



Information for Victims of Crime

This leaflet sets out what you can expect from the Criminal Justice System if you are a victim of crime.

It contains information about organisations that you can contact for free advice, practical information or emotional support.

Firstly, thank you for reporting the incident to the police. The section below may be helpful in noting down the details of people you meet when you report your crime.

Your own notes and contact details

You may find it useful to note down the details of any people you come into contact with when your case is being investigated. This way you have all the contact details and important information in one place.

Initial contact with the police

Name of officer:

Phone number of police station:

Officer dealing with the case (if different from above)

Name of officer:

Phone number of officer:

Crime case details

Crime case reference number:

Phone number of crime desk:

Next steps

The police will give you information about what to expect from the criminal justice system, including information about the Victims' Code. The Victims' Code sets out the services you can expect from the criminal justice agencies. The police will conduct a "needs assessment" and will ask you questions to establish what help and support you might need. The Victims' Code sets out your rights to make a complaint under the Victims' Code if you are unhappy with the service you receive.

If you would like to read the Code in full, or to access a shorter guide to the Code, please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime>

Please note that even if you were not resident in England and Wales at the time that the criminal conduct took place, you are still entitled to the standard entitlements set out in the Victims' Code if the crime took place in England and Wales.

The Victim Personal Statement (VPS): The Victims' Code includes an entitlement for victims of crime to make a Victim Personal Statement (VPS). The VPS helps give victims a voice in the criminal justice process. In your VPS you can tell the court and the Parole Board, where applicable, how the offence has affected you or your family. You can also choose to read your statement aloud in court or have it read out on your behalf if the defendant is found guilty. To find out more, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/victim-personal-statement>

If you agree, the police will pass your details on to an organisation that provides services to victims of crime.

In the majority of cases, but depending on their specific needs, a victim's details will be passed on to Victim Support. This is a national, independent charity whose trained volunteers and staff can help you. Their services are free, confidential and available to everyone, regardless of when the event happened. You might find it helpful to talk to one of their staff if you found the experience distressing. If you need more specialised advice or support they will also be able to refer you to a more suitable organisation. To find out more, visit: www.victimsupport.org.uk or call **0845 30 30 900**.

Working together with the police to investigate your crime: To help the police investigate your crime, you should let them know:

- If you remember something not already included in your current statement.
- If your contact details change.
- If the crime involved any type of hostility, for example if you were targeted because of your race, sexuality, religion, disability or gender identity, or perceived race, sexuality, religion, disability or gender identity.
- If you have any specific needs, for example, mobility, communication or religious requirements.

Protection against harassment or intimidation: If you, or others close to you, are harassed or threatened in any way during an investigation or a trial, you should contact the police immediately. If the accused is bailed, the court may impose a condition preventing the accused from making any contact with a named person or persons. You could also apply to court to get an injunction against the accused if you think it's likely that he or she will harass you. If the accused is convicted or acquitted, the criminal court can make a restraining order. Victims and witnesses are also protected against witness intimidation for up to a year after the end of a trial.

Criminal charges: In some cases if someone is arrested and charged, the **Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)** will decide whether to prosecute or not and whether to take your case to court. To find out more about the CPS, visit: www.cps.gov.uk or call **0203 357 0000**.

The **joint police/CPS Witness Care Unit** will provide you with a single point of contact after the point of charge about the progress of your case, including the date of hearing. They can also give information on claiming expenses for attending court, including travel, pre-trial visits, allowances for meals, loss of wages and child care. To find out more, visit: www.cps.gov.uk/news/fact_sheets/witness_care_units/.

Going to court as a witness: Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) is responsible for running all of the courts. To find out more visit: <https://www.gov.uk/going-to-court-victim-witness/help-getting-to-the-court>.

The **Witness Charter** sets out the standards of care you can expect if you are a witness to a crime or incident in England and Wales. The Charter is available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-witness-charter-standards-of-care-for-witnesses-in-the-criminal-justice-system>.

There is a 'Going to Court – A Step by Step Guide to Being a Witness' DVD which explains what happens at court. You can view this via the www.gov.uk website: (<https://www.gov.uk/going-to-court-victim-witness>.)

In addition HMCTS has a 'You are a Prosecution Witness' leaflet on services and facilities available at individual Crown and Magistrates' Courts. This can also be viewed online at: <https://courtribunalfinder.service.gov.uk/>

The **Witness Service**, run by Victim Support, helps victims and witnesses attending court. They are trained staff and volunteers who you can talk to about what to expect before going to court during a pre-trial visit, and who are also present to support you at court. Please note the Witness Service cannot discuss the case or the contents of your evidence with you. To find out more, visit: www.victimsupport.org.uk or call **0845 303 0900**.

Compensation: If you have been a blameless victim of a violent crime, you may be eligible for compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA). You can apply online at www.gov.uk. If you need help to complete an application by telephone contact the CICA Customer Service Centre advisors on **0300 003 3601**. You can apply for compensation whether someone has been prosecuted for the offence or not but you must apply within two years of the date of the incident. You should not wait until the end of a civil or criminal trial before applying for criminal injuries compensation. To find out more, visit: www.gov.uk or call CICA on **0300 003 3601**.

You can apply for financial help if you have to take time off low-paid work because you've been the victim of a violent crime. To find out if you are eligible for payment for having suffered immediate financial hardship contact Victim Support on 0845 30 30 900 or visit: www.victimsupport.org.uk as soon as possible.

Translation and Interpretation: If you do not understand or speak English, you are entitled to ask for interpretation into a language you understand when reporting a crime, being interviewed by the police or giving evidence in criminal proceedings. In this type of hearing in Wales, you have the legal right to use Welsh when giving evidence and the court will make the necessary provisions.

Restorative Justice: As a victim, you may be able to undertake Restorative Justice and have a say in the resolution of the offence against you. Restorative Justice is the process of bringing together victims with those responsible for the harm, to find a positive way forward. To find out more, visit www.restorativejustice.org.uk.

Conviction, sentence, release and probation supervision: When someone is convicted of an offence and sent to prison, they pass into the care of the Prison Service. To find out more, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-prison-service>.

If you would like to find out more about what you are entitled to under the Victims' Code after a sentence has been passed, such as information on the **Victim Contact Scheme** and the role of the **Parole Board**, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime> or <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/parole-board>.

Further information You can find more detailed information about support and services for victims and witnesses at www.gov.uk.

Citizens Advice can help with financial problems or advice, legal issues or other practical problems. To find out more, visit: www.citizensadvice.org.uk or call **0845 126 4264**.

For more information on the full Victims' Code:

www.gov.uk