

You've reported a crime... so what happens next?

This information tells you what you can expect from the Criminal Justice System, and explains:

- what happens now
- how to get advice and support
- your rights
- where you can find more information.

The police will pass information about you to Victim Support so that they can offer you help and support – unless you ask the police not to.

We are sorry to hear that you experienced a crime. We understand that this might have been a distressing experience, or that you might feel angry or frustrated.

We appreciate that you reported the incident. The decision to contact the police can be stressful, and you might be worried or concerned about its implications. If you would like advice or support, there are many people who can help.

This information explains what will happen now and what you can expect from the **Criminal Justice System**. It also contains information about organisations that you can contact for free advice – whether it's for practical information or emotional support.

The **Criminal Justice System** is one of the biggest public services in the country. It is made up of agencies such as the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, courts, prisons and probation, all working together to deliver criminal justice in England and Wales.

What happens now?

What the police will do

When you have reported a crime, the police will let you know what happens next.

- They will inform you whether or not the crime is being investigated further. If the investigation is closed, they will give you the reasons why.
- If your case is investigated further, the police will give you information about its progress. You have a right to be kept informed about your case, so do ask your police contact for updates.

This is what you can do to help the police

When you report a crime, there are a few things you can do to help with the investigation:

- Tell the police if you remember anything more about the offence after you made your statement.
- Alert the police straight away if you change your contact details – like your phone number or home address.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



- Tell the police if the crime involved abuse, or if you think it was related to race, sexuality, religion, disability or gender identity.
- Let the police know if you have any specific needs – for example, if you have special mobility, communication or religious requirements.

Protecting you against harassment

If you are harassed or threatened in any way during an investigation or a trial, you should contact the police immediately. It is a criminal offence to intimidate anyone helping the police in an investigation.

If the offender has been caught, remanded in custody, released on bail or convicted, the criminal court can make a restraining order to stop them coming near you, threatening you or intimidating you again.

If your case goes to court

If someone is arrested and charged, the **Crown Prosecution Service** (CPS) will decide whether to prosecute and take your case to court.

If your case goes to court, you will be contacted before the trial by the **Witness Care Unit**. They will be your single point of contact from then on, and will inform and support you at court.

Some witnesses who feel intimidated or vulnerable, because they are young or disabled for example, may need help giving evidence. In these cases, witnesses may be entitled to 'special measures'. This could involve placing a screen between the witness box and the defendant or giving evidence with the help of a specialist.

The **Criminal Justice System** is responsible for prosecuting criminal cases that have been investigated by the police.

The **Witness Care Unit** takes care of victims and witnesses from the point when someone is charged with the crime to the end of the case. They inform witnesses about the progress of their case, make any arrangements for witnesses going to court, and offer support.

Find out about the court process

For more information about:

- How the decision to prosecute is made, go to the 'Your CPS' section at **www.cps.gov.uk**

Or order the leaflet *The decision to prosecute* by calling **020 7796 8442**

- What happens at court, watch the 'Going to court' video online at www.moj.coionline.tv/videos/goingtocourtvideo

Or go to www.cjsonline.gov.uk/victim for more general information

How to get advice and support

When you have experienced a crime, there may be many reasons why you would like advice or support. However big or small your questions or worries are, there are organisations that can help.

Advice and support organisations

Victim Support

If you have been a victim of crime, you may need practical help and information about, for example, replacing or repairing property (such as changing locks) or claiming compensation.

Victim Support is a national, independent charity whose trained volunteers 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 volunteers 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.

Phone: **0845 30 30 900** Lines are open Mon to Fri 9am to 9pm, Sat to Sun 9am to 7pm, Bank Holidays 9am to 5pm

Or: **0207 268 0200** For data protection issues

Website: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Citizens Advice

If you have experienced a crime, you may be facing financial problems or need financial advice as a result. You may also have questions about legal issues or other practical problems. The national network of Citizens Advice Bureaux can help you resolve these by giving you free information and advice.

Phone: Go to the website to find the phone number of your local bureau

Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

UK Online

There is a lot of practical information and advice available online if you have experienced a crime. If you don't have access to the internet, UK Online can help you find free or low-cost internet access at one of their local centres. They have over 6,000 centres – call them free to find your nearest one.

Phone: **0800 771 234**

Website: www.ukonlinecentres.com

Your rights

The Victims' Code of Practice

The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime sets out what services you can expect from the criminal justice agencies – such as the police and the courts – when you have reported a crime. The Code ensures, for example, that you are kept up to date on the progress of your case. If you are a vulnerable or intimidated victim, it also makes sure that you are given special consideration.

If you are not happy with the service you receive, you can make a complaint under the Code.

- For more information about the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime or to make a complaint, go to www.cjsonline.gov.uk/victim and click on 'Your rights' in the right-hand panel.

How you can seek compensation

Injury, loss or damage

If you have suffered any injury, loss or damage as a result of the offence, you may be entitled to compensation if someone is caught and convicted. You will need to tell the police if you want to seek compensation, so that the CPS can apply for a compensation order. You will also need to give the police accurate details of the loss, injury or damage, and (if possible) any evidence, like receipts.

Injuries caused by a violent crime

If you have been injured in a violent crime, you can seek compensation through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. For more information about this scheme, visit the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority website.

Phone: **0800 358 3601**

Website: www.cica.gov.uk

Damage caused by an uninsured driver

If the offender was driving an uninsured vehicle, you may be able to claim compensation through the Motor Insurers' Bureau (MIB).

Phone: **01908 830 001**

Website: www.mib.org.uk

Where to find more information

Any questions?

If you have any questions or if you need help getting the advice and support available to you, contact your local police force. You will find their contact details in your phone directory.

You can also find more information about the criminal justice process and the support available in the victim section at www.cjsonline.gov.uk

Braille and other languages

This information is also available in Braille – as well as in a number of different languages.

- If you would like to get one of these alternative versions, ask your local police force. You will find their contact details in your phone directory.

Help to prevent crime

Reducing the risk and fear of crime is a challenge for the police and the community to tackle together. But there are many ways that you can reduce the risk of becoming a victim of crime.

The leaflet *Be safe, be secure: Your practical guide to crime prevention* offers suggestions on how you can protect your family, your home and your belongings.

- To view the leaflet online, go to www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk, or ask your local police force for a copy. You will find your local police contact details in your phone directory.