



Ministry
of Justice



The support you should get if you are a victim of crime



This is an EasyRead booklet
showing you what to do.

About this booklet



Ministry
of Justice



The Ministry of Justice wrote this information.

This is an EasyRead guide to the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.

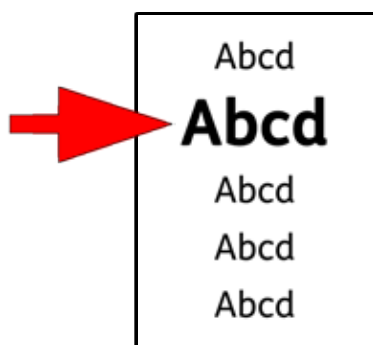
It is not itself a direct translation of the Code.

Whilst we have tried to make sure this matches the Code as much as possible, the EasyRead translation may have altered the meaning of certain terms and entitlements in places.



We are part of the government that makes sure there is a good and fair **criminal justice system** in England and Wales.

When we use a difficult word in this booklet we put it in **bold** and say what it means.



These and other legal words are explained in the Word Bank at the end of this booklet.



All victims of crime have a right to some types of information and support from organisations like the police and courts.



The Victims' Code says what should happen from when you tell the police about a crime until after the trial.



This is an EasyRead guide to this information.



You can read the whole Code at:
www.gov.uk

What is in this booklet?



1. Services that must support victims

5



2. Who can get support?

7



3. What support must victims get?

11



4. Support while the police are looking into a crime

18



5. Support before the trial

22



6. Support during the trial

24



7. Support after the trial

28



8. How different services support victims

35



Word Bank

40

**What happens for Victims -
A pull-out Guide**

1

SERVICES THAT SUPPORT VICTIMS



The Victims' Code says which services must support victims.



These services must have information about the Victims' Code on their own websites and tell people which pages to look at on the government's website.

They must communicate with victims in ways you can understand using:



- EasyRead



- Audio



- Someone who can help you understand things and say what you want to say.



There is a list of these services and what they do at the end of this booklet.



The Victims' Code says you can get support if:

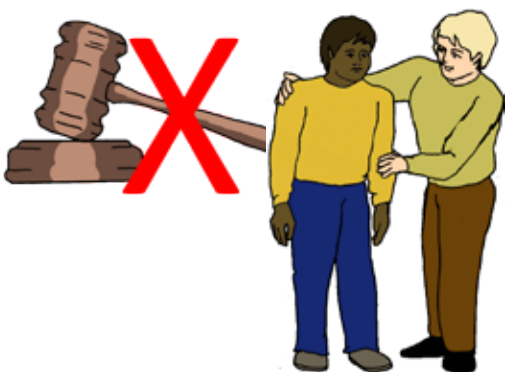
- You are a victim of crime



- Someone from your family is killed in a crime.



The crime must have happened in England or Wales but you do not need to have lived there when it happened.

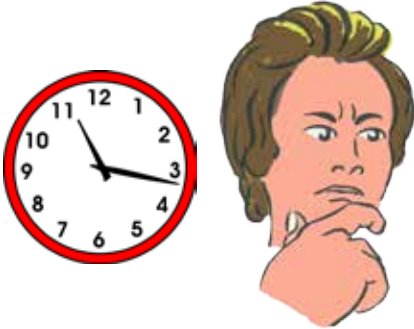


You can get support if you are affected by crime even if the police have not charged anyone with it and even if you do not want to be involved in the



investigation.

You can choose not to have some or all of the support or information if you do not want it.



If you change your mind, you can have it later.



Victims of crime

This means anyone who tells the police about a crime in England and Wales.



You can also get support if someone else tells the police about a crime that happened to you.



The **Witness Charter** says what support you can get if you see a crime but it does not happen to you.



Victims' families

If someone from your family is killed in a crime you get the same support as a victim of a serious crime.



You can also get support if someone from your family is killed in a road accident and the police are finding out whether this was a crime.



Your family can choose a member of the family to work with the police and other services and get this support. They are called the **spokesperson**.



You or your family can also choose a spokesperson if you have a disability or are so badly injured by the crime that you cannot speak for yourself.



People under 18 years old

There is another booklet about support for victims who are under 18 years old and their families.

3

WHAT SUPPORT MUST VICTIMS GET?

These are the types of support victims can get.



We tell you more about them in the rest of this booklet.

If you are a victim, you should be able to:



- Get an **assessment** to find out what support you might need



- Have your details passed to organisations that give help and support to victims of crime unless you do not want them to be

Information



- Get information about what to expect



- Get information about what the police are doing



- Make a **Victim Personal Statement** about the crime



- Ask the Crown Prosecution Service to look at things again if you are not happy with what they decide



- Know what is happening about the trial and sentence



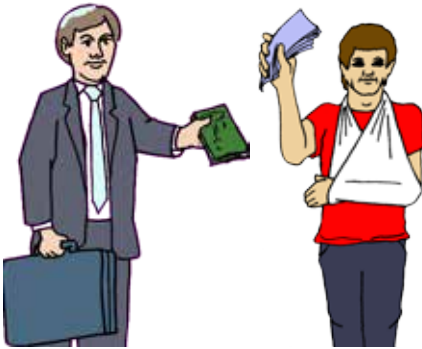
- Get help or support to go to court and give evidence



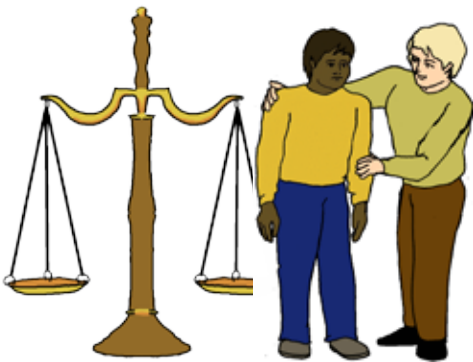
- Know if the person makes an **appeal** to ask a different court to look at their case again



- Choose support from the **Victim Contact Scheme** if your **case** qualifies for this **Scheme**



- Apply for **compensation**



- Know about **restorative justice** which means getting the victim and offender to try and find a way forward instead of just punishing someone for a crime



- Complain if you do not get the information and support you should.



Extra support

You can get more services and support if you are:



- A victim of **serious crime**



- **Vulnerable** or being **threatened**



- Someone who is a victim of lots of crimes.



When your needs are assessed the police and other criminal justice agencies decide if you should get this extra support.

Serious crime includes:



- Rape and other sex offences



- Being abused by someone you live with



- **Human trafficking** which means being brought to this or to another country and being used for sex, as a slave or something else you do not want.



- Crimes that mean to hurt you badly like terrorism, attempted murder or Grievous Bodily Harm.



Vulnerable or threatened victims are:

- Under 18 years old when the crime happens



- People who find it hard to give evidence because of their mental health or a mental or physical disability



- Scared to give evidence because of who they are, the type of crime or what people say to them.



People who are victims of lots of crimes are:

- Victims of different crimes over a long time, like stalking or harassment.



Victims of serious crime, victims who are vulnerable or being threatened and people who are victims of lots of crimes can:



- Get help to give evidence in court
- Have information about special services that support victims where appropriate



- If the case was closed without anyone being charged, be asked if you want to know if the police are going to look at the case again. The police will have to take into account your views.



- Say if you want to know if no one is charged



If someone from your family is killed in a crime you can get:

- a **Family Liaison Officer** (a police officer who is trained to support you and be a link to the police)



- clear information about coping when someone dies and about services that can support you.

4

SUPPORT WHILE THE POLICE ARE LOOKING INTO A CRIME



If you or someone else tells the police about a crime that happens to you, the police must:



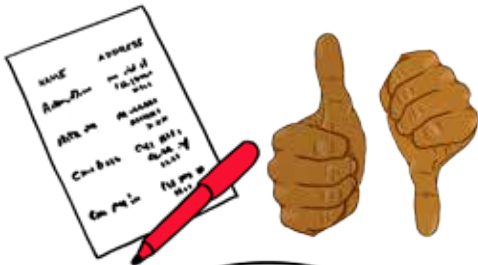
- Give you information about what will happen and what to expect from services involved in law, crime and punishment



- Do an **assessment** to find out what support you might need



- Think about whether you need more services if you are from one of the 3 groups who need extra support



- Give your contact details to organisations that support victims (you can say you do not want them to do this)



- Tell you if someone is arrested for the

crime

You can:



- Make a **victim personal statement** about how the crime has affected you



- Ask the police to tell you what they are doing and say how often you want them to tell you what is happening.

Saying how the crime affects you



A **victim personal statement** (or **impact statement** for a business) says how the crime has affected you.



You do not have to make one and can do it any time before the suspect goes to court.



You cannot take back a statement after you make it but you can change it or make a new statement.



If the suspect goes to court their lawyer can see your statement and might ask you about it. The newspapers might talk about what is in your statement if it is read out aloud.



You can choose to say whether you want to read it to the court if the person is found guilty (or ask someone to read it for you). The final decision on whether you can read it aloud will be made by the court.



The court will think about your victim personal statement when someone has been found guilty and they are deciding how to punish them for the crime.



If you are in one of the groups that needs extra support you can make a victim personal statement even if you do make a witness statement to tell the

SUPPORT BEFORE THE TRIAL



The Police must tell you if the Crown Prosecution Service decide to deal with the case without going to court.



If you have to go to court and talk about the crime you can get support from someone from the **Witness Care Unit**.



They will support you until the case is over and make sure you know:

- What to expect in court
- When the person will go to court

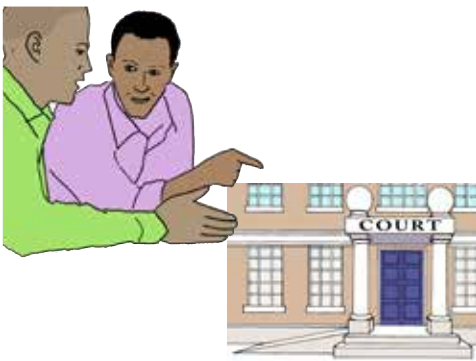




- Where the trial will be



- If the person will be in prison before the trial or on **bail**.



You can ask the Witness Care Unit about help or support to give evidence in court. They can help you go to the court to look round before you have to give evidence.



The Crown Prosecution Service must tell you if there are any changes to the **charge** or if they decide not to take the case to court.



If you are not happy with what the Crown Prosecution Service decide you can ask them to explain things or look at

6

SUPPORT DURING THE TRIAL



You can watch the trial in court:



- After you give your evidence or



- If you do not have to give evidence (you should tell the court you will be there).



If you are a witness and will give evidence you should be able to:

- Where possible, meet the **prosecutor** and ask about the trial. The prosecutor tries to prove that the suspect did the crime



- Wait in a different place from the suspect and their friends or family where possible



- Have any special support the court thinks will help you give evidence



- Speak to someone who can tell you what will happen in the trial.



There is more information about being a witness on this website:
www.gov.uk/going-to-court-victim-witness/help-getting-to-the-court



and a DVD about going to court on this website:

www.gov.uk/going-to-court-victim-witness



If you are a vulnerable or threatened witness

You can ask the Witness Care Unit for extra help to make you feel safe when you give evidence.

The court will decide if you can:



- Have screens so you cannot see the suspect or their family



- Be in the building but use a video link to talk to the court



- Ask the judge and lawyers not to wear their wigs and gowns



- Ask the public to leave the court



- Have a trial without the public or newspaper reporters, this is only for very serious cases



- Have someone to help you understand the questions and give your evidence.



If someone from your family is killed in a crime you can meet the Crown Prosecution Service:



- To tell them you made a victim personal statement and it is up to date



- If the person is found not guilty or is charged with a crime that is not so serious



- So they can explain the sentence that has been given.



When the court decides the sentence

All victims must:

- Be told about the sentence and what it means
- Be told if there are any changes or the person asks another court to





You can get support from victim services to help you after the trial.



You can also fill in a form to claim back money you spent to go to court.



Appeals

This is when the person asks another court to look at the case again.



The Witness Care Unit must tell you what is happening and if there is a change to the sentence the person was given.



If you go to court you can ask to sit in a different place from the suspect and their friends or family.

If the prisoner or offender tries to contact you



If you do not want them to contact you this is very serious.



Tell the prison or the victim service that is supporting you or call the Victims Helpline

Telephone: 0845 7585.



Email: victim.helpline@noms.gsi.gov.uk



Victim Contact Scheme

If you are the victim of a serious violent or sexual crime and the person who did it is sentenced for more than 1 year you must be able to:

- Choose if you want the Victim Contact Scheme to support you and tell you about the sentence and when the person will come out of



prison



- Suggest what rules the person should keep to when they are let out of prison (these will last for a set time)



- Know about any rules the person has to keep to when they come out of prison



- Make a victim personal statement if the Parole Board is thinking about letting the person out of prison.



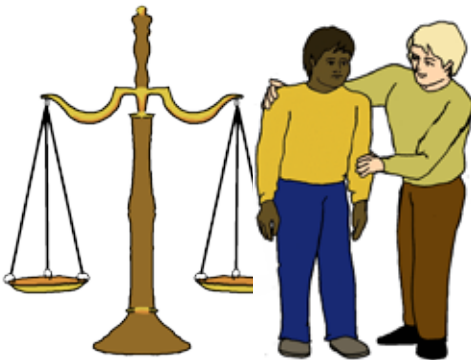
If the person who did the crime is under 18 years old



The **Youth Offending Team** might contact you if you do not qualify for the Victim Contact Scheme and the person has a short sentence or is being punished in the community.

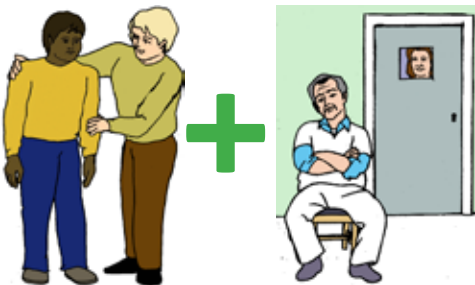


They will let you know what is happening and can tell you about services that support victims.



Restorative justice

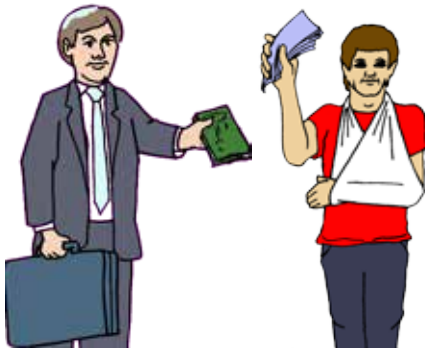
This helps people understand how their crime affects the victim and gives them a chance to put things right.



The victim and the person who did the crime must both agree to take part.



The police or Youth Offending Team will ask if you want to take part.



Compensation

Compensation is money you get if you lose something, have problems or are injured and it is not your fault.



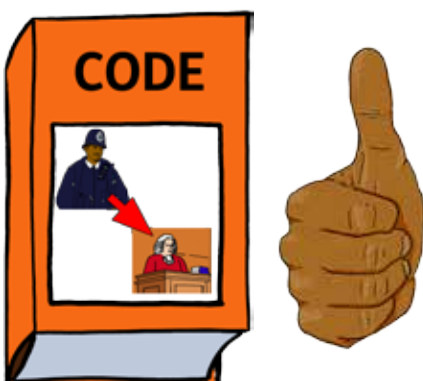
Some people who are victims of violent crime can get compensation.



You can find out more from the **Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority**

Website: www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-criminal-injury

Telephone: 0300 003 3601



How to complain

All services that work with the Victims' Code should know how to support

victims well.



You can complain if you are not happy with a service or cannot get a service you need.



The service should tell you how to do this and how they deal with complaints.



They should reply to your complaint in 10 working days.



If you are not happy with what they say you can contact your MP to complain to the **Ombudsman**. They are independent and will look at your complaint again.



There is more information on their website:

www.ombudsman.org.uk

HOW DIFFERENT SERVICES SUPPORT VICTIMS



Criminal Cases Review Commission

This independent organisation can check whether a court has been fair and ask an appeal court to look at the case again.



Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority

This government organisation can pay money to someone who is hurt because of a crime.



The First-tier Tribunal

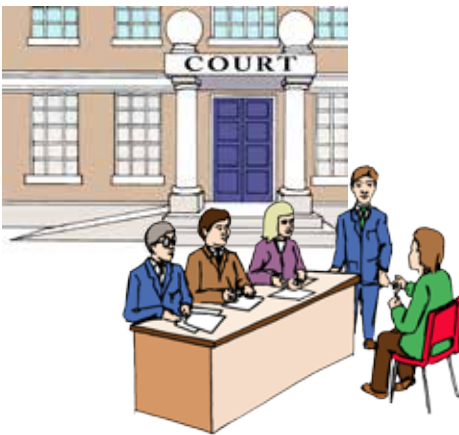
Can look at things again if someone is not happy with a decision the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority made after 1st April 1996.



Crown Prosecution Service

This service works with the police and decides how to charge someone for a crime in England and Wales.

Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service



This service makes sure courts and tribunals run properly. **Tribunals** are small courts or meetings that sort out arguments between people or organisations.

Her Majesty's Prison Service



Looks after people who the courts say are guilty and helps them stick to the law and lead better lives in prison and when they get out of prison.



National Offender Management Services (NOMS)

Plans and buys services in the community and prison to look after people who are guilty of crimes in England and Wales.

The Parole Board



An independent organisation that decides whether it is safe for prisoners to leave prison.

Police and Crime Commissioner



A person the local community votes for in England and Wales to make sure the police work well in their area.



Police - including transport and military police

The government gives the police the power to:



- Make sure people behave properly and stick to the law



- Stop crime happening



- Find out about crimes

Probation services



Make sure people over 18 stick to the rules if they are given a community sentence or when they leave prison. They also work with people who are victims of serious crimes.

The UK Supreme Court



The most important court in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. If someone is not happy with what a court decides about their case they can ask the Supreme Court to look at it again.

Witness Care Units



Make it easier for victims and witnesses to go to court and tell them what is happening with their case.

The Word Bank

Appeal

This is when the person asks another court to look at the case again.

Arrest

When the police take someone to the police station because they think they may have done a crime. They have the right to a lawyer to help them.

Assessment

A check that is done to see what you need.

Bail

Being allowed out of prison until you have to go back to court, if a judge thinks you will go back when you should. Sometimes you might need to go to a police station every day or stay in at night time.

Case

When you tell the police about a crime, everything about that crime is called the case. It will have a number which you will be given.

Charge

When the police officially tell a person which law they think they have broken.

Compensation

It is money you get if you lose something, have problems or are injured and it is not your fault.

Crime

When a person breaks the law.

Criminal Justice System

All the services involved in law, crime and punishment working together.

Crown Prosecution Service

This service decides how to charge someone for a crime and take the person to court.

Defense

You or a lawyer saying why you did or didn't do something.

Evidence

Information that can be used to try and prove something.

Family Liaison Officer

A police officer who is trained to support you and be a link to the police.

Guilty

When a court decided that you did something wrong.

Human trafficking

Where you are taken to another country and used for sex, as a slave or something else illegal.

Investigation

When the police look at the facts and try to find out what happened.

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

They look into complaints that people have been treated unfairly or have received poor service from government departments and other public organisations and the NHS in England.

Probation Service

This service checks a prisoner does things like training, getting treatment or helping in the community when they leave prison.

Prosecutor

The lawyer who tries to show someone did a crime.

Punishment

What happens to someone who breaks the law. For example, if the court sends them to prison.

Registered Intermediaries

People that help you understand questions you are asked and help you give your answers.

Restorative justice

Which means trying to make things better for the victim instead of just punishing someone for a crime.

Sentence

The punishment you get in court.

Special Measures

They depend on what you need to give the best evidence you can.

Spokesperson

Someone who speaks for a group of people.

Standards

The support you can get and how you should be treated from when you first tell the police about a crime to after it has gone to court.

Statement

Writing down what really happened. Someone else can write this down for you and if you agree you have to sign it.

Suspect

Someone the police think broke the law.

Threatened

Being made to feel afraid someone will hurt or upset you.

To swear

To promise by putting your hand on a holy book like the bible or other religion.

To affirm

To promise.

Trial

When a case goes to court and the court decides if the person is guilty of the crime.

Victim

A person who is harmed because of a crime.

Usher

Court Staff that will come and show you where to go when in court.

Vulnerable

Someone who is at greater risk of being taken advantage of.

Witness

Someone who can tell the court what happened.

Witness summons

A court paper saying you must go to court to give evidence.

What happens for Victims? - a pull out guide



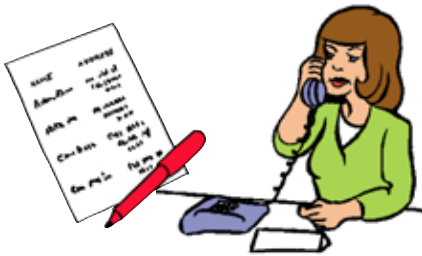
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You are a victim of a crime.

You tell the police and they give you a number for the crime.



You have an **assessment** to find out what support you might need.



The police give your information to services that support victims.



The police

The police tell you if they cannot do anything about the case.



You make a **witness statement** to tell the police what happened.



You can also make a **victim personal statement** to say how the crime affected you.



The police look into the case and tell you what is happening.

The police **arrest** someone for the crime and tell you whether:



- They cannot do anything else about the case



- The person has **bail** and must go back to the police station.

The police **charge** the person with the crime and tell you whether:



- They cannot do anything else about the case



- They will deal with the crime without going to court

- The person has **bail** until the case goes to court



- The person will go to prison until the case goes to court.



The court

If the person says they are not guilty the **Witness Care Unit** will find out what support you need if you have to go to court.



The court will tell you the date of the **trial**.



If you **do not** have to give evidence you can go to the court to watch and get support after the trial.



If you **do** have to give evidence you get help and information about what to expect and the chance to visit the court before the trial.

You can also get support after the trial.



- Have support from the **Youth Offending Team**, your **Victim Liaison Officer** or the prison service's **Victims' Helpline** if the person tries to contact you and you don't want this.



After the trial

If the court decides the person is guilty you must:



- Get information about the **sentence** and what this means



- Know if the person is going to **appeal** and ask another court to look at the case



- Be offered support from the **Victim Contact Scheme** if you are the victim of a serious violent or sexual crime and the person who did it is sentenced for more than 1 year



- Suggest what rules the person should keep to when they are let out of prison



- Make a victim personal statement if the **Parole Board** is thinking about whether the person can leave prison