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Victim personal statement

Where someone is to be prosecuted for a crime, you are entitled to be given the opportunity to make a victim personal statement (VPS). This is your choice. The VPS sets out in your own words the impact the crime has had on you. It will only be used when the case goes to court and the person pleads or is found guilty. It tells the court the impact the crime has had on you, before any sentence is passed. Advice and support on making a VPS is available from Victim Support NI and the NSPCC Young Witness Service. To find out more, visit <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/victim-personal-statements>.

Going to court as a witness

If you are called to court to give evidence the Victim and Witness Care Unit will give you a leaflet about the services and facilities at the court. The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service also have leaflets for all courts. To find out more visit www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/courts-and-tribunals
You may also find it helpful to watch the ‘Going to Court’ video. This explains what happens at court www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/going-court-victim-or-witness.

You may want to know how long it will take for a case to be dealt with. While this will vary from case to case (and could vary significantly depending on how complex the case is), data for 2020/21 shows that on average it took around six months for adult Magistrates’ Court cases, nine months for Youth Court cases and 19 months for Crown Court cases during this period.

It is also helpful to have a pre-trial familiarisation visit before going to court. This can be organised by the Witness Service run by Victim Support NI for adults and by the NSPCC for young persons. They have trained staff and volunteers who you can talk to about what to expect before going to court, during a pre-trial visit, and who can support you at court. The Witness Service cannot discuss the case or the content of your evidence with you. Information on Victim Support: <https://www.victimsupportni.com/>.

NSPCC Young Witness Service provides support and assistance to children and young people under 18-years-old who have to attend court as prosecution witnesses in Northern Ireland. It’s free, independent and confidential. More information about the service - <https://youtu.be/U2U2mm3SnEM>

A witness who is under 18 on the proposed date of contest, is automatically eligible for special measures, which also applies in cases where witnesses are vulnerable adults.

Restorative justice

In some cases, as a victim of a crime, you may be able to address questions you have for the person who caused the harm and even participate in a meeting that brings you together with that person to help repair the damage caused. This is completely voluntary, will move at your own pace and you can withdraw at any stage. Further information on this and on the Youth Justice Agency can be found at <http://www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk> www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk. Victim Support NI also offers a restorative justice service called ‘Justtalk’ which can be accessed via 02890 243133.

Conviction, sentence, release and supervision

You are entitled to receive information about the final outcome of the police investigation or court case, including any sentence given. If the offender goes to prison, or is subject to a supervised order, they pass into the care of the Prison Service or Probation Board www.pbni.org.uk. www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/prisons.

If the offender is sentenced to six months or more in prison, is supervised by the Probation Board or subject to a hospital order with a Restriction Order, you are entitled to be told about key points in the offender’s sentence. You must register with the Victim Information Unit to receive this information, it does not happen automatically. The Victim and Witness Care Unit will notify you about the information scheme. PBNI facilitate a limited number of restorative justice conferences which are victim-led. Find out more at <https://www.pbni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Victim-Information-Schemes-leaflet-tagged.pdf>

Victim Information Unit

Tel: 0300 1233 269
Email: VictimInfo@probation-ni.gov.uk
Web: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/contacts-az/probation-board-northern-ireland-victim-information-unit>.

Your entitlements

As a victim of crime you can receive support and services under the Victim Charter. The Charter sets out your entitlements and the services you can expect from service providers. You can make a **complaint**, if you are unhappy with the service you receive. You can also raise your concerns with an independent body. For further information, including about service providers, go to www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/support-services-victims.

You can access the Charter, as well as a summary document and translations of this, in Latvian/Latviešu, Lithuanian/Lietuvių, Mandarin, Polish/Polskie, Portuguese/Português and Romanian/Româna at www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimcharter. If the crime took place in Northern Ireland, but you did not live here at that time, you can still receive services under the Charter as set out in this leaflet.

Further information on support services

This can be found on organisations’ websites, in the criminal justice system guide or at www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/support-services-victims.
For help from Victim Support NI phone 028 9024 3133 or 028 7137 0086. Additional help is also available for specific crime types:

Domestic abuse:

24-hour helpline 0808 802 1414.
Women’s Aid 028 9024 9041.
<https://www.womensaidni.org/get-help/local-groups/>
Men’s Advisory Project 028 9024 1929.
ASSIST NI advocacy support service
<https://assistni.org.uk/> Email: info@assistni.org.uk

Hate Crime:

Details of hate crime advocates can be found at www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/hate-crime.

Murder/Manslaughter:

Cruse Bereavement Care
028 9079 2419 or 0808 8081 677.
Support After Murder and Manslaughter
National Helpline: 0121 472 2912 or 07342 888 570.

Road traffic death:

Brake 0808 800 0401.
Cruse Bereavement Care 0808 8081 677 or 028 9079 2419.

Sexual abuse:

24-hour helpline 0808 802 1414.
Nexus 028 9032 6803.
The Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre
0800 389 4424.
Domestic and Sexual Abuse Advocacy Service
<https://assistni.org.uk/> Email: info@assistni.org.uk

Trafficking:

Migrant Help 24-hour helpline
0808 8010 503 and 013 0420 3977.
Modern slavery 24-hour helpline 0800 012 1700.
Also see domestic violence above.

If medical assistance is required you can contact your GP, visit your local hospital or dial 999 in an emergency.

Citizens Advice can help with financial problems or advice, legal issues or other practical problems. To find out more visit

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/northern-ireland/> Information on social security benefits can be found at www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/ssa-policy-and-guidance. **‘Make the Call’** advises on unclaimed benefits (Tel: 0800 232 1271)
Web:
<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/unclaimed-benefits>.



Information for victims of crime



This leaflet sets out what you can expect from key service providers as a victim of crime. It also contains information about organisations that you can contact for free advice, practical information or support. To find out more visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/victims-and-witnesses-of-crime.

Crime reference and contact details

Where you have reported the incident to the police, information on the reported crime is set out below.

Reporting the crime

You should report a crime as soon as possible, in one of these ways:

- Emergency:**
Phone 999 where there is serious injury, threat or danger; a crime is in progress; or suspects are on the scene.
- Non-urgent matters:**
Phone 101 or you can report online at <https://www.psnipoliceuk/adviceinformation/>
- Hate crime:**
You can also report hate crime online at www.psnipoliceuk/crime/hate-crime/
- Crimestoppers helpline:**
Freephone 0800 555 111, if you do not want to give your name. This is not part of PSNI.
- Call at your local police station:**
You can report non-urgent incidents at your local police station, during opening hours.

If necessary, the police will take a written, or video recorded, statement from you setting out what happened. The format will depend on your needs. The police will assess your needs to consider what information, protection and support you may need.

PSNI

Web: www.psnipoliceuk

The police will automatically pass your details to Victim Support NI and other criminal justice organisations, so you can be offered information on additional services (including support services). They can advise on medical support or alternative accommodation should this be required as a result of the crime.

Further information on the information sharing process can be found at <https://www.psnipoliceuk/adviceinformation/information-about-yourself/data-protection/>. You have the right to ask for your details not to be shared at any time.

Scheduled visit (if applicable)

On (date) at (time) Police called. You were unavailable. Please make contact with us (details below).

Initial contact with the police

Name of officer:
Police station:
Phone Number: 101

Officer dealing with the case (if different)

Name of officer:
Police station:
Phone Number: 101

If you can’t contact the investigating officer, and want a further update, phone 101 and ask for the Contact Management Support Unit. If the Unit cannot answer your question, they will arrange for the officer to contact you.

Crime details

Initial crime detail (offence type):
Time and place of crime:
Time and place of reporting:
Damage or harm reported:
Crime reference number:

Police investigation

You will receive an update within 10 days on what the police are doing to investigate the crime. If appropriate, they will give you further updates as the case progresses and agree when these will be.

Helping the police to investigate your crime

So that the police assist you as best they can, and can investigate your case, you should let them know if:

- your contact details change:
- you remember something not already included in your statement:
- you have any specific needs, for example, because of a learning or physical disability, mental health issue or communication difficulty: or
- you feel intimidated, for example because of your relationship with the offender, or your gender, race, sexuality, religion or disability.

Victims with specific needs

If you have a learning or physical disability, mental health issue, communication difficulty, are a child or are being intimidated you may need extra help to tell the police, and court, what happened. ‘Special measures’ and other protection measures are available to help you. Where appropriate the police and Victim and Witness Care Unit will discuss these with you.

The Victim Charter sets out measures and entitlements for young people and others including those who live in other EU countries.

Information on special measures (such as giving evidence by video link, the use of screens, giving evidence in private, using video-recorded statements and assistance from Registered Intermediaries, who can help you communicate your evidence) can be found at: <https://www.psnipoliceuk/adviceinformation/victim-support/special-measures/>. The Judge will decide if special measures are to be granted.

Translation and Interpretation

If you do not understand or speak English, you are entitled to request interpretation and translation into a language you understand when being interviewed by the police, giving evidence in court, receiving information about court hearings and the outcome of proceedings. Assistance can also be provided at other times as necessary.

Compensation

If you have been a victim of a violent crime you are entitled to apply for compensation. Guidance is available from Compensation Services, at police stations and Victim Support NI offices. You should submit an application to Compensation Services within two years (of the date of the incident). Victim Support NI can provide you with FREE information, advice and support to make a claim for criminal injuries compensation. Any award made will be paid to you without a deduction for their services.

Alternatively you can also lodge a claim online at www.nidirect.gov.uk/compensation-services.

Compensation Services

Web: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/justice-and-law/compensation-services>
Tel: 0300 200 7887
Email: compensationservices@justice-ni.gov.uk

Support services

Victim Support NI is an independent charity (with trained staff and volunteers) for people affected by crime, including if you are giving evidence at court. Their services are free and confidential, providing information, a listening service and practical support to help you cope. If you need more specialist advice or support they can refer you to a suitable organisation. NSPCC also provide support to young witnesses.

Victim Support NI

Web: www.victimsupportni.com
Tel: 028 9024 3133
Email: info@victimsupportni.org.uk

NSPCC Young Witness Service

Tel: 028 9344 1947
Email: niyws@nspcc.org.uk

Other information, help and services

Details of other information, help and services that are available can be found at www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/support-services-victims.

When meeting service providers you can usually bring someone to support you.

Prosecution

Once a crime is reported to the police it may lead to a suspect being prosecuted. The Public Prosecution Service will make a decision on this. You are entitled to be told if a suspect is to be prosecuted, be given reasons for a decision not to prosecute and ask for that decision to be reviewed.

Public Prosecution Service

Web: www.ppsni.gov.uk
Email: info@ppsni.gov.uk

Victim and Witness Care Unit (VWCU)

The Unit provides you with a single point of contact (including their details) from when the Public Prosecution Service receives the investigation file through to the conclusion of proceedings. They will assess your individual needs as your case progresses, offer access to additional services (where appropriate) and advise you of the trial, sentence and appeal dates. The Unit will tell you if you have to give evidence, as well as provide information to help you prepare for this, about claiming expenses (www.ppsni.gov.uk) and the case outcome. You can contact the Unit for an update on the case.