses to give their best evidence. The court can order the following special measures to be available:

- Screens / curtains in the courtroom so the witness does not have to see the defendant, and, in some cases, the public gallery.
- A live video link allowing a witness to give evidence away from the courtroom. This could be from a separate room within the court, or from a dedicated live-link site outside the court building.

## **WITNESS SERVICE**

People can feel anxious about giving evidence in court.

Before and during the trial victims and witnesses can get free help and support from the Citizens Advice Witness Service, which is separate from the Police, the Witness Care Unit and the Crown Prosecution Service. They have trained volunteers who can help. Victims and witnesses can talk to the Witness Service in confidence; they will make sure that information and support is available, either from them or from other organisations.

The Witness Service can arrange for victims and witnesses to visit the court before the trial, so they know what to expect on the day and have an opportunity to ask any questions.

If a family member or friend will be coming to the court with you, we can give them support too.

There will be a volunteer at the court to offer support on the day of the trial. They will also keep them updated and help with any problems. If required, the Witness Service can go into the court with victims and witnesses.



## The Media

We may release details of crime to local media and on force social media such as:



[www.cumbria.police.uk](http://www.cumbria.police.uk)

This is to help trace any witnesses or appeal for information.

We will not disclose your name or full address unless we have your permission.



## Other Agencies / Support

### **CUMBRIA TOGETHER**

There are organisations in Cumbria that can help and support you or someone you know who may be a victim of crime.

Cumbria Together is a website that provides an information portal bringing together services and information about what is available for those affected by crime irrespective of whether the crime has been reported or not. The Cumbria Together website can be searched via geographical area, crime type or directory and links can be made directly to agency websites. A dedicated section is available for children/ young people and there is a multi-lingual facility. The website is not a reporting mechanism and if anyone using the Cumbria Together site wishes to report a crime they should visit [www.cumbria.police.uk](http://www.cumbria.police.uk) to report a crime online, or call 101 or 999 in an emergency.

[www.cumbriatogether.com](http://www.cumbriatogether.com)



## Other Agencies / Support

### THE BRIDGEWAY

The Bridgeway is a dedicated service that aims to help men, women and children who have been raped or sexually assaulted either recently or in the past. The Bridgeway provides a range of services to help you through the difficult time following rape or sexual assault, including:

- Medical examination and collection of forensic evidence.
- Support in making a report to the police.
- Emergency contraception and access to screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections.
- Emotional and practical support.
- Referral onto counselling and/or other support services.
- 24 hour helpline 0808 118 6432.
- Follow-up.

The Bridgeway staff can share details of the assault, such as the location or a description of the perpetrator with the police. This can be done anonymously. Sharing of this sort of information can help the police to identify trends in assaults and may help prevent it happening to other people.

For help and advice please call 01768 800 670 during office hours.

### Anonymity of Victims

The Bridgeway staff can share details of the assault, such as the location or a description of the perpetrator with the police. This can be done anonymously. Sharing this sort of information can help the police to identify trends in assaults and may help prevent it happening to other people.

For victims of sexual abuse who wish to make a complaint to the police and seek justice through the criminal justice system, then under the Sexual Offences (Amendments) Act 1976 and 1992, as amended by Sec 6 Sexual Offences Act 2003, there are two levels of anonymity for victims of rape and other sexual offences. These are:

- From the outset of the report, the publication or broadcast of the victim's name, address or likeness is prohibited in England and Wales during that person's life time
- From the time a person is charged with the offence, the publication or broadcasting of any material, which might lead a member of the public to identify the victim, is prohibited. This protection lasts for the lifetime of the victim even if the proceedings are abandoned. The protections can be removed by a court.



## Other Agencies / Support

### **VICTIM SUPPORT**

Victim Support gives emotional and practical help to people who have been affected by crime in Cumbria and can advocate on their behalf.

Their support is free, confidential and they can support all victims of crime. If you contact your Victim Support team, they will make sure you get the information and support you need.

If you have been affected by crime, one of the ways they can help you is by giving you the support you need to cope with emotional stress. Their staff and volunteers are trained to listen, give information, and offer feedback. They can help you to make sense of what you have been through, discuss your options, and help you to feel like you are getting your life under control again.

They can help with simple tasks like filling out forms, getting broken doors and windows fixed, and installing burglar alarms. They can also assist with bigger issues such as getting medical treatment, being rehoused, or dealing with the criminal justice system. They give you the information you need to understand your options and next steps.

They can be contacted for support regardless of whether you have contacted the police, and no matter how long ago the crime took place.

They will help you for as long as it takes to overcome the impact of crime.

Victim Support opening hours Monday - Friday 9am – 7pm.

Call 0300 30 30 157

Out of hours 08 008 1689 111

Online – [victimsupport.org.uk](https://victimsupport.org.uk)

Cumbria Constabulary may provide Victim Support with limited details about a victim of crime, in order that contact can be made to offer the support services described above. In the event that the offer of support is declined Victim Support will not retain those details.

### **INDEPENDENT DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE ADVISORS (IDSVA)**

IDSVA's provide practical and emotional support to high-risk victims of Domestic Abuse, and to victims of Rape and Serious Sexual Assault. They are independent of the police but can help you understand the police and court process. They can also act as your voice with other agencies, on your behalf.

They work for Victim Support and can be contacted on 0300 303 3797.



# Victims of Stalking and Harassment

Information will be provided advising of the steps you can take to protect yourself from harm.

You can also visit the Constabulary's website to find further links to the [Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service](#) and to the [National Stalking Helpline](#).

There are some practical steps that you can take to identify any sources of personal information that could be used by a suspect. These could include mailing lists, the electoral roll, school or work records, internet sites and wastepaper and refuse bins. You should never dispose of personal information via a refuse bin. Such items should be shredded, burnt or disposed of by some other means, which are not accessible to a suspect.

You should consider changing your passwords for gaining access to personal information via the telephone or internet. In particular, the use of your mother's maiden name and pet names as verification codes for access to personal details should be discouraged.

Anonymous voter registration is available for people at risk. Please visit: [www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk) for more information.

There are also facilities to restrict the more general availability of your personal information. To find out more visit the Information Commissioner's website: [www.whatdotheyknow.com](http://www.whatdotheyknow.com)



# Protecting your home and your property

Cumbria is one of the safest places to live and work. At Cumbria Constabulary we aim to keep it that way. There are steps you can take to protect your personal safety, your home, and your property:

## PROTECT YOUR HOME

- Fit good quality locks to all doors and windows.
- Do not leave your house and car keys where they can be easily grabbed by an opportunist thief.
- Postcode your valuables - it will identify them if stolen.
- Use light timer switches and draw curtains so your home does not look obviously empty after dark.
- Check that all is secure before leaving your home.
- Secure outdoor sheds with good quality locks and bolts.
- Consider installing a house alarm.

## PROTECT YOUR VEHICLE

- Always lock all doors and windows when parking.
- Never leave your vehicle unattended with the engine running.
- Park in well-lit areas or secure car parks.
- Never leave valuables on display in parked cars - store them out of sight in the boot.

For information and advice visit [www.cumbria.police.uk](http://www.cumbria.police.uk)

The check list below will help you to confirm that our staff have provided you with all the information you need.



## Have we...?

- Explained what is going to happen and why?
- Given practical help?
- Offered advice?
- Established a 'victim contract agreement' with you?
- Explained what further contact you should expect, when, how and by whom?
- Explained that your details will be given to Victim Support and why?
- Explained the opportunity for you to make a Victim Personal Statement?
- Checked if you had any further questions?
- Left a Crime / Incident reference number?
- Left written details of the name, email address and phone number of the officer dealing with your case?



## How did we do?

In Cumbria we want to do our best for you. By working with external agencies and gathering and sharing information we are able to be pro-active in our approach, prevent crime happening, protect you and your property, and bring criminals to justice. By providing this service we are helping to keep Cumbria safe.

We would welcome your feedback on the way we provide our service to you and your community. We believe it is essential that you and others have confidence in the police and are satisfied with the service we give you. With this in mind, we would like to hear from you. How did we do?

You can feedback your comments by using the methods below.

[www.surveymonkey.co.uk](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk)

[www.cumbria.police.uk](http://www.cumbria.police.uk)

**Letter:**

Police Headquarters,  
Carleton Hall,  
Penrith,  
Cumbria  
CA10 2AU

We want to do our best for you and your feedback is important to us. We may contact you in due course in relation to the service you have received. We respect your right to privacy. The information you provide will only be used for policing purposes.

You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

We also have a newsletter - visit [www.cumbria.police.uk](http://www.cumbria.police.uk) to sign up



cumbriapolice





## Other Useful Information

- [Citizens Advice Bureau:](#)
- [Cumbria Community Messaging service:](#)
- [Neighbourhood Watch:](#)
- [Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111](#)

Cumbria Constabulary is required to conduct Customer Satisfaction Surveys to evaluate our performance and effectiveness. We may contact individuals, such as victims of crime or those reporting incidents, and ask them to give us their opinion of the service we are providing to the public. We use the information given to improve our service wherever we can. Cumbria Constabulary, like many police forces use a private company to undertake such surveys on our behalf with strict controls to protect the personal data of those involved.





Peter McCall