

# Victim Charter

A Charter for victims of crime

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## Overview of the key entitlements in the Victim Charter

1. As a victim you will receive services under the Victim Charter, a Charter for victims of crime. These are described as entitlements which apply to a range of service providers. Full details of the entitlements, how they will work and the conditions for these are set out in the body of the Charter. The text below is simply a summary overview of the main elements – there are more than 22 entitlements. Broadly speaking you are **entitled** to:

- be treated fairly, professionally, and with dignity and respect;
- be understood and to understand – in your first language if necessary;
- be updated at key stages and given relevant information;
- have your needs considered by service providers;
- be told about available support and bring someone with you to give support;
- apply for compensation (within two years of the incident causing the injury) if you were a victim of a violent crime;
- ask for a court familiarisation visit and be kept separate from the accused as much as possible at court;
- have the opportunity to tell the court how the crime has harmed you;
- ask to be told how the offender’s sentence is managed; and
- let service providers know if you are unhappy with their service.

2. You are **entitled** to:

1. Be **recognised and treated** in a courteous, dignified, respectful, sensitive, tailored, professional and non-discriminatory way.

2. Have service providers take appropriate measures to help you **understand** what they are telling you and make sure they understand what you are telling them.

3. Be **told what is happening**, at times agreed with the police, where the police are investigating the crime.

4. **Receive information** on:

- what to expect from the criminal justice system;
- crime reference details;
- help and support available to you (including information on specialist support organisations);
- decisions not to continue with or end an investigation;
- a decision not to prosecute someone;
- the offences for which the accused is being prosecuted;
- the date, time and location of key court hearings (trial,<sup>1</sup> sentence and appeal);
- the outcome of relevant bail hearings (where this directly affects you) and the trial;
- claiming expenses, if asked to give evidence;
- claiming compensation (on request); and
- victim information schemes (where relevant).

5. Have **access to free**

**translation or interpretation**, if asked for and you do not speak or understand English, when:

- reporting a crime;
- being given an acknowledgement of the crime;
- receiving information about the date, time and location of key court hearings;
- giving evidence; and
- receiving information about the outcome of the trial.

1 For the purpose of this Charter references to trial include a reference to a contest at Magistrates’ Court.

6. **Bring** someone of your choice to **support** you when you meet service providers, unless this would not be in your best interest or could affect the case.
7. Be referred to, and have access to, free of charge confidential services (including specialist services) that can help you, based on your needs – **support services**.
8. Have your **needs assessed** to identify if you need extra help to give evidence to the police or at court.
9. Be **interviewed** by the police as few times as possible – **only where necessary** for the investigation – and to have someone of your choice with you (unless this would hinder the police investigation).
10. Be told whether a suspect is to be **prosecuted or not** and to have a decision not to prosecute that person reviewed, where you ask for this.
11. **Get property** that you own **back** as soon as possible, if it is taken as evidence, unless it is needed for the investigation or court proceedings or its return would be an offence.
12. Apply for **compensation**, if you are a victim of a violent crime (within two years of the incident causing the injury).
13. Be given the opportunity to make a **written statement** to the court about how a crime has affected you, where the case is to go to court.
14. Be told if you have to give **evidence at court** and receive information to help you prepare for this.
15. Discuss any needs you have with your **case officer** in the **Victim and Witness Care Unit** and be referred to a relevant victim support service provider, if appropriate, who can advise you of services (including specialist services).
16. Ask for a **court familiarisation visit** before the case is heard, to enter the building through a different entrance from the alleged offender and to sit in a separate waiting area, where possible.
17. Be **protected from contact** with the alleged offender at court, where possible.
18. Where you take part in programmes to **engage with the offender**, have steps taken to **protect** you.
19. Know when the offender leaves custody or hospital or will be supervised as part of their sentence, where you join the relevant victim **information release scheme** (for sentences of six months or more).
20. Raise your concerns with a service provider or an independent body, if you are **not happy with the service** provided or don't think your entitlements under the Charter have been met by service providers.
21. Deal with people who are **trained appropriately** in contact with victims.
22. A range of services and assistance, if you **live in another EU Member State**.

3. If you are a victim of crime, you can report it in the following ways, typically to the Police Service of Northern Ireland:

**Emergency:** In an emergency dial 999 or 18000 for textphone users. This is where serious injury has been caused or a crime is in progress and suspects are on the scene.

**Non-Emergency:** Where the incident is not urgent telephone 101.

**Hate crime:** Where the incident is not urgent telephone 101, then dial 2. You can also report hate crime online at [www.urzone.com/hatecrime/hatecrime.asp](http://www.urzone.com/hatecrime/hatecrime.asp). This is in addition to the other ways of reporting the crime set out in this section.

**Call at your local police station:** Where the incident is not urgent you may also report it at your local police station, during opening hours.

The crime may also be reported in the following ways:

**Crimestoppers:** You can report a crime anonymously by calling the freephone Crimestoppers charity helpline on 0800 555 111. This service is not part of the police.

**Harbour or Airport incident:** Where the incident has occurred within the grounds of Belfast International Airport or Belfast Harbour you should contact Belfast International Airport Constabulary on 028 9448 4400 (extension 4412)/Mobile 077 1081 9183 or Belfast Harbour Police on 028 9055 3000. Where a major or serious incident such as murder, an act of terrorism or armed robbery has occurred these can also be reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Incidents at Belfast City Airport will be dealt with by the Police Service of Northern Ireland, through the contact details above.

**Third party reporting:** If you really do not want to or cannot report the crime yourself, someone else can report it for you, such as a family member, a representative or a voluntary organisation. They would make the initial contact with the police. You would still be involved later in the proceedings.

4. To talk confidentially about what happened to you, or any concerns that you have, you can also contact Victim Support NI on 028 9024 3133 or 0845 3030 900. Additional help is also available for specific crime types or type of victim:

**Children:**

- NSPCC Northern Ireland 028 9035 1135.
- NSPCC Young Witness Service (at court) 028 9448 7533.

**Domestic abuse/violence:**

- 24 hour domestic and sexual violence helpline 0808 802 1414.
- Women's Aid 028 9024 9041.
- Men's Advisory Project 028 9024 1929.

## **Hate Crime:**

Details of hate crime advocates can be found at **Annex C** or at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations). This includes the Victim Support NI advocacy co-ordinator who can refer you to the relevant advocate.

## **Murder/Manslaughter:**

- Cruse Bereavement Care 028 9079 2419 or 0844 477 9400.
- Support after Murder and Manslaughter NI 028 9442 9009.
- Care for the Family 028 9262 8050.

## **Road traffic death:**

- Brake 0845 603 8570.
- Cruse Bereavement Care 028 9079 2419 or 0844 477 9400.

## **Sexual abuse/violence:**

- 24 hour domestic and sexual violence helpline 0808 802 1414.
- Nexus 028 9032 6803.
- The Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre 0800 389 4424.

## **Trafficking:**

- Migrant Help 24 hour helpline 077 6666 8781 and 013 0420 3977.
- Modern slavery 24 hour helpline 0800 012 1700.
- Also see domestic violence above.

Contact details for support organisations, including specialist support services (for example, for victims of domestic or sexual abuse/violence, hate crime, trafficking as well as families bereaved through murder, manslaughter and road death) can be found at **Annex C** or at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations).

## Short guide to the criminal justice system

### Overview of service providers

**Compensation Services** in the Department of Justice operates five statutory compensation schemes in Northern Ireland for criminal injuries, criminal damage and actions taken under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007.<sup>2</sup>

The **Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service**<sup>3</sup> is responsible for managing and supporting the operation of the courts, as well as tribunals, regionally.

The **Northern Ireland Prison Service**<sup>4</sup> keeps people who have been sent to prison in secure, safe and humane custody. By working with prisoners and with other organisations, the Northern Ireland Prison Service aims to reduce the risk of a person re-offending, in order to protect the public and contribute to peace and stability in Northern Ireland.

The **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) Young Witness Service**<sup>5</sup> provides support and information for children and young people under the age of 18 who may have to give evidence in court. The service also aims to help parents and carers support their child through the court process.

There are a number of Northern Ireland police services as follows:

- The **Police Service of Northern Ireland**<sup>6</sup> aims to keep people safe through prevention of crime, protection of people and communities; particularly the most vulnerable and detecting those who commit crime and bringing them to justice.
- The **Belfast International Airport Constabulary** is a small, specialised police service responsible for policing Belfast International Airport.
- The **Belfast Harbour Police** is a small, specialised police service with the responsibility of policing the Port of Belfast.<sup>7</sup>

For the purpose of this Charter these are referred to collectively as the police.

The **Probation Board for Northern Ireland**<sup>8</sup> aims to reduce crime and the harm it does by challenging and changing offenders' behaviour.

The **Public Prosecution Service**<sup>9</sup> aims to provide an independent, fair and effective prosecution service. The Public Prosecution Service is committed to making sure victims' best interests are taken into account as far as possible.

The **Victim and Witness Care Unit** provides a single point of contact for victims and witnesses, for as much of the prosecution process as possible.

2 [www.dojni.gov.uk/compensation-services](http://www.dojni.gov.uk/compensation-services)

3 [www.courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/pages/default.aspx](http://www.courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/pages/default.aspx)

4 [www.dojni.gov.uk/index/ni-prison-service.htm](http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/ni-prison-service.htm)

5 [www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/the-work-we-do/services-for-children/young-witness-service/young-witness-service\\_wda100687.html](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/the-work-we-do/services-for-children/young-witness-service/young-witness-service_wda100687.html)

6 [www.psnipolice.uk/](http://www.psnipolice.uk/)

7 [www.belfast-harbour.co.uk/corporate/policing](http://www.belfast-harbour.co.uk/corporate/policing)

8 [www.pbni.org.uk/site](http://www.pbni.org.uk/site)

9 [www.ppsni.gov.uk/](http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/)

**Victim Support NI**<sup>10</sup> helps people who have been a victim of, or witness to, a crime. They provide emotional support, information and practical help to victims, witnesses and others affected by crime through compensation, community and witness services. They can provide services even if you do not wish to report the crime. Victim Support NI can refer you to specialist support services, where appropriate and available.

The **Youth Justice Agency**<sup>11</sup> aims to make communities safer by reducing youth crime. It works with children and young people aged 10 to 17 years who have committed crimes or are at serious risk of doing so.

More detailed information can be found on service providers' websites and in **A Guide to Northern Ireland's Criminal Justice System for Victims and Witnesses of Crime; A Guide to Northern Ireland's Criminal Justice System for bereaved families and friends following murder or manslaughter;** and **Information, help and support for adult victims of rape and sexual assault in Northern Ireland.**<sup>12</sup>

Contact details for the service providers covered by the Charter can be found at **Annex B** or at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimcontacts](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimcontacts). Contact details for other support organisations, including specialist support services (for example a 24 hour helpline for victims of domestic and sexual violence) can be found at **Annex C** or at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations).

The Commission for Victims and Survivors also works to promote the interests of victims and survivors of the Conflict (see **Annex C** which refers to practical support, advice and information for victims of conflict-related incidents).

## Criminal justice system guide

5. If you have been the victim of a crime you should report it to the police. However, if you do not want to report the crime you can still contact a victim support service provider, or specialist services, to get help and support. When you report a crime to the police you will be given a crime reference number as well as (or be advised about) a victim of crime information leaflet. This will explain the criminal justice process, how to claim compensation, support available to you (including what special measures are) and contact details for support organisations (including specialist support services). Even if there is no criminal offence or investigation, you may be able to seek support from outside the criminal justice system.
6. The police will carry out an assessment to consider what help and support you may need to give evidence. They will pass your details to Victim Support NI who can provide further information and support. If necessary, the police will take a written, or video recorded, statement from you that sets out what happened. You can be supported by a friend, family member, support worker from a voluntary organisation or other person (unless this is not considered to be in your best interests or would affect the investigation). If you do not speak English you should have access to free interpretation services, where requested. Sign language facilities are also available, if you need these to give evidence to the police and at court. All of the statutory service providers have access to interpretation services, covering more than 100 languages.

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10 [www.victimsupportni.co.uk/](http://www.victimsupportni.co.uk/)

11 [www.youthjusticeagency.ni.gov.uk/](http://www.youthjusticeagency.ni.gov.uk/)

12 These guides are available at [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk) and [www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications.htm](http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications.htm). They are due to be updated in 2016.

- 7.** The police will discuss the timing of updates on the investigation, which can be tailored to suit you. If the police are unable to identify a suspect they will let you know and ask if you wish to be informed of any future developments. If a suspect is identified you will be informed if they have been arrested (including any release on police bail and the terms of this), or released with no further action to be taken. You will be advised if an alternative to prosecution is offered, such as a caution or informed warning. For certain lower level crimes the police can show discretion, if the offender admits their guilt. The police will tell you if the suspect is charged to attend court or reported to the Public Prosecution Service, with the Victim and Witness Care Unit informing you when the investigation file is received for consideration by the Public Prosecution Service.
- 8.** The Public Prosecution Service will make a decision as to whether or not to prosecute, based on the test for prosecution, which has two elements:

  - The evidential test – is there enough evidence to provide a reasonable prospect of a conviction?
  - The public interest test – is it in the public interest to prosecute?
- 9.** Both elements of the test must be met in order to prosecute. The Public Prosecution Service will also consider whether alternatives to prosecution at court (a caution, informed warning or diversionary youth conference) are more appropriate. You will be advised of the decision. If a decision is made to prosecute someone through the courts a case can proceed on the basis of a charge to attend court, after which the person may be held in custody or released on bail, or the issue of a summons. The Victim and Witness Care Unit will then give you information on how to make a written victim personal statement. If the suspect pleads 'guilty' you normally won't need to attend court or give evidence. If the suspect pleads 'not guilty' the Victim and Witness Care Unit will inform you if you have to give evidence. Support will be available from victim support service providers.
- 10.** You will be told the trial date. You will also be told any sentencing and appeal dates. The Victim and Witness Care Unit will carry out a needs assessment to identify any support or potential eligibility for special measures<sup>13</sup> that may help you give your best evidence. If it is considered that special measures could help achieve this the police, the Victim and Witness Care Unit or the Public Prosecution Service will discuss this with you. You can also ask a victim support service provider to arrange a visit to the court before the trial. You may watch court proceedings from the public gallery, from the start if you are not giving evidence, otherwise after you have given evidence. At court you will be introduced to someone from the Public Prosecution Service. Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service staff are also available. If possible a victim support service provider will offer you a separate room to wait in. The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service will arrange to put in place any special measures that have been granted.
- 11.** All criminal cases, even the most serious, begin in a Magistrates' Court. The Magistrates' Court hears and decides on less serious criminal cases, cases involving young people and some civil and family cases. When a criminal case takes place in a Magistrates' Court, the District Judge (Magistrates' Court) listens to the evidence and decides if the defendant is guilty. In the Youth Court (for defendants aged 17 and under) the District Judge will hear a case with two lay members. The Magistrates' Court also carries out the initial hearings in more serious criminal cases, which are then sent or 'committed' to a Crown Court for trial. In the Crown Court, a jury usually decides

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<sup>13</sup> [www.psni.police.uk/special\\_measures\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.psni.police.uk/special_measures_leaflet.pdf)

if the defendant is guilty (there is no jury in a Magistrates' Court). The judge decides on the sentence, taking account of the maximum sentence they can give, whether the defendant pleaded guilty or not, the level of sentence in similar cases in the past and aggravating or mitigating circumstances. The final sentence granted may be less than the maximum that is available, due to the individual circumstances of the case. The Court of Appeal hears appeals against the decisions of lower courts.

- 12.** 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 2014/15 shows that on average it took around five months for Magistrates' and youth court cases and 17 months for Crown Court cases during this period.<sup>14</sup>
- 13.** The Victim and Witness Care Unit will inform you of the outcome of the case, any sentence and the meaning of this. If a prison sentence of six months or more is awarded, the sentence includes supervision by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland or the offender has been sent to hospital under a restriction order, you will have the opportunity to register with the post-conviction victim information schemes (information is not provided automatically). The Victim and Witness Care Unit outcome letter will refer to the relevant information scheme and include a leaflet on this. If you join a scheme you will be provided with updates on release and compliance with the terms of any licence. If you prefer, you can nominate a representative, such as Victim Support NI, who can receive this information on your behalf and pass it on to you as agreed.

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<sup>14</sup> The average time from when the accused was charged (or they were informed by the police that they would be reported to the Public Prosecution Service) until disposal of the case.

## Summary flowchart of the criminal justice process

### 1. Reporting a crime

The process begins when a victim (or someone else who is aware of what happened) reports a crime to the police. Each victim journey will be unique and your needs may differ at each stage of the process.



### 2. Support services

You can access support services, including specialist support, whether or not you report the crime to the police. Contact Victim Support NI (028 9024 3133), who can also advise you about specialist support. More information can be found at [www.victimsupportni.co.uk](http://www.victimsupportni.co.uk).



### 3. Police investigation

The police will investigate the crime and check what support you need. They will refer you to Victim Support NI. You may have to give a witness statement. The police will update you within 10 days and tell you whether a suspect has been identified. If there is no suspect or there is not enough evidence, the investigation may be closed. In some instances, the police may deal with the case in a way which means that it does not have to go to court.



### 4. Will it go to court?

If the police send a file to the Public Prosecution Service, a prosecutor will decide whether there is enough evidence for the case to go to court and whether it is in the public interest for this to happen. In some cases, the prosecutor may decide that, for example, a caution is more appropriate. The Victim and Witness Care Unit will let you know the decision. If the case is going to court, the Unit will check what support you need and give you information on how to make a victim personal statement. They will also tell you whether you have to give evidence at court.



### 5. Preparing for court

Depending on your age, you can get support from Victim Support NI's Witness Service (for adults aged 18 or over) or the NSPCC's Young Witness Service (if you are under 18). This may include visiting the court so that you have a better idea of what to expect.



### 6. The trial and giving evidence

If the defendant pleads guilty before the start of the trial you will not usually have to give evidence. If the trial goes ahead, the Victim and Witness Care Unit will keep you informed about what's happening and what you need to do. They will also check again what support you might need. If you have additional needs, some extra help (known as 'special measures') may be provided if you want this and the judge agrees.



### 7. Outcome

The Victim and Witness Care Unit will tell you the case outcome. If the defendant is found guilty, or pleads guilty, they will tell you about any sentence given and what this means.



### 8. After the trial

If there is a sentence of six months or more, the offender is going to be supervised by the Probation Board or will be subject to a hospital order, the Victim and Witness Care Unit will send you details of the relevant post-conviction victim information scheme.

There is a detailed flowchart showing the criminal justice process at **Annex D**.

## Introduction

14. As a victim of crime, you have the right to expect high quality services, tailored to your individual needs, in any interaction with criminal justice service providers. You have a legitimate interest in knowing how the system operates and your role in it. This includes being proactively provided with information about how a case is progressing, getting help and support as you move through the criminal justice system (including when giving evidence) and understanding the information that is provided to you. The Charter places duties on a range of organisations who currently provide services to victims of crime.
15. There are a number of key elements to the Charter, namely how you can expect to be treated by service providers, what information you will receive as you move through the criminal justice system and when and what services you will receive. It also makes clear who you can contact if you have a query, need more information or if you are not happy about how you have been treated. Taking account of individual needs, the Charter aims to provide support where it is most needed. The services provided under the Charter are free of charge.

## Purpose of the Charter

16. The Charter sets out the services to be provided to victims of criminal conduct, by a range of service providers in Northern Ireland.<sup>15</sup> Criminal conduct is behaviour that constitutes an offence, as governed by the National Crime Recording Standard.<sup>16</sup> For ease of understanding the term 'crime' will be used instead of criminal conduct. This Charter applies in relation to criminal offences committed in Northern Ireland and to criminal proceedings that take place in Northern Ireland. It confers rights on victims of extra-territorial offences only in relation to criminal proceedings that take place in Northern Ireland. The rights in the Charter apply regardless of your residence status in Northern Ireland or your citizenship or nationality. Service providers may provide support and services to you outside the scope of this Charter on a discretionary basis.
17. The purpose of the Charter is to ensure that victims of crime receive appropriate information, support and protection and are able to participate in criminal proceedings<sup>17</sup> (typically as a witness giving evidence to the police or at court). The Charter sets out what your entitlements are and the standards of service that you can expect to receive. Service providers will take account of your particular needs where possible and where they know about these. You may also decide that there are services or information that you do not wish to receive; you can inform the relevant criminal justice organisations about this (unless the information must be provided as you are taking part in proceedings). The Charter also provides for victims' entitlements as set out in relevant parts of the European Victims Directive.<sup>18</sup> A short overview of a victim's journey through the criminal justice system is provided in the previous section, while a summary of terms used in the Charter is included at **Annex A**.

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15 This Charter is issued by the Department of Justice under section 31 of the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015. It implements relevant provisions of the EU Directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime (2012/29/EU) and Directive 2011/92/EU combatting the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children.

16 A review of the reference to the National Crime Recording Standard is being undertaken, with a view to removing this in the future, bringing some other crimes such as lower level road traffic incidents within the remit of the Charter. It is intended that any change would be in place by summer 2016.

17 Criminal proceedings will start when a crime has occurred and is reported to the police.

18 Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime.

## Who is this Charter for?

- 18.** For the purpose of this Charter a victim is an individual who is a victim of a crime.<sup>19</sup> This includes a person who has suffered harm (including physical, mental or emotional harm) or economic loss which was directly caused by the crime.
- 19.** The following people are also to be treated as a victim under the Charter, either instead of or in addition to the victim:
- a family member of the victim, where the victim dies (whether directly as a result of the crime or not). This includes a person who has suffered harm as a result of that person's death;
  - a family member of the victim, where the victim could not reasonably be expected to act for themselves, due to their physical or mental state;
  - a representative where the victim dies (whether directly as a result of the crime or not) or could not reasonably be expected to act for themselves, due to their physical or mental state. This would apply where there is no family member to be treated as a victim, the family member cannot be agreed upon or a representative is reasonably considered more appropriate; and
  - a parent of the victim (or person with parental responsibility for them) where the victim is a child or young person (under the age of 18). The child or young person will still be treated as a victim in their own right.

This Charter is also for those who have a duty to provide services under the Charter and to meet your entitlements. As well as setting out your entitlements the Charter can be used as a reference document for service providers (**Section 11** sets out the duties on service providers to enable them to meet your entitlements), support organisations and those advocating on behalf of victims. It makes clear what services they must provide under the Charter.

## Who can get services under the Charter?

### Direct victims of crime

- 20.** Most of the services and entitlements under the Charter will only be relevant where the crime has been reported to the police and there are criminal proceedings. In those cases you are **entitled** to receive services under the Charter if you have made an allegation to the police, or had an allegation made on your behalf, that you have directly experienced a crime. This also applies if you are related to the person accused of the crime.

### A child victim and/or parent of a child

- 21.** You are **entitled** to get services under the Charter if you are a child or young person (under the age of 18) or a parent (or person with parental responsibility) of that child or young person. The services may be provided to the parent as well as the child or young person or may be given to the parent instead of the child or young person due to, for example, their young age. In providing services under the Charter, where the victim is a child or young person, the best interests of the child or young person will be a primary consideration and will be assessed on an individual basis. A child sensitive approach will be adopted, taking due account of their age, maturity, views, needs and concerns. Depending on the individual circumstances of the case this may be done

<sup>19</sup> Section 28 of the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 ([www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2015/9/contents/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2015/9/contents/enacted)) sets out what is meant by a 'victim' for the purpose of this Charter. The term 'individual' does not apply to an entity such as a business, company or public body.

through contact with the parent or guardian. As well as the material in this Charter a child and/or parent will be informed about measures, or entitlements, specifically focused on the child in the information leaflet that is issued to victims of crime. The NSPCC Young Witness Service will make them aware of these measures or entitlements, where they are to give evidence at court. A Young Person's Guide to the Charter is also available.

## Bereaved family of a victim

- 22.** A family member of a person who has died (whether directly as a result of the crime or not) is **entitled** to receive services under the Charter. Where there is a dispute in a family, service providers would encourage you to appoint a representative as a single point of contact. A service provider may decide, taking account of the individual circumstances of each case, that the entitlements in this Charter should apply to more than one family member. This would be at the discretion of the service provider. In those cases the rights in the Charter could extend to them, as far as is possible. The right to victim support services and protection is unaffected by this.

## Family of a victim unable to act on their own behalf

- 23.** If it would be unreasonable to expect you to access or receive services yourself, due to your physical or mental condition, a family member is **entitled** to receive services under the Charter on your behalf and act as the single point of contact.

## A representative

- 24.** If a victim has died or it would be unreasonable to expect you to access or receive services under the Charter yourself, due to your physical or mental condition, a representative is **entitled** to receive services under the Charter on your behalf and act as the single point of contact. This would normally apply where there is no family member to receive services on your behalf or the family member could not be agreed upon.
- 25.** If a victim has died, or they are unable to act on their own behalf, the family member or representative must tell the service provider that they are dealing with that they are the person who should receive services under the Charter and act as the single point of contact.

## Conditions and exceptions

- 26.** The service providers covered by the Charter may provide services to more than one family member, other family members or another person, at their discretion. They may also, at their discretion, provide services additional to those covered by the Charter.
- 27.** You will not be treated as a victim, or receive services under the Charter, if:
- you are under investigation for, or have been charged with, an offence in connection with the crime, for example where the parent of a child victim is accused of being the offender. This exclusion would not apply where counter-allegations have been made and there are deemed to be two separate offences and, therefore, two separate victims;<sup>20</sup>
  - you are an indirect victim of the crime, for example a witness to it;
  - in the reasonable opinion of the service provider it would not be in the victim's best interest for you to receive such services (where you would receive services as well as or instead of the victim);

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<sup>20</sup> In these circumstances, your entitlements in respect of services provided by the Victim and Witness Care Unit may be tailored to the specifics of your case.

- to do so would adversely affect your well being; or
  - to do so would threaten the safety of any person.
- 28.** Even if no one is brought to justice you will still have entitlements and be able to access services under the Charter.<sup>21</sup> Access to services under the Charter, in most cases, is not dependant on you having reported the crime to the police. Access to some services, such as compensation, is dependent on having co-operated with the police.
- 29.** You are **entitled** to have access to some other services based on your needs, such as general victim support services and specialist support services, even if the crime has not been reported to the police. Your family members are also **entitled** to have access to these types of services, based on their needs and the degree of harm suffered as a result of the criminal offence committed against you.

## Who has to provide services under the Charter?

### Bodies within, or agencies of, the Department of Justice

- Compensation Services;
- the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service;
- the Northern Ireland Prison Service;
- the Probation Board for Northern Ireland; and
- the Youth Justice Agency.

### Statutory Bodies

- the Northern Ireland police services, which include the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Belfast Harbour Police and Belfast International Airport Constabulary;
- the Public Prosecution Service; and
- the Victim and Witness Care Unit (run by the police and the Public Prosecution Service).

### Non-governmental Organisations

- the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) Young Witness Service; and
  - Victim Support NI.
- 30.** These organisations are referred to as ‘service providers’ in the Charter. Other bodies may provide services to you, as a victim, but are not covered by the Charter. In some cases the services to be provided by the Victim and Witness Care Unit may be undertaken/relayed by the police family liaison officer, for example where a family has been bereaved through murder, manslaughter or a driving offence resulting in death.
- 31.** All service providers must include information about the Victim Charter on their websites and, where appropriate, make available other relevant web pages where additional information can be found. They must also include a way for you to comment on the services that they provide under the Charter.

<sup>21</sup> This includes where no one has been identified for, apprehended for, charged for, prosecuted for or convicted of an associated offence. The majority of the entitlements and services are only available where criminal proceedings are being taken forward – access to support services is not conditional on this.

- 32.** In order to provide you with a service it is important that your contact details are correct. Should you move house or change your telephone number while a case is ongoing you should advise the police about the change in your contact details. They will then be able to make this information available to most other service providers (in some instances this may not apply to the voluntary support services).

## General entitlements

- 33.** Some of the services and service standards set out in the Charter will be specific to a particular service provider or may depend on how far the case has gone or whether or not you will give evidence at court. Others will apply to all service providers, as set out below.

### Standard I.1: Ensuring fair treatment

You are **entitled** to be recognised and treated in a respectful, dignified, courteous, sensitive, tailored, professional and non-discriminatory manner by the service providers covered by the Charter and in your contacts with them as a victim of crime, within the context of criminal proceedings. This will apply irrespective of your background, religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, any disability or whether you have dependants. The entitlements in this Charter will apply to you in a non-discriminatory manner, including with respect to your residence status, that is whether you normally live in Northern Ireland, the rest of the UK or another EU Member State.<sup>22</sup>

### Standard I.2: Understanding and being understood

You are **entitled** to have service providers take appropriate measures to assist you understand what they are telling you and make sure they understand what you are telling them (for example, the use of a Registered Intermediary where you are giving evidence to the police or at court).<sup>23</sup> This will apply from your first contact with a service provider and during any further necessary interaction with service providers in the context of criminal proceedings and your subsequent engagement in the criminal justice process. It will include where information is provided to you by the service provider. Service providers will take steps to ensure that when they tell you something that this is in simple and accessible (understandable) language, whether they are speaking or writing to you. In communicating with you, they will take into account any personal characteristics including any disability (where known) that may affect your ability to understand or to be understood. Where a service provider undertakes a needs assessment this will include consideration of your communication needs.

<sup>22</sup> This will be regardless of your nationality or immigration status. It may not be possible to provide some services where you are not physically present in Northern Ireland (for example, where you return to your country of residence). Where you have left Northern Ireland service providers will no longer be obliged to provide assistance, support and protection otherwise than in direct relation to the criminal proceedings that are being conducted. Where you normally live in another part of the UK or another EU Member State that country should provide assistance, support and protection for you to recover.

<sup>23</sup> The final decision on the use of a Registered Intermediary, as with any special measure, is a matter for the judge. The function of the Registered Intermediary is to facilitate communication when a person with significant communication difficulties is giving evidence.

### Standard I.3: Interpretation and translation

You should not be prevented from actively taking part in a police investigation or criminal proceedings due to language difficulties. The police and Victim and Witness Care Unit will assess whether language difficulties mean that you do not understand or speak English and they cannot effectively communicate with you, including whether you need interpretation to take part in any interviews or questioning during criminal proceedings or need translation of any decision to end criminal proceedings (including the reasons for this). You can ask for an interpreter of a particular sex, where the crime involves gender-based violence. Where you express reasonable wishes about the gender of the interpreter, the service provider will advise the interpretation contractor, who will consider this in deploying an interpreter.

A relevant service provider must ensure that, where you do not understand or speak English, interpretation or translation (as set out in the Charter) in a language you understand is provided on request, free of charge. The service provider may provide an oral translation or oral summary instead of a written translation, as long as this does not prejudice the fairness of the criminal proceedings.

If you do not understand or speak English you are **entitled** to request the translation or interpretation of information that is essential for you to actively participate in criminal proceedings (that is give evidence to, or answers questions from, the police or the court) and where you are required to do so – including to provide evidence to, or answer questions when asked by, the police or the court – in a language that you understand. You are **entitled** to submit a reasoned request to consider a document as essential. There will be no requirement to translate essential documents which are not relevant for the purpose of enabling you to actively participate in criminal proceedings, that is to answer questions or give evidence. If your reasoned request for interpretation or translation, including that you consider a document essential to exercise your rights in criminal proceedings, is turned down, or you are assessed as not requiring interpretation or translation and you disagree with this, you can challenge this decision through the service provider's complaints mechanism (see **Section 10** for further details). The entitlements related to interpretation and translation, or any consideration of a complaint associated with this (including challenging a decision not to provide interpretation or translation), shall not unreasonably prolong the criminal proceedings.

### Standard I.4: Someone to support you

You are **entitled** to have someone of your choice come with you when you first meet service providers, particularly if the impact of the crime means you need help with understanding what they are telling you or that they would need help to understand you. This could include, for example, a family member or support worker from a voluntary organisation. This entitlement will not apply where the service provider considers that it would be contrary to your interests or where the criminal proceedings would be prejudiced as a result of this.

## Standard I.5: Contact point for service providers

Service providers will take whatever steps are needed and appropriate to help you use and benefit from their services. You will be informed about a contact point for communication about your case at key stages of the process. When any service provider contacts you, they will explain who they are, why they are contacting you, what you can expect from them, the information that you will receive and what will happen next. For some service providers, such as the Victim and Witness Care Unit, you will be given a named single point of contact – this applies from when the Public Prosecution Service receives the investigation file through to the outcome of the case.

## Standard I.6: Provision of information as you move through the criminal justice system

You are **entitled** to receive information about the criminal justice system and how it operates. You are also **entitled** to receive information from service providers about the progress of the case (that is the state of the criminal proceedings), where this is available and unless in exceptional cases the proper handling of the case may be adversely affected by this. You can ask for updates or information outside the times agreed with service providers. You can tell a service provider that you don't want to receive information, including about the case (except where it must be provided to enable you to take part in the criminal proceedings). You can change your mind about receiving information at any point. If you notify a service provider about this they will take account of it.

Where you are to receive information from a service provider about the progress of the case you can ask for the information to be provided in a format that best suits your needs (for example, by phone, by email or in writing).

## Standard I.7: Professional and trained staff dealing with victims

Service providers must ensure that officials likely to come into contact with victims receive both general and specialist training to a level appropriate to their duties and the nature and level of contact with victims of crime (including those who carry out needs assessments). This training should increase their awareness of the needs of victims and enable them to recognise victims as well as deal with you and provide services in an impartial, respectful, sensitive, tailored, professional and non-discriminatory manner.

## Standard I.8: Residents of other EU Member States

If you were not resident in Northern Ireland at the time that the crime took place, you are still **entitled** to receive services under the Charter if the crime took place in Northern Ireland or criminal proceedings are taking place in Northern Ireland.<sup>24</sup> Service providers will take appropriate measures to minimise the difficulties that you face where you normally live (are resident), in another EU Member State and are a visitor to Northern Ireland. This will include with regard to the way in which the proceedings are organised, as far as possible. In relation to this you are **entitled** to:

- have the police take a statement from you immediately after you have reported the crime;
- as far as possible, have access to video conferencing and telephone conference calls, if you are resident abroad,<sup>25</sup> for the purpose of giving evidence to the police or at court; and
- help with understanding proceedings, and being understood, including access to free interpretation and translation as set out elsewhere in the Charter.

Some of these measures may also apply if you live in the rest of the UK.

<sup>24</sup> Where a crime has taken place in Northern Ireland the entitlements in the Charter will apply in a non-discriminatory manner in terms of whether or not you live in Northern Ireland. This will be regardless of your nationality or immigration status. It may not be possible to provide some services where you are not physically present in Northern Ireland (for example, where you return to your country of residence).

<sup>25</sup> As laid down in the Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters between the EU Member States of 29 May 2000.

- 34.** If you live in Northern Ireland and are a victim of crime in the rest of the UK or another EU Member State you may report a crime to the police in Northern Ireland, if you are not able to report it where the crime was committed or, where it is a serious offence (which would be considered by the Crown Court) such as rape, murder etc., if you do not wish to do so. If you report the crime to the police in Northern Ireland, you are **entitled** to have the police send information about the crime to the relevant authority where the crime was committed, without delay, if proceedings cannot begin in Northern Ireland.
- 35.** If you are a victim of crime in Northern Ireland and normally live in the rest of the UK or another EU Member State you may be able to report the crime to the police where you normally live, if you are not able to report it in Northern Ireland or, if it is a serious offence as determined by the country in which the crime occurred, you do not want to report it to the police in Northern Ireland.

### What if I don't get the services I should?

- 36.** If you don't get the services or standard of services that you expect to receive under the Charter you can raise this with the relevant service provider. If you are still not satisfied, you can raise the issue with an independent body (if necessary). Further detail on this can be found in **Section 10**.
- 37.** In some cases it may not be possible to provide all of the services and standards set out in the Charter, due to individual operational or practical constraints, for example where a case moves extremely quickly. Service providers will, however, uphold the entitlements in this Charter as far as is possible in these circumstances.

### Can I comment on the Charter or services provided under it?

- 38.** You will find information on service providers' websites about the best way to contact them to give feedback or comment on the services they provide. If you have comments on the Charter itself, rather than the services provided, you can send these to:

Victims and Witnesses Branch  
 Department of Justice  
 Castle Buildings  
 Stormont Estate  
 Belfast  
 BT4 3SG

Email: [DOJVictW@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:DOJVictW@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk)

Telephone: 028 9052 0550

Text phone: 028 9052 7668

### Alternative formats

- 39.** This Charter is supplemented by a shorter summary version of the Charter, as well as an easy read version of the summary and a young person's guide to the Charter. The summary document and victim of crime information leaflet are available in a number of other languages besides English (Latvian, Lithuanian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese and Romanian).<sup>26</sup> These documents are available at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimcharter](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimcharter). Hard copies and copies in other formats (including Braille, large print, a language other than those specified, etc.) can be made available on request. If it would help you to have one of these documents in an alternative format or language, please let us know by contacting Victims and Witnesses Branch and we will do our best to assist you.

<sup>26</sup> This is based on those languages for which an interpreter is most commonly needed in the criminal justice system (at police and court stage).

## Special measures and additional support for victims with particular needs

### Assessment of your needs

- 40.** Not everyone is affected by crime in the same way and for some people the impact is greater than for others. You may need extra help to give evidence to the police or at court or to meet specific needs that you have. You are **entitled** to a timely individual assessment by the police and by the Victim and Witness Care Unit (if the case progresses to prosecution) to identify such needs, necessary support or special measures related to this. The purpose of this would be to determine whether, and to what extent, you would benefit from additional support or ‘special measures’ when giving evidence to the police or at court. The extent of the assessment, including its nature, length and content may be adapted according to the severity of the crime, its apparent harm or impact on you and your individual needs.
- 41.** The assessment will, in particular, take into account:
- your personal characteristics (for instance, whether you have a disability);
  - the type or nature of the crime;
  - the circumstances of the crime; and
  - your views (including whether or not you want additional support or wish to benefit from special measures) and involve you.
- 42.** The more information you are able to provide during the assessment the more tailored any support will be to your individual needs. The assessment could include identifying:
- your needs relating to interpretation, translation, being understood, help to give evidence in the form of special measures<sup>27</sup> and other additional support;
  - if you have been intimidated or are at risk of intimidation; or
  - if you have any other needs that may require additional support, when giving evidence to the police or at court.
- 43.** In the context of the individual assessment by the police or Victim and Witness Care Unit, particular attention will be paid to you if you have suffered considerable harm due to the severity of the crime, the crime involves a bias or discriminatory motive that could, in particular, be related to your personal characteristics or where you may be particularly vulnerable due to a relationship with or dependence on the alleged offender. This would include consideration of a family member bereaved as a result of the crime, a victim with a disability or if you are a victim of sexual abuse or violence; domestic abuse or violence; gender-based violence;<sup>28</sup> human trafficking; exploitation; hate crime; an intent or attempt to endanger your life; organised crime; or terrorism. If you are a child or young person you will be presumed to have specific protection needs and will receive an individual assessment to determine whether, and to what extent, you would benefit from additional support or special measures to give your evidence to the police or at court. More generally, all victims, regardless of crime types or needs, will be **entitled** to an individual assessment.

<sup>27</sup> [www.psnipolice.uk/special\\_measures\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.psnipolice.uk/special_measures_leaflet.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> This includes violence in close relationships, sexual violence (including rape, sexual assault and harassment), trafficking in human beings, slavery and other forms of harmful practices, such as forced marriages, female genital mutilation and so-called ‘honour crimes’.

44. If your needs, or the elements that form the basis of the individual assessment, change significantly during the criminal proceedings you are **entitled** to be given the opportunity to be re-assessed. You can also have your assessment updated, if the service provider is aware of the change of circumstances that impacts on your needs or you make them aware of this. This could be due to your health, intimidation or some other reason. Once a service provider has identified your needs, they should try to ensure that relevant information is passed on as necessary to other service providers with responsibilities under the Charter and to victim support services, where appropriate.

### Additional support for victims with particular needs

45. Victims with particular needs may require additional support as they go through the criminal justice system. While the Victim Charter applies to all victims of crime, a particular area of focus is victims with particular needs, as set out in the following paragraphs. Support is available from a range of organisations. In addition to Victim Support NI (028 9024 3133 or 0845 3030 900), additional help is available for specific crime types (see paragraph 4).

### Vulnerable and intimidated victims

46. You are **entitled** to be offered additional support and be advised by the police or the Victim and Witness Care Unit about the special measures that may be available to help you give evidence if you are identified as having particular needs, taking account of whether and to what extent this would help you during your engagement with the criminal justice process. This includes vulnerable and intimidated victims (children and young people are also considered to be vulnerable victims). In these circumstances you are **entitled** to have the Public Prosecution Service lawyer responsible for the case consider making an application for special measures. You are also **entitled** to ask that a special measures application is considered in your case, to help you give your best evidence. This can be done through the police, the Victim and Witness Care Unit or directly to the Public Prosecution Service. Your views on whether or not you want to benefit from any support or special measures will be considered. **The judge will decide whether or not special measures are granted.**
47. You are considered to be a **vulnerable victim**,<sup>29</sup> when giving evidence, if:
- (a) you are under the age of 18 at the time of the offence, or
  - (b) the quality of your evidence is likely to be affected because you have:
    - mental health issues;
    - learning or communication difficulties;
    - a neurological disorder; or
    - a physical disability.

<sup>29</sup> This is based on the criteria in Article 4 of the Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 for the court to determine witness eligibility for special measures. The legal detail of the criteria can be found in these provisions.

**48.** You are considered to be an **intimidated victim**, when giving evidence, if the quality of your evidence is likely to be affected because of your fear or distress about testifying.<sup>30</sup> You automatically fall into this category if you are a victim of a sexual assault, trafficking or slavery. You may also be considered to be intimidated, when giving evidence, if you:

- have experienced domestic violence;
- have been harassed, bullied or victimised;
- are a frail and older person;
- are a victim of organised crime;
- are a victim of terrorism;
- are a victim of hate crime;
- neglect or harm yourself;
- are a victim of exploitation; or
- are making allegations against professionals or carers.

**49.** If you are a vulnerable or intimidated victim (which includes children and young people), or are identified as having particular needs, you are **entitled** to the following from the police or the Victim and Witness Care Unit. To:

- a needs assessment (including consideration for special measures);
- have the police offer to audio-video record your statement in criminal investigations, to make it easier for you to tell the police what happened. This may also mean that you do not have to repeat this in court, where the recording is used as evidence in criminal proceedings. Final decisions on whether or not the video recording may be used as evidence will be a matter for the judge. You may ask to give live evidence at court if you would prefer not to make a video statement. In some cases a written statement may be more appropriate. A written statement may be taken at your home, or another suitable location, should you ask for this is and the police agree it is feasible;
- have information on special measures explained to you, where these may be applied for;
- have your views on whether or not you want to benefit from any support or special measures considered;
- be informed if a special measures application has been granted or refused;
- be referred to a specialist organisation, where appropriate and available;
- be referred to a hate crime advocate who can support you, where appropriate and available (advocate contact details can be found in **Annex C** or at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations));
- be informed about pre-trial therapy and counselling, where appropriate; and
- have information about your needs passed on to the Public Prosecution Service so that they can continue to support you.

## Children and young people

**50.** As a child or young person under 18 you will be presumed to have specific protection needs and should receive the highest level of support and protection as you move through the criminal justice system. You are **entitled** to the services available to all victims of crime as well as those available to vulnerable victims (which includes children and young people). Extra support is available for children and young people. You are also **entitled** to:

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<sup>30</sup> This is the test in Article 5 of the Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 by which the court determines witness eligibility for special measures. The legal detail of the criteria can be found in these provisions.

- talk to the police to help you work out what support you need;
- have someone with you when you give your statement to the police and give your evidence in court;
- ask the police for someone to help you understand the questions you are asked;
- automatically be considered as eligible for special measures by the police conducting the investigation and the Victim and Witness Care Unit as part of their needs assessment. Final decisions on the granting of special measures will be a matter for the judge;
- have your statement audio-video recorded by the police, to make it easier for you to tell them what happened, where this is appropriate. This may also mean that you do not have to repeat this in court, where the recording is used as evidence in the criminal proceedings. When recording your evidence the police will have regard to Article 9 of the Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 which states that the 'primary rule' for child witnesses (subject to prescribed limitations) is that the court must provide (by way of direction) for any relevant recording to be admitted as video recorded evidence in chief and must provide for any evidence given by the witness in the proceedings which is not given by those means to be given by means of a live link. Final decisions on whether or not a video recording may be used as evidence in criminal proceedings, or whether a live link may be used, will be a matter for the judge;
- ask the police or the Victim and Witness Care Unit to give live evidence at court, instead of a video recorded statement, if you want. The final decision on this will be a matter for the judge;
- have access to a victim support service provider and be provided with a Young Witness Pack by that service provider that will help you understand what will happen, if you have to give evidence at court;
- be informed about special measures by the police and/or the Victim and Witness Care Unit if you might have to go to court, which can make the court process less daunting;
- practice using the live link TV facility before the trial, when you are to use this to give evidence, where possible;
- view your statement to help refresh your memory. If you have made a written statement it will be available for you at court on the day. If you have made a video recorded statement arrangements will be made for you to view this separately before the trial;
- have the Victim and Witness Care Unit take appropriate steps to help you get the support you need as a result of the needs assessment process; and
- speak to someone specially trained to listen to you and help you get over the crime, at any time during the investigation (and trial). This may be called therapy or counselling and is often provided by a specialist organisation. If you wish to avail of this you should speak to the police, the Victim and Witness Care Unit (who will refer you to a victim support service provider) or directly to a victim support service provider.

**51.** In some cases service providers may not know your age or this may not be certain. If your age is uncertain and there is reason to believe that you are a child or young person under the age of 18, service providers will presume that you are a child for the purpose of providing services to you, including under this Charter.

## Bereaved families

- 52.** A family member of a victim who dies as a result of a crime is **entitled** to additional services, in addition to the standard entitlements for victims. You are **entitled** to be offered accessible advice on bereavement and information on victims' services from the police. Specialist support services are provided by Cruse Bereavement Care (028 9079 2419 or 0844 4779 400), Support after Murder and Manslaughter NI, Care for the Family and Brake (a road safety charity). Additional contact details can be found at **Annex C** or at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations). You are also **entitled** to have a police family liaison officer assigned to you by the police (to manage communication between you and the investigation team), where the Senior Investigating Officer considers this to be appropriate. This will happen in the majority of cases.
- 53.** You are **entitled** to be offered a meeting with a prosecution representative<sup>31</sup> at stated key points in the process, where possible, and to ask for a meeting with a prosecution representative at any other point. Further information on this is set out in **Section 2**. You do not have to meet but will have the option of this; some of the meetings may take place at court. A **Guide to Northern Ireland's criminal justice system for bereaved families and friends following murder or manslaughter** is also available.<sup>32</sup>
- 54.** You may also have to attend the Coroner's Court, which is within the remit of the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service. If you are a bereaved family member you are **entitled** to speak to the Coroner's Liaison Officer assigned to the case. They will:
- tell you the preliminary cause of death following the post-mortem examination if this is known;
  - tell you if any organs or tissue samples were retained at post-mortem examination;
  - explain why these may have been retained and what you can request should happen to them; and
  - explain the processes and stages in the Coroner's investigation.

There are a variety of leaflets which explain more about the work of the Coroner's Court. You can get these from all court offices in Northern Ireland or at [www.courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/Services/Coroners/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/Services/Coroners/Pages/default.aspx).

## Support services for victims of certain crimes

- 55.** If you are a victim of certain types of crime you are **entitled** to be offered additional help, based on your needs. If you are a bereaved family member or a victim of domestic or sexual abuse/violence, hate crime or trafficking, a range of specialist services are available. You are **entitled** to ask the police or victim support service provider to refer you to relevant services, where appropriate (see **Annex C** or [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations)). Services are available for both men and women.

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31 This could be a Public Prosecution Service regional prosecutor, Assistant Director, senior representative or prosecuting counsel (who will present the case at court).

32 [www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications/publication-categories/pubs-criminal-justice/a\\_guide\\_to\\_the\\_northern\\_ireland\\_criminal\\_justice\\_system\\_for\\_bereaved\\_families\\_and\\_friends.pdf](http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications/publication-categories/pubs-criminal-justice/a_guide_to_the_northern_ireland_criminal_justice_system_for_bereaved_families_and_friends.pdf). This is to be updated and extended to include families bereaved through culpable road death.

## Trafficking

- 56.** If you are a potential adult victim of human trafficking you can access the following services from the Support Service for Potential Adult Victims of Human Trafficking:
- have a needs assessment undertaken, upon entry to the Support Service;
  - be provided with information on and have access to specialised support services, where required, including access to interpretative services, safe accommodation and counselling;
  - be signposted to justice, compensation, immigration and independent legal advice and legal representation; and
  - receive support from a key worker who assesses your requirements.
- 57.** The Department of Justice currently funds Migrant Help, to provide support to adult male potential victims of human trafficking, and Women’s Aid, to support adult female potential victims of human trafficking. The support includes:
- safe accommodation;
  - one-to-one support;
  - help with living/travel costs;
  - help to access healthcare;
  - sign-posting to immigration advice;
  - sign-posting to independent legal advice and advice on compensation;
  - help to access counselling or other therapeutic services; and
  - interpreter/translation services.
- Migrant Help has a 24 hour helpline (077 6666 8781) for referring potential victims of trafficking or seeking advice about trafficking. It is a free service. Migrant Help can also be contacted on 013 0420 3977. There is also a 24 hour domestic and sexual violence helpline (0808 802 1414). If you are a female victim of trafficking you can also contact Women’s Aid on 028 9024 9041.
- 58.** Help is available to potential victims of human trafficking through the National Referral Mechanism, a process that identifies victims of human trafficking and ensures they receive appropriate help and support (with their consent). Further detail on this can be found at [www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/specialist-capabilities/uk-human-trafficking-centre/national-referral-mechanism](http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/specialist-capabilities/uk-human-trafficking-centre/national-referral-mechanism).
- 59.** The Modern Slavery Helpline (0800 0121 700) provides potential victims, members of the public and professionals with a single telephone number to call if they have concerns related to modern slavery. There is also a modern slavery website ([www.modernslavery.co.uk](http://www.modernslavery.co.uk)) which includes a range of materials, including video content, to explain the issue in more detail.
- 60.** The NSPCC’s Child Trafficking Advice Centre provides information and advice for any professional working with children or young people who may have been trafficked into the UK. They can be contacted on 0808 800 5000 or by email at [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

## Domestic and sexual violence/abuse

- 61.** If you are a victim of domestic or sexual violence a range of targeted and integrated support is available. You can:
- have access to a 24 hour domestic and sexual violence helpline (0808 802 1414). This provides a confidential telephone, email and text service open to all men and women affected by domestic or sexual violence. Trained helpline workers will take the calls. They can refer you to other specialist services;
  - be assessed and, if considered to be at a high risk of physical violence, serious injury, harm or death, be referred by the police, or a range of statutory or voluntary groups, to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), where safety plans can be put in place to provide protection. A MARAC is a meeting where highest risk cases of domestic abuse are discussed and information shared, to ensure that victims get the support needed for their safety;
  - contact the Supporting People Programme, which provides accommodation based services and floating support services for victims of domestic violence. Refuge accommodation and support for victims of domestic and sexual violence, as well as emergency temporary and hostel accommodation for vulnerable individuals, is also available;
  - be offered support through a Sanctuary scheme which enables victims in Northern Ireland Housing Executive properties to remain as safe as possible in your own home, through the provision of support and enhanced protection; and
  - call the police (on 101 where it is not an emergency; in the case of an emergency you should dial 999) and ask to speak to a domestic violence officer.
- 62.** If you are a victim of a sexual offence you are **entitled** to have access to a range of support and services, through the Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre. This applies regardless of whether the offence is reported to the police. The centre delivers a range of support and services, all year round to children, young people, women and men who have been sexually abused, assaulted or raped - whether this happened in the past or more recently. The centre can be contacted on 0800 389 4424. This helpline number is available 24 hours a day. The following support and services are available:
- emotional support;
  - emergency contraception as well as screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections;
  - medical examination by a specially trained doctor if required;
  - support in making a report to the police, if you choose to do so;
  - signposting onto other support services such as Victim Support NI, counselling services and a local Genito-Urinary Medicine clinic; and
  - follow-up support.

## Hate crime

- 63.** If you are a victim of a hate crime you are **entitled** to be:
- referred to a hate crime advocate (see **Annex C**) who can support you, where appropriate and available. This applies regardless of whether the offence is reported to the police. You may be referred by the police or by Victim Support NI, if you are in contact with them. A number of

other organisations may refer you to a hate crime advocate. This includes the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities, Rainbow, Leonard Cheshire and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. The advocate's role is to signpost you to relevant services, making victim services more accessible; and

- assessed by the police for personal and home protection measures under the Hate Incident Practical Action Scheme if your home has been damaged or if someone from your household has been a victim, where the motivation of the attack is racist, homophobic, disabilist, sectarian, transphobic or faith related. You will only be eligible to access the Hate Incident Practical Action Scheme if the crime has been reported to the police.

## Special measures

- 64.** Special measures are measures put in place to help you give your best evidence if you are vulnerable, intimidated or have other particular needs. These are only available if the judge agrees one or more of the following special measures is appropriate:
- screens/curtains in the courtroom so you do not have to see the defendant and, in some cases, the public gallery when you are giving evidence;
  - a live video link allowing you to give evidence away from the courtroom. However, it is likely that you will still be in the court building. You may have a supporter with you when you give your evidence from the live link room;
  - giving evidence in private – the public gallery can be cleared in cases involving a sexual offence, trafficking or slavery or where the court is satisfied that someone other than the accused may seek to intimidate you;
  - removal of wigs and gowns by judges, and by the defence and prosecution team;
  - video recorded statements – these allow you to use a pre-recorded video statement as your main evidence;
  - assistance from a Registered Intermediary.<sup>33</sup> Registered Intermediaries are communication specialists who can help you give evidence if you have significant communication difficulties. They are recruited by the Department of Justice to help vulnerable victims give their best evidence to the court. They can also assist when you are being interviewed, to help you communicate your evidence to the police; and
  - using communication aids, such as alphabet boards (if you are a vulnerable victim).
- 65.** The information leaflet on the criminal justice system provides an overview of special measures that can help you give your best evidence. More information is available at [www.psni.police.uk/special\\_measures\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.psni.police.uk/special_measures_leaflet.pdf). You are **entitled** to have information on special measures explained to you, where these may be applied for, and to ask the relevant service provider, which could be the police, the Victim and Witness Care Unit or the Public Prosecution Service, for an application to be made (where appropriate) to the judge. Your views on whether or not you want to benefit from any support or special measures will be considered. In some cases additional information, for example from a GP, may be needed to support the application. **The judge will decide if one or more special measures are to be provided in court.**

33 The Registered Intermediary Schemes currently apply to cases dealt with at Crown Court.

## Section 1: Reporting a crime and the police investigation

### Reporting a crime

**66.** You may be worried about reporting a crime. However, you are encouraged to report it to the police. You can do this in a number of ways, typically to the Police Service of Northern Ireland:

**Emergency:** In an emergency dial 999 or 18000 for textphone users. An emergency is where serious injury has been caused or a crime is in progress and suspects are at the scene.

Emergency SMS text service: The police operate an emergency SMS text message registration scheme to help those with certain disabilities contact them in an emergency. This service also enables the police to pass on requests for assistance to the fire and ambulance services. The service is only available to pre-registered users who have completed an application form (further details and an application form are available on the police website [www.psnl.police.uk](http://www.psnl.police.uk)).

**Non-Emergency:** Where the incident is not urgent telephone 101.

**Hate crime:** Where the incident is not urgent telephone 101, then dial 2. You can also report hate crime online, using a hate crime reporting form, at [www.urzone.com/hatecrime/hatecrime.asp](http://www.urzone.com/hatecrime/hatecrime.asp). This is in addition to the other ways of reporting the crime set out in this section.

**Third party reporting:** If you really do not want to or cannot report the crime yourself, someone else can report it for you, such as a family member or voluntary organisation. They would make the initial contact with the police. You would still be involved later in the proceedings.

**Call at your local police station:** Where the incident is not urgent you may also report it at your local police station, during opening hours.

The crime may also be reported in the following ways:

**Crimestoppers:** If you do not want to give your name you can report a crime anonymously by calling the freephone Crimestoppers charity helpline on 0800 555 111. This service is not part of the police.

**Harbour or Airport incident:** Where the incident has occurred within the grounds of Belfast International Airport or Belfast Harbour you should contact Belfast International Airport Constabulary on 028 9448 4400 (extension 4412)/Mobile 077 1081 9183 or Belfast Harbour Police on 028 9055 3000. Where a major or serious incident such as murder, an act of terrorism or armed robbery has occurred these can also be reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Incidents at Belfast City Airport will be dealt with by the Police Service of Northern Ireland, through the contact numbers above.

**Police Ombudsman:** If you believe that a crime has been committed by a police officer you should report it to the Police Ombudsman who will investigate and may make recommendations to the Director of Public Prosecutions for criminal prosecution.

**Standard 1.1: Reporting a crime or incident**

If you report a crime or other incident, you are **entitled** to have the police take appropriate measures to help them understand what you are telling them and help you understand what they are telling you. If you do not understand or speak English you are **entitled** to report the crime in a language that you do understand, have help to report it or be given help to report it (by receiving the necessary linguistic assistance). This could include translation or interpretation, free of charge, if needed.

- 67.** The police will also explain how they are going to deal with the matter. You are **entitled** to receive information from the police on what to expect from the criminal justice system, in terms of what happens next. You are also **entitled** to be informed by the police about how often you will receive updates on the status of the case, following discussion with them.
- 68.** If you are a victim of a violent crime you may be able to claim compensation (see **Section 9**). You should submit an application for compensation within two years of the date of the incident that caused the injury. Further information about compensation for victims of violent crime can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/compensation-for-victims-of-crime](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/compensation-for-victims-of-crime) or by contacting Compensation Services (see **Annex B**). Victim Support NI can give you free information, advice and support during the compensation claim process.

**Standard 1.2: Fair treatment**

Additional support will be provided, where required, and any reasonable adjustments will be made by service providers to ensure that you have equal access to information and support services. This could include the use of an interpreter, hearing induction loop or access adaptations.

**Information provided when reporting a crime****Standard 1.3: Information provided when reporting a crime**

If you report a crime to the police you are **entitled** to receive either written information on what to expect from the criminal justice system such as the 'Information for victims of crime' leaflet, or the details of a website which contains the same information, without unnecessary delay,<sup>34</sup> after reporting the crime. This will enable you to access the rights set out in this Charter. This information will also be provided where the police attend the scene of a crime and you do not wish to report the crime and is available online.<sup>35</sup>

The police will highlight that victim support services, and medical services if required, are available.

- 69.** The information leaflet will set out information about:
- the type of support you can obtain and who from (including contact details for general victim support service providers and specialist support, so that you can access their services, basic information about access to medical support, as well as an overview of special measures that may be available). Should support (including medical or specialist support) or alternative accommodation be required as a result of the crime the police can advise on this. Victim support service providers can refer you to or advise you about access to specialist support, including psychological support;

<sup>34</sup> Within this Charter unnecessary delay means within five working days. This includes within five working days of a service provider being informed or notified of a decision, making a decision or being informed of the outcome of a case, as appropriate.

<sup>35</sup> [www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications/publication-categories/pubs-criminal-justice/information-for-victims-of-crime.pdf](http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications/publication-categories/pubs-criminal-justice/information-for-victims-of-crime.pdf)

- the procedures for reporting a crime (making a complaint) and your role in connection with this;
- obtaining protection, if required;
- accessing advice;
- access to compensation. Further information can be provided from Compensation Services;
- entitlements to interpretation and translation services;
- measures to protect your interests if you normally live in a different EU Member State;
- the available procedures for making a complaint, including where your entitlements under the Charter are not met by service providers operating within the context of criminal proceedings;
- the contact details for communications about your case;
- available restorative justice services; and
- the payment of expenses, where you are called to give evidence.

- 70.** The information leaflet may refer you to service providers (and their websites) for more detailed information. You are also **entitled** to be provided with additional information at later stages of the case, as you move through the criminal justice process, depending on your needs and the relevance of this information at each stage of the case. The extent or detail of the information provided may vary depending on your needs and circumstances, the type or nature of the crime, or its relevance to the particular stage of the investigation or criminal proceedings.

#### **Standard 1.4: Crime reference information**

You are **entitled** to be informed by the police of crime reference information that may be needed to make a compensation or insurance claim, where you report a crime to them. In such circumstances you are **entitled** to receive a written acknowledgement of the reporting of the crime (your formal complaint), setting out the basic elements of the crime (such as the type of crime, time and place, any damage or harm caused by the crime as well as the time and place for reporting the crime). This will include your crime reference number, the name and contact details of your investigating officer and where they are stationed. It will also provide you with details of the police Contact Management Support Unit which you can contact if your investigating officer is unavailable. The acknowledgement may be provided electronically and can be made available in Latvian, Lithuanian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese and Romanian where you do not understand or speak English.

If you do not understand or speak English you are **entitled** to have the written acknowledgement translated free of charge, on request, into a language that you do understand.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> In this Charter a request for translation or interpretation can be made by you, or by someone else on your behalf.

**Standard 1.5: Referral to a victim support service provider**

You are **entitled** to have the police and Victim and Witness Care Unit automatically pass your details to a victim support service provider and/or the Victim Information Unit, where relevant, so that you can be offered information on support services and information schemes that are available to you. While your contact details and basic details of the crime will automatically be shared for this purpose there is no obligation on you to use the services. You are also **entitled** to tell the police or the Victim and Witness Care Unit if you do not want your details passed on. The information leaflet that you are given, or told about, by the police when you report a crime also provides details of specialist support services that are available to families bereaved through crime, victims of domestic or sexual abuse/violence, trafficked victims and victims of hate crime (also see [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations) or **Annex C**).

Service providers and the Department of Justice will take steps to raise awareness of the Victim Charter and your entitlements. A Victim Charter card, highlighting victims' entitlements and victim support services, will be made available to relevant bodies who come into contact with victims, so that they have information available to them that enables victims to be aware of, or referred to, victim support services.

**Police Investigation**

- 71.** When the police investigate a crime there are a number of things that they will need to do. You can help by telling them what happened to you, either in writing or by speaking to them.

**Standard 1.6: Making a statement to the police (including any interviews or questioning) on a crime**

When you make a statement to the police (including making a written statement or any interviews or questioning) you are **entitled** to the following from the police. To:

- have the purpose of the statement explained to you, including that you may have to give evidence in court if the case goes to trial;
- have a timely and individual needs assessment carried out to help identify your specific needs, what particular help or support you may need, whether your best evidence would be achieved through video recording your statement and determine whether and to what extent you would benefit from additional support or 'special measures' in the course of criminal proceedings, that is when you are giving evidence to the police or at court;
- have your views, on whether or not you want to benefit from any support or special measures, considered;
- have an assessment made of whether you need help or interpretation during any interviews or questioning;
- get help or interpretation during any interviews or questioning about the crime, on request, where you do not understand or speak English;
- have interviews or any questioning take place as soon as possible (that is, without unjustified delay) after you report the crime to the police;
- have the number of interviews or any questioning of you kept to a minimum and to have these carried out only where they are strictly necessary for the purpose of the police investigation or criminal proceedings;

- ask for a break at any time, if you find the interview or making a statement upsetting;
- have any written statement taken at your home, or another suitable location, where you ask for this and the police agree it is feasible. In some cases this may not be possible, including if the statement needs to be video recorded;
- be accompanied by a person of your choice (including a legal representative) unless there is good reason (a reasoned decision has been made) that this should not take place – for example, where it would not be in your best interests or the police investigation or criminal proceedings would be prejudiced as a result of this;
- have any medical examinations kept to a minimum and have these carried out only where strictly necessary for the purpose of the police investigation or the criminal proceedings;
- read over your written statement to check that it is accurate, or have someone read your statement back to you if you have difficulty reading;
- have any inaccuracies in your statement, that you point out, corrected and any further relevant information added; and
- have them explain to you that, if you are making an evidential statement, this may result in you needing to give evidence in court if the case goes to trial.

The police have policy, training and specialist departments in place to ensure that consideration is given to you as an individual and your unique circumstances, including your protection. Where you have concerns about your safety or protection during questioning, or more generally, you should advise the police of this. You may believe yourself to be at risk of harm as a result of a crime or having reported a crime. Where you report your concerns to the police you are **entitled** to have them make an assessment and, where necessary and reasonable, bearing in mind the level, probability and immediacy of the risk, take steps to safeguard and protect you.

## Interviews with victims who have particular needs

- 72.** If you are vulnerable, intimidated or identified as having other particular needs the police will carry out interviews with you having considered ‘Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings’ guidance. They will also take account of your needs and views as far as possible.

### **Standard 1.7: Interview procedures for those identified with particular needs**

If an individual assessment identifies you as being vulnerable, intimidated or having other particular needs, and the police consider that you would benefit from the following measures, due to your particular vulnerability to secondary and repeat victimisation, intimidation or retaliation, you are **entitled** to the following from the police. To have:

- interviews or questioning of you take place, without unjustified delay, after the facts have been reported to the police;
- interviews with you carried out in premises designed or adapted for that purpose;
- interviews with you carried out by or through professionals trained for that purpose;
- all interviews with you carried out by the same person, unless this would be contrary to the good administration of justice; and
- all interviews with you carried out by a person of the same sex as you, if you so wish (unless this would prejudice the criminal proceedings), where you are a victim of sexual abuse, exploitation or violence, gender-based violence or of domestic abuse or violence.

- 73.** These entitlements will not apply where operational or practical constraints make this impossible, or where there is an urgent need to interview you and a failure to do so could harm you or another person or could prejudice the investigation or criminal proceedings.

## Progress of the police investigation

### Standard 1.8: Update from the police about the investigation

You are **entitled** to the following from the police:

- to receive an update, within 10 days, on what they are doing to investigate your crime. If it is appropriate they will give you further updates and agree with you when these updates will be;
- to contact the police and ask for an update outside of any agreed times;
- to be informed where a suspect has not been identified in connection with the crime; and
- to be informed, without unnecessary delay, about any decision not to proceed with or to end an investigation or to use one of the alternative disposals available to the police and the reasons<sup>37</sup> for this (except where the reasons are confidential).

If you do not understand or speak English you are **entitled**, on request, to have the above information translated into a language that you do understand.

### Standard 1.9: Information on charges, bail and summons

You are **entitled** to be informed by the police, without unnecessary delay, and to have the reasons explained to you, when a suspect is:

- arrested;
- kept in custody;
- released on police bail, or if police bail conditions are changed or cancelled, or the suspect has absconded from police custody, unless sharing the information would endanger someone or there is an identified risk of harm to the suspect which would result from this;
- charged to court or reported to the Public Prosecution Service; or
- offered an alternative disposal available to the police.

Where necessary, you are **entitled** to be informed by the police of any relevant measures issued for your protection in the case of the release or escape of a suspect.

### Standard 1.10: Return of property

The police are usually responsible for the return of property taken to help the police investigation or court proceedings, generally on the advice of the Public Prosecution Service. Property will only be retained for as long as is necessary in all the circumstances. The police will provide you with appropriate information regarding your property which they have taken to help the police investigation or court proceedings. In appropriate cases, and where possible, the police will copy property taken and return the original to you. The police will keep under review the need for continued retention of property for the purposes of the investigation, court proceedings or, where someone has been prosecuted, the potential need for continued retention under the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996.

<sup>37</sup> While the term 'reasons' is used throughout this Charter this may mean 'reason' in individual cases and should be read accordingly. A brief summary of reasons may also be provided where the term reasons is used in this Charter.

You are **entitled** to have any recoverable property, including where it is seized in the course of criminal proceedings, returned to you without delay, unless it is needed for the purpose of those proceedings (including the police investigation), subject to exceptional circumstances such as a dispute over its ownership, the possession of the property is illegal, the property itself is illegal, its return to you would constitute an offence or the property is required for the purpose of other investigations, inquiries or proceedings. In terms of the latter the property would be returned to you without delay once it is no longer required for those other purposes.

The police will make arrangements with you, for the return of the property, normally at your local police station. Further detail on the procedures around the return of property is available from the police.

## Police alternative disposal and referral to the Public Prosecution Service

- 74. Police alternative disposal:** For certain crimes the police can consider an alternative disposal. In such circumstances the investigation file will not be sent to the Public Prosecution Service. An alternative will be considered such as a penalty notice for disorder or the offender having to repair or pay for an item that has been stolen. The entitlements relating to a decision not to prosecute, which are set out later in this Charter, do not apply where the case is settled outside court.
- 75. Case referred to the Public Prosecution Service:** In all other cases an investigation file will be sent to the Public Prosecution Service for a prosecution decision, if the evidence shows that a crime may have been committed and a suspect is identified. At the conclusion of an investigation the police will either charge the suspect to court or report them to the Public Prosecution Service. In both cases a file is submitted to the Public Prosecution Service, who will then decide whether or not to prosecute and for which offences.

## Help from victim support service providers (whether or not you report a crime)

- 76.** A victim support service provider can offer support to help you cope and recover after a crime. The Charter covers Victim Support NI and the NSPCC Young Witness Service. For NSPCC the entitlements only apply where a child or young person is to give evidence at court. Other NSPCC support services may be available outside the scope of the Charter, such as Childline services.<sup>38</sup> You are **entitled** to access some victim support services whether or not you have reported the crime to the police. Other aspects such as support at court and eligibility to apply for compensation are only available if the crime has been reported to the police.

<sup>38</sup> Childline is a private confidential service offering support to children and young people up to the age of 19. You can contact a Childline counsellor about anything – no problem is too big or small. Call free on 0800 1111, have a one to one chat online or send an email via [www.childline.org](http://www.childline.org).

**Standard 1.11: Access to general and specialist victim support services**

The Department of Justice will ensure that free of charge, independent and confidential victim support services are available. Specialist support services are also available, which victim support service providers can refer you to.

You are **entitled** to:

- have access to confidential, general victim support services, free of charge, in accordance with your needs, whether or not you report the crime to the police. Services are available and will act in the interests of victims before, during and for an appropriate time after criminal proceedings. Your family members are also **entitled** to have access to these services in accordance with their needs and the level of harm suffered as a result of the crime against you;
- have access to confidential, specialist victim support services, free of charge, in accordance with your specific needs, whether or not you report the crime to the police. Your family members are also **entitled** to have access to these services based on their specific needs and the level of harm suffered as a result of the crime against you. You will usually be referred to these specialist support services by a victim support service provider. The information leaflet provided, or referred to, by the police when you report a crime also includes details of specialist support services that are available to families bereaved through crime, victims of domestic or sexual abuse/violence, trafficked victims and victims of hate crime (also see [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations) or **Annex C**);
- be contacted by a victim support service provider within five working days, where your contact details have been passed on by the police at the investigation stage. Appropriate measures will be taken to contact priority cases within two days;
- have the opportunity to talk to a victim support service provider worker in confidence;
- discuss the type of support that you need with a fully trained victim support service provider, who will work with others to secure that support where required; and
- ask to meet a victim support service provider at a time that is convenient to you.

**77.** Victim support service providers, in delivering their services, will:

- (i) provide information, advice and support relevant to the rights of victims, including on accessing national compensation schemes for criminal injuries, and on their role in criminal proceedings including preparation for attendance at the trial;
- (ii) provide information about or direct referral to any relevant specialist support services in place;
- (iii) provide emotional and, where available, psychological support;
- (iv) provide advice relating to practical issues arising from the crime;
- (v) provide referral to services providing advice relating to financial issues arising from the crime;
- (vi) provide advice relating to the risk and prevention of secondary and repeat victimisation, of intimidation and of retaliation; and
- (vii) pay particular attention to the specific needs of victims who have suffered considerable harm due to the severity of the crime.

Services relating to compensation schemes and referral for financial advice will not be provided by the NSPCC Young Witness Service. They can refer victims to psychological support services. Key specialist support services that are available are set out at paragraphs 55 to 65. Advice services and a range of other support services are set out in **Annex C**.

## Section 2: Will it go to court (pre trial)?

### Victim and Witness Care Unit

**78.** The Victim and Witness Care Unit is a single, informed point of contact for victims and witnesses during the prosecution process. The service is available from the point at which the Public Prosecution Service receive the investigation file through to the conclusion of any proceedings (including an appeal). The Unit is staffed jointly by the police and the Public Prosecution Service. You are **entitled** to have the Victim and Witness Care Unit:

- inform you when the Public Prosecution Service receive the investigation file;
- provide you with information about the Victim and Witness Care Unit and the services that it provides – including a single point of contact, means of communication, services and information provided to victims and witnesses of crime and available support services;<sup>39</sup>
- communicate with you using your preferred means of contact - letter, email, telephone, etc. – at a preferred time of day, where possible;
- seek your views on what contact you wish to have with them (including no contact, except where information must be provided to enable you to take part in the criminal proceedings);
- inform you of your case officer's name and telephone number (your single point of contact in the Unit);
- conduct an initial individual needs assessment when a decision is taken to prosecute and a further assessment if you have to give evidence. Further needs assessments may be carried out as circumstances require;
- refer you to other support services (including specialist support services), as appropriate;
- provide you with information about making a victim personal statement;
- make sure consideration is given to individual requirements for special measures or other support, where appropriate, if you are vulnerable or intimidated or have any other needs that require additional support while giving evidence;
- tell you about the case outcome and sentence, as appropriate; and
- tell you if the offender appeals against their conviction or sentence and the outcome of this.

### Alternatives to prosecution

#### Standard 2.1: Information on alternatives to prosecution

In some cases, the police or the Public Prosecution Service may consider it appropriate to deal with an offence without taking it to court. This may prove more effective in preventing further offences and enables the incident to be dealt with relatively quickly. In such cases the police or the Public Prosecution Service will consider your views.

You are **entitled** to have the police or the Public Prosecution Service inform you of a decision to give the suspect an alternative to prosecution, without unnecessary delay. This could include a caution, an informed warning or a youth conference, which is dealt with in **Section 8**. If you do not understand or speak English you are **entitled**, on request, to have this information translated into a language that you do understand.

<sup>39</sup> [www.ppsni.gov.uk/Branches/PPSNI/PPSNI/Files/Documents/VWCU%20Leaflet%20\(web\).pdf](http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Branches/PPSNI/PPSNI/Files/Documents/VWCU%20Leaflet%20(web).pdf)

## Decision on prosecution

- 79.** Following a decision not to prosecute, you are **entitled** to be notified of the reasons why this decision was made, how you can access further information about the decision and how you can seek a review of the decision if you are dissatisfied with it, in accordance with the review scheme. This gives you a right to request a review of a decision not to prosecute. Where you are notified of a decision that qualifies for a review you are **entitled** to receive sufficient information to enable you to decide whether to request a review of the decision not to prosecute on request. This will also cover certain decisions taken by the police in the course of an investigation. If you do not understand or speak English you are **entitled**, on request, to have the relevant information translated into a language that you do understand.
- 80.** Where an investigation file has been sent to the Public Prosecution Service a decision will be made on whether or not someone will be prosecuted for the offence, based on the test for prosecution. A Public Prosecution Service lawyer can decide to prosecute or not prosecute.

### Standard 2.2: Information on a decision to prosecute/not prosecute

In relation to prosecution decisions (including a decision not to prosecute) you are **entitled**:

- to ask the Public Prosecution Service to take your views into account when deciding whether to prosecute;
- to be informed by the Victim and Witness Care Unit, without unnecessary delay, of a decision by the Public Prosecution Service to prosecute or not to prosecute an alleged offender;
- to be informed by the Victim and Witness Care Unit of the reasons why a Public Prosecution Service lawyer has made a decision not to prosecute (except where the reasons are confidential), for example, that there is not enough evidence or it is not in the public interest to prosecute;
- in more serious cases, to be given detailed reasons from the Public Prosecution Service for the decision not to prosecute, through the Victim and Witness Care Unit;
- in all cases, to ask the Victim and Witness Care Unit for detailed reasons to be given to you for the decision by the Public Prosecution Service not to prosecute so that you can decide whether to request a review of this decision not to prosecute; and
- to ask to meet with the Public Prosecution Service decision maker in the case.

If you do not understand or speak English you are **entitled**, on request, to have the relevant information translated into a language that you do understand.

If a decision is taken by the Public Prosecution Service not to prosecute, and you do not agree with this, you are **entitled** to:

- receive information from the Victim and Witness Care Unit, without unnecessary delay, on how you can ask for a review of the Public Prosecution Service decision;
- have the Public Prosecution Service review the decision, where you ask for this;
- have the review completed by someone other than the person who took the original decision, where no additional evidence or information is provided. If additional evidence or information is provided the original prosecutor will consider the case; and
- be informed by the Public Prosecution Service of the outcome of the review.

The right to a review of a Public Prosecution Service decision not to prosecute applies regardless of the crime type or potential court tier. Where the decision not to prosecute is taken by the Director of Public Prosecutions, and that decision cannot be reviewed by a higher authority, the review may be carried out by the Director of Public Prosecutions. Further detail on the right to a review and how this operates can be found at [www.ppsni.gov.uk](http://www.ppsni.gov.uk).

- 81.** If the Public Prosecution Service decides to prosecute, the case will go to court. You will usually only have to give evidence if this is necessary to prove the case, or should the defence or judge wish to ask you questions about any victim personal statement (see **Section 3**) that you make.

## Changes to charges

- 82.** In some cases a decision may be taken not to proceed with the original charge or to accept a plea to a less serious offence. This may happen, for example, if the available evidence has changed or a significant public interest consideration has arisen. When considering whether this should be done, the Public Prosecution Service will, whenever possible, and where you want this, explain to you why this is being considered and listen to your views. In some cases it may not always be possible to speak to you if issues have to be dealt with relatively quickly at court.
- 83.** Where the charges against a defendant change you are **entitled** to have the Public Prosecution Service or the police (in some cases through the Victim and Witness Care Unit) inform you, where possible, and where you ask give you reasons, for any decision the Public Prosecution Service makes to:
- substantially alter a charge;
  - discontinue all proceedings; or
  - offer no evidence in all proceedings.
- 84.** Where this occurs on the day of a court hearing or trial, prosecution counsel will try to advise you of this where it is possible to do so and where they are aware that you are at court. If you have any queries about the nature of charges you can contact the Victim and Witness Care Unit.

## Hearings

### Standard 2.3: Information on hearings

If the defendant has been charged with an offence by the police (rather than being summonsed to attend court) a court date will be set and the defendant will have to appear at court. You are **entitled** to be informed by the police, without unnecessary delay, of:

- the date, time and location of the first hearing;
- the nature of the charges against the alleged offender; and
- the outcome of the hearing, for example whether the suspect has been remanded in custody or has been granted bail by the court.

If you do not speak or understand English the information referred to above will be translated for you, on request, into a language that you do understand.

Where the defendant has been summonsed to attend court, rather than being charged by the police, you are **entitled** to ask your case officer in the Victim and Witness Care Unit for information

about the date, time and location of the first hearing (appearance on summons) and the outcome of that hearing.

As the case progresses (whether the person has been charged by the police or summonsed to court) you are **entitled** to be informed by the Victim and Witness Care Unit, without unnecessary delay:

- of the outcome of any bail hearing (any relevant bail conditions and any relevant changes to these bail conditions);
- of the outcome of a hearing if a suspect is re-arrested on foot of an arrest warrant issued in relation to your case. If a suspect is re-arrested after a warrant has been issued they will normally attend court soon afterwards. The police will update you when a suspect has been re-arrested prior to their hearing taking place, wherever possible;
- if the defendant has entered a not guilty plea;
- if the defendant has entered a guilty plea;
- of the discontinuance of proceedings, where applicable;
- of the date, time, location and outcome of the trial,<sup>40</sup> as well as arraignment,<sup>41</sup> sentencing and appeal, where applicable.

If you do not speak or understand English you are **entitled** to have this information translated, on request, into a language that you do understand.

- if the suspect pleads not guilty, discuss any needs you have with the Victim and Witness Care Unit and be referred to a relevant victim support service provider where appropriate.

The Victim and Witness Care Unit will provide three monthly updates to victims in Crown Court cases, typically the most serious cases, where there has been no communication within the previous three months. Where you are **entitled** to be informed of the date, time and location of the trial (as set out above) you are also **entitled** to be informed where there is a delay in proceedings and the reasons for this. Delay means that an event that you have been informed about will not take place on that date. Where this happens it could be for a number of reasons, for example that the judge has adjourned the case, that further evidence is required or medical reports are being sought. Where possible you will be advised in advance of a delay in the relevant date of the hearing. In some cases it may only be possible to advise you of this on the day of the hearing, due to developments on that day that are outside the control of the service provider. There may be other circumstances, for instance if you are not at court for the scheduled hearing, where it will only be possible to inform you afterwards that the hearing has not gone ahead.

## Meetings with the Public Prosecution Service

**85.** There may be occasions where you wish to receive additional information from the Public Prosecution Service. You are **entitled** to ask the Public Prosecution Service for a meeting:

- to discuss a Public Prosecution Service decision not to prosecute a suspect, where detailed reasons for this have been requested;

<sup>40</sup> In the Magistrates' Court this is referred to as the contest date. For the purpose of this Charter a reference to trial includes a contest.

<sup>41</sup> This type of hearing happens only in the Crown Court and is when the defendant enters a plea of guilty or not guilty at the start of proceedings in that court.

- to discuss a Public Prosecution Service decision to substantially alter a charge, discontinue all proceedings or offer no evidence in all proceedings; and
- if a case results in an acquittal or a less serious charge.

**86.** While the Public Prosecution Service will try to meet with victims, where asked, the decision in each case will depend on the particular facts and circumstances of the case. You can also ask to meet the Public Prosecution Service prosecutor or barrister, who will be presenting the case in court, where you are to give evidence. This would normally take place on the day of the trial. For serious and complex cases they will try to meet with you before the trial. Prosecutors are bound by strict legal rules and professional guidelines in relation to what they can and cannot discuss with victims and other witnesses in the case. Whilst each individual case depends on its own facts and circumstances there may be issues or matters relating to the case that the prosecutor cannot discuss with you before you have given evidence because of these rules.

**87.** A bereaved family member is also **entitled** to ask for a meeting with a prosecution representative at any point in the process.

## Section 3: Letting the court know about the impact of the crime on you

### Victim personal statement

- 88.** A victim personal statement allows you to say in your own words how a crime has affected or continues to affect you. It can only be used when a case goes to court and a person pleads guilty or is found guilty. It allows your views to be heard during criminal proceedings. The statement must be submitted in writing before any sentence is passed.

#### Standard 3.1: Making a victim personal statement

The Victim and Witness Care Unit will inform you that you are **entitled** to be given the opportunity to make a written victim personal statement, once a decision has been taken to prosecute someone for the crime (based on the test for prosecution) and where it is practicable to do so. This would apply if you are:

- (i) a direct victim (including a child, taking account of their age and maturity);
- (ii) a parent of a child victim (instead of or in addition to the child or young person);
- (iii) a close family member, or a representative, of a deceased victim; or
- (iv) a representative of a person who is unable to make a statement due to their physical or mental state.

- 89.** If a victim is deceased or unable to act for themselves someone else can write the statement; the Victim and Witness Care Unit need to be made aware of who this will be. If you are a child, your parent or guardian can make a victim personal statement for you and you can also make it yourself. Due account will be taken of a child's age and maturity, with support and help available from victim support service providers, including NSPCC Young Witness Service. They can give you information and advice about making the statement, about what information should or shouldn't be included in the statement and can also help you prepare the statement.
- 90.** You don't have to make a victim personal statement if you don't want to – it is entirely your choice. If you decide not to make one, no one will assume that you have been unaffected by the crime. If you wish to make a victim personal statement you should contact a victim support service provider or your family liaison officer (for a family member bereaved through murder, manslaughter or a driving offence resulting in death) after you have been told about the decision to prosecute someone, typically when you have received the date for trial. They will inform you about what your statement may contain and advise you that the defence team or judge may ask you about its content in court. You are **entitled** to ask a victim support service provider or the police family liaison officer, where appropriate, for help in preparing your statement.
- 91.** The victim personal statement **should** set out the impact on you as a victim of the crime or, if that person is deceased, the impact on the family member completing the statement. This could include physical, emotional, social, financial or any other impacts. It may also reflect on how it affects the actual victim's close family. If you are completing the statement and are not the actual direct victim or a bereaved family member, for example a parent or representative, you can set out how the crime has affected both you and/or the victim.

- 92.** You should not give your views on the defendant, any other or alleged offences, or on any punishment you think should be given. This is because these views are not admissible in court. Before the statement is given to the judge, the Public Prosecution Service will remove any information that should not be in it. The victim personal statement will be used in court if the defendant is found guilty or pleads guilty. It will be seen by the prosecutor, the defendant, their legal representative and the judge. Where a person is convicted of an offence the court must consider relevant parts of the victim personal statement when determining the sentence. In some cases it may not be possible for a statement to be considered if the case is dealt with very quickly by the courts – for example, if there is an early guilty plea or the case is dealt with at the first court appearance.
- 93.** Where you engage with other criminal justice service providers (the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland or the Youth Justice Agency) they may find it helpful to see your victim personal statement. This could help them provide services to you. In such cases you can tell them that you want them to see your statement – this is entirely your choice. They will explain what the statement would be used for, get your written consent to it being shared with them and then get the statement from the Public Prosecution Service. Steps will be taken to ensure that the statement is stored securely.
- 94.** More detailed information on making a victim personal statement can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/vps](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/vps). Community impact statements can also be made, to allow a community to say how a crime has affected or continues to affect it. These are intended to be used for a critical incident which has had a significant impact on the community, as an indirect victim and has damaged public confidence. Further information can be found at [www.dojni.gov.uk/making-a-community-impact-statement](http://www.dojni.gov.uk/making-a-community-impact-statement).

## Section 4: Preparing for court

### Preparation for attending court

- 95.** You may be anxious before attending court and unsure about what to expect when you are there. The entitlements below cover the information, support and help that is available before going to court. Some of these entitlements will only apply if you are giving evidence at court. If a suspect pleads guilty you will not usually need to give evidence.

#### Standard 4.1: Enhanced needs assessment

If a decision has been taken to prosecute a suspect, you are **entitled** to:

- an enhanced needs assessment by the Victim and Witness Care Unit, when you are required to give evidence, to make sure that you are supported in giving your best evidence. This will consider:
  - your needs relating to interpretation, translation, being understood, help to give evidence (in the form of special measures) or other additional support;
  - whether you may be intimidated or at risk of intimidation; or
  - whether you have any other needs that may require additional support, when giving evidence at court.

Where your safety is at risk due to intimidation or threats the Victim and Witness Care Unit can advise the police of this, where they are made aware of this. You should, however, contact the police without delay if you feel your safety is at risk.

#### Standard 4.2: Setting a court date

If you are to attend court to give evidence the Victim and Witness Care Unit will ask for your availability. This information will then be given to the court when a date is being set for trial. Every effort will be made to accommodate your availability. The judge will make the final decision on the trial date.

#### Standard 4.3: Information provision about attending court<sup>42</sup>

If you are required to attend court to give evidence you are **entitled** to:

- have the Victim and Witness Care Unit tell you about this;
- receive information from the Victim and Witness Care Unit to help you prepare for going to court and understand the court process, in advance of giving evidence, so that you know what to expect;
- speak to your single point of contact in the Victim and Witness Care Unit if you have any queries or concerns about attending court; and
- receive information from the Victim and Witness Care Unit about the court venue, including information on the court location and transport links; the support available at court and the facilities available, such as food and drink; separate waiting areas; and arrangements for people with disabilities.

<sup>42</sup> Further information can also be obtained at [www.courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/Services/Support2VictimandWitnesses/Pages/SupporttoVictimandWitnesses.aspx](http://www.courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/Services/Support2VictimandWitnesses/Pages/SupporttoVictimandWitnesses.aspx)

## Standard 4.4: Court familiarisation and preparation for attendance

Before attending court you are **entitled** to ask:

- a victim support service provider, or the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service, if you can visit the court, whether or not you are to give evidence, so you're familiar with the building and the court room. If you are to give evidence you are **entitled** to be given the opportunity to visit the court; and
- the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service if you can enter the building before other members of the public, or if you can enter the court building through a separate entrance from the defendant and their family and friends. This may be facilitated through witness support services.

If you are to attend court to give evidence you are **entitled** to:

- view a video online about what to expect at court;<sup>43</sup>
- have a victim support service provider explain to you what happens in court;
- give evidence using any of the special measures available, if these have been applied for and granted by the judge;
- practice using the live link TV facility before the trial, when you are to use this to give evidence, where possible;
- ask the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service if it might be possible to transfer the case to another court venue, if the original venue is particularly difficult for you to attend, although there may be legal restrictions preventing this. You should discuss this with the person who has asked you to give evidence, or the Victim and Witness Care Unit, when the court date is being arranged; and
- view your statement to help refresh your memory. If you have made a written statement it will be available for you at court on the day. If you made a video recorded statement arrangements will be made for you to view this separately before the trial.

## Witness services (victim support services where you give evidence)

**96.** Before, and at, court a victim support service provider can help you and offer support. You are **entitled** to the following from them. To:

- have access to a free, independent, impartial and confidential service, which can provide information on court procedures;
- have someone to talk to, and have access to support, before, during and for an appropriate period after the trial. Where you are to give evidence, witness services cannot discuss the evidence in the case before the trial;
- be contacted before the trial and have witness services offered to you, where you are to give evidence;
- ask to be accompanied throughout the court process, where possible when you are to give evidence, and if permitted by the court; and
- discuss any needs that you may have with a victim support service provider, and be referred to specialist support services, where appropriate and available.

<sup>43</sup> This can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/crime-justice-and-the-law/going-to-court.htm](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/crime-justice-and-the-law/going-to-court.htm).

## Consideration of special measures and additional support

### Vulnerable and intimidated witnesses

**97.** When your needs are assessed by a service provider, and you are identified as being eligible for additional support or special measures, they will discuss with you what ‘special measures’ may be available if they think that you might benefit from these. Once assessed an application for special measures can be made, if appropriate. It is the judge who decides whether special measures should be granted. Once granted you are **entitled** to receive them. If you are vulnerable or intimidated, or have other particular needs identified as a result of the individual assessment and the service provider considers that you would benefit from special measures when giving evidence at court (due to your vulnerability to secondary and repeat victimisation, intimidation or retaliation) you are **entitled** to have:

- the Public Prosecution Service apply to the court for special measures (if you are considered eligible and you want to use them to give your evidence) and explain these to you;
- the Victim and Witness Care Unit inform you whether or not special measures have been granted; and
- the Public Prosecution Service ask the court to give the case priority.

## Section 5: The trial and giving evidence at court

### Attending court to give evidence

- 98.** You may have to give evidence at court or simply want to watch court proceedings related to the case. When you arrive at court you should find polite and helpful Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service staff, clear signs to help you find your way around and a clearly signposted witness service. You should also be able to see a list of cases to be heard on that day. You can expect to be able to use clean and comfortable waiting and refreshment areas, or be informed by court staff what arrangements are available to get refreshments.
- 99.** When attending court, whether giving evidence or not, you are **entitled** to:
- have access to Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service staff at the court if you need information; and
  - ask a victim support service provider to talk over the case once it is finished.

#### Standard 5.1: Support available at court where you are giving evidence

If you are giving evidence at court help and support is available. You are **entitled** to:

- meet with a victim support service provider upon arrival at court, if asked for and arranged before you arrive at court;
- be provided with a place to wait by a victim support service provider, for you and your family and friends, which is away from the defendant and their family and supporters. In some courts a lack of space may mean that this is not possible;
- if circumstances permit, meet the Public Prosecution Service prosecutor or representative and ask him or her questions about the court process;
- have any special measures set up for you by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service where these have been ordered by the court;
- have the Public Prosecution Service provide you with interpretation services, on request, when giving evidence or being questioned during criminal proceedings at court, where you do not speak or understand English;
- have someone from the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service or a victim support service provider go with you into the courtroom, or the live link room, when you give evidence, where possible and if permitted by the court; and
- have questions about court answered by a victim support service provider or be referred by them to someone who can answer your questions.

- 100.** If you have been called to give evidence at court you will be asked about what happened by the Public Prosecution Service prosecutor and/or defence counsel. It is up to the court to make sure the trial is conducted in a fair and just manner. When giving evidence the Public Prosecution Service prosecutor will treat you respectfully, and where appropriate, will seek the court's intervention where the prosecutor considers that questioning is not appropriate or is aggressive. If a victim personal statement (see **Section 3**) is available to the judge, it will be considered after the offender has been convicted and before they are sentenced. You may also be questioned about this.

- 101.** If you need to leave the court building at any time, you should give your contact details to Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service staff or a victim support service provider (witness services) so they can contact you if necessary. However, you should speak to whoever asked you to attend court before leaving the building. If you are not giving evidence in the case you are **entitled** to watch court proceedings from the public gallery, from the start, unless the judge has ordered that the gallery is cleared. If you are giving evidence, you can normally only watch the proceedings after you have given evidence. While at court, you can ask for further information on the court procedure from Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service staff at the public counter.

#### **Standard 5.2: Waiting times at court**

You may be required to wait at court before you are called to give evidence. The length of time that you will have to wait depends on the progress of other cases, but you should let your victim support service provider know if you have been waiting a long time without receiving any information.

Where you are to give evidence, and where it is possible to do so, you are **entitled** to:

- be told, as quickly as is practicable by the Public Prosecution Service prosecutor or representative if the case cannot be heard on the day;
- have the Public Prosecution Service prosecutor or representative indicate how long you may have to wait before giving evidence and update you regularly during the day; and
- receive an explanation from the Public Prosecution Service prosecutor or representative if the delay is longer than expected.

#### **Standard 5.3: Safety at court**

When attending court you may be concerned about your safety around the defendant, or their family and supporters. You are **entitled** to:

- have Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service security staff take appropriate measures to make sure that you are safe, where you have advised them that you have concerns about your safety;
- ask the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service that an incident of intimidation is reported to the police; and
- where possible, wait in a separate area from defence witnesses and supporters.<sup>44</sup>

Court security officers search all court users entering the court building. Anyone who may disrupt court business or pose a threat to the safety of other court users will be removed from the court building.

<sup>44</sup> For any new Court buildings the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service will ensure that there are separate waiting areas for victims (including those that give evidence) and that separate entrances are available on request for victims (as well as their family and supporters) in any plans that are developed for new court premises. These arrangements will include considering the design of courtroom layouts in new buildings to avoid contact between victims and their family members and the defendant as far as possible.

## Privacy and protection

### 102. You are also **entitled**:

- in some cases, to have the Public Prosecution Service apply to the court for your identity not to be revealed, or reporting directions which prevent some details from being reported in the press, including images of you and your family. The decision whether to grant this application rests with the judge. These measures could also include clearing the court where you are a victim of a sexual offence, trafficking or slavery; and
- to ask the Public Prosecution Service about ancillary (other) court orders. These can be used to address the harm caused by offenders and ensure that effective measures are put in place to prevent repeat victimisation. These include a Compensation Order and a Sexual Offences Prevention Order. You are **entitled** to discuss ancillary orders with the Public Prosecution Service and, where appropriate, have these applied for, for example, a Restraining Order.

### 103. Where your safety is at risk due to intimidation or threats the Victim and Witness Care Unit can advise the police of this, where they are made aware of this. More generally, where service providers (the police, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland and the Youth Justice Agency) deal with both offenders and victims, you are **entitled** to have them take appropriate measures to avoid contact between you (and your family members) and the offender, where necessary, within their premises where criminal proceedings are conducted. This would apply unless contact was needed for progression of the case or the criminal proceedings.

## Section 6: Outcome of proceedings, sentencing decisions and appeals

### Outcome of proceedings

**104.** If a case has gone to court you will understandably want to know the result.

#### Standard 6.1: Information on the outcome of proceedings

You are **entitled** to be informed by the Victim and Witness Care Unit, without unnecessary delay, of the final outcome (judgment) of criminal proceedings and the trial. This includes a short explanation about the meaning and effect of any sentence. You are **entitled** to ask the Victim and Witness Care Unit for further information about the outcome of proceedings. You are also **entitled** to ask the Victim and Witness Care Unit for further information about the reasons for the decision concerned (which may be provided through the Public Prosecution Service), except in the case of jury decisions, a decision where the reasons are confidential or where reasons are not provided by the court or made available to the Public Prosecution Service. This also covers not guilty decisions.

If you do not speak or understand English this information will be given to you, on request, in a language that you do understand.

**105.** If you are at court giving evidence the Public Prosecution Service prosecutor should tell you about and explain the sentence given. Otherwise you are **entitled** to have the Victim and Witness Care Unit tell you the result of the case and any sentence imposed. This will include a short explanation about the meaning and effect of the sentence, for example, that a person has been found guilty of certain offences and has been sentenced to a term of imprisonment, some of which is in jail and some of which is on licence. A leaflet on sentencing is also available. If you have queries about this you are **entitled** to be referred to the Public Prosecution Service, where requested through the Victim and Witness Care Unit, for more information.

**106.** If the offender receives a sentence which includes supervision by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland you are **entitled** to ask them to explain the meaning of any order that is imposed. This can be done by phone, in writing or face-to-face.

#### Standard 6.2: Post trial support

Following the trial you are **entitled** to be directed by the Victim and Witness Care Unit to victim support services, where appropriate and where they are available. A victim support service provider can offer you further advice and, if necessary, offer to refer you to specialist help and support.

### Appeals

**107.** If an appeal is made to the County Court against a conviction or sentence in the Magistrates' Court or the Court of Appeal against a conviction or sentence in the Crown Court you are **entitled** to be informed by the Victim and Witness Care Unit about:

- any notice of appeal that has been made;
- the date, time and location of any key hearings; and
- the outcome of that appeal, including any changes to the original sentence.

- 108.** If you do not speak or understand English this information will be given to you, on request, by the Victim and Witness Care Unit in a language that you do understand.
- 109.** You do not have a right of appeal against a sentence imposed. However, if you consider that a sentence imposed is too lenient, where the person has been sentenced in the Crown Court, you can ask the Director of Public Prosecutions to consider referring the case to the Court of Appeal. The Director of Public Prosecutions can only refer sentences for certain offences to the Court of Appeal and only if he thinks a sentence is unduly lenient. As referrals must be made within 28 days of the sentence being imposed, you should bring your concerns to the Director's attention as soon as possible. You can do this by writing to the Director yourself or through a legal or public representative. Further information about this is available on the Public Prosecution Service website at [www.ppsni.gov.uk](http://www.ppsni.gov.uk).

## Expenses

- 110.** If you are required to attend court to give evidence you may have to pay for aspects like your travel. You can apply to have this money paid back. This is subject to time limits for claiming money back and standard rates for travel and subsistence costs, as well as maximum daily amounts for loss of earnings. Expenses are not paid for making a statement to the police about the criminal offence. You should contact your case officer in the Victim and Witness Care Unit if you want to discuss attendance at court. If travel arrangements are needed for you to give evidence, such as flights, your case officer in the Victim and Witness Care Unit can book these on your behalf to save you incurring the costs and reclaiming them.
- 111.** Witness invitations to attend court, issued from the Victim and Witness Care Unit, will be accompanied by a witness expenses claim form. The witness invitation will tell you the first date on which you are required to attend. The form makes clear that expenses will only be paid on the days that you are asked to attend court; you will be paid whether or not you actually give evidence, unless you have refused to give evidence. Details of how, under what conditions expenses can be reimbursed by the Public Prosecution Service and the rates that apply will be provided by the Victim and Witness Care Unit. These can be found at [www.ppsni.gov.uk/Publications-7873.html](http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Publications-7873.html).
- 112.** In summary, expenses information will be provided on the following where you are called to give evidence:
- **Subsistence allowances:** This is the level of day subsistence, and the amounts that are payable, where you are required to attend court for up to five hours, between five and 10 hours and over 10 hours. A night subsistence allowance or overnight allowance may also be payable in some cases.
  - **Travel costs:** This is the mileage rate(s) that applies, where travel is incurred. This includes the rate where you use public transport, your own car, a motorcycle, bicycle or other transport.
  - **Loss of earnings:** This is the allowance towards lost earnings that would apply for an absence from work of up to four hours and over four hours respectively, for those that are employed and self-employed, if you lose pay while you are required to be at court.
  - **Other costs:** This is other costs that may be incurred, some of which would have to be receipt based.

- 113.** You can speak to the court witness helpdesk by calling 0845 300 5770, if you are unsure about any aspect of completing an expenses claim. Your form can be authorised on the day you are at court, being signed and dated by a Public Prosecution Service staff member or police officer, for you to then submit to the Public Prosecution Service along with relevant receipts. Details of where to return your expenses claim form will be set out within the form itself.

### **Standard 6.3: Payment of expenses**

Where you participate in criminal proceedings, you are **entitled** to the possibility of reimbursement of the expenses incurred as a result of your active participation in the criminal proceedings (that is where you are required by the Public Prosecution Service to give evidence at court). You are **entitled** to be:

- informed by the Victim and Witness Care Unit about when, how and under what conditions you can claim expenses for travel to and from the court, meals and refreshments, any loss of earnings incurred as a result of attending court and childcare costs where you have been called by the Public Prosecution Service to give evidence at court. In an emergency the Victim and Witness Care Unit will, upon request, arrange travel and accommodation where necessary and within guidelines;
- informed by the Victim and Witness Care Unit about expense rates and upper limits of allowances, including provisions relating to travel costs, childcare costs, other costs and loss of earnings;
- paid any expenses you are due, after you give evidence at court or attend court to give evidence; and
- paid by the Public Prosecution Service, not later than 30 days after they receive a correctly completed claim form, where you are eligible.

## Section 7: After the trial – the release and supervision of offenders

### Victim information schemes

**114.** If, as set out below, an offender is sentenced to prison, confined to hospital or is under Probation Board supervision you are **entitled** to be informed by the Victim and Witness Care Unit about access to a relevant post-conviction victim information scheme. You are also **entitled** to ask the Victim Information Unit to provide you with certain information. The Unit, which is managed by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland, co-ordinates a single victims' service which covers all three victim information schemes. The three schemes are the prisoner release victim information scheme (PRVIS), the Probation Board for Northern Ireland victim information scheme and the mentally disordered offenders victim information scheme. These relate to:

- young offenders who have been given the equivalent of a life sentence, convicted of a grave offence or sentenced to detention in a Young Offenders Centre by the Crown Court (when the young offender becomes 18). The prison scheme also covers adult offenders (18 or over) who are sentenced to six months or more;
- offenders who receive a sentence which includes supervision by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland; and
- offenders who are subject to a Hospital Order with a Restriction Order.

#### Standard 7.1: Access to victim information schemes

You are **entitled** to make use of these information schemes if you are:

- an actual victim of the offence (where you are aged 18 or over) or a bereaved family member;
- a family member (or legal guardian) of a person under the age of 18; or
- a family member (or legal guardian) of a victim whose physical or mental state is such that it would be reasonable for you to receive the information.

#### Standard 7.2: Contact with the Victim Information Unit

You are **entitled** to have the Victim and Witness Care Unit inform you about a relevant information scheme, without unnecessary delay, where it has been informed of the outcome of the case. You are **entitled** to apply to the Victim Information Unit to receive information about the release or supervision of an offender. You must register with the Victim Information Unit if you want to be informed of an offender's release (including temporary release) or supervision. This does not happen automatically.

### Prisoner Release Victim Information Scheme (PRVIS)

**115.** If you register with the scheme you are **entitled** to be informed by the Victim Information Unit, without unnecessary delay (where it has been informed of a decision or outcome), about:

- the year and month in which a prisoner is expected to be released from custody or will be eligible to be considered for temporary release;

- when the prisoner is being considered for temporary release;
- any decision taken in relation to temporary release; and
- any known conditions of the prisoner's release, or conditions imposed on temporary release, and any breaches of these which result in the prisoner being returned to custody unless sharing the information would endanger someone or there is an identified risk of harm to the offender which would result from this.

**116.** In the cases of prisoners given a life sentence, an indeterminate custodial sentence or an extended custodial sentence which are subject to considerations of release by the Parole Commissioners you are **entitled** to be informed by the Victim Information Unit about when the prisoner is being considered for release. You will also be **entitled** to make your views on release known to the Parole Commissioners (through the Victim Information Unit) ahead of such a prisoner being considered for release. You are **entitled** to be informed of the decision the Parole Commissioners make and, if it is to release the prisoner, to be told of the licensing arrangements that apply.

**117.** You are also **entitled** to have the opportunity to submit views to the Victim Information Unit, or to register concerns you have about your personal safety and have these considered as part of the assessment process, when an offender applies for temporary release or is to be released on licence.

**118.** Very occasionally it may only be possible to tell you about a release after it has happened. In the very unlikely event that an offender in the case you are involved in escapes from detention you will be **entitled** to be informed about this, without unnecessary delay, by the police or the prison service, unless sharing the information would endanger someone or there is an identified risk of harm to the offender which would result from this. You are also **entitled** to be informed by the police or prison service of any measures then taken to protect you.

### Probation Board for Northern Ireland Victim Information Scheme

**119.** If you register with this scheme you are **entitled** to receive information from the Victim Information Unit, without unnecessary delay (where it has been informed of a decision or outcome), on:

- how the case is to be managed;
- the type and length of supervision the offender will receive and the general conditions of this (including any variation);
- any extra conditions that apply to the supervision, including where these are varied;
- the number of hours of community service, where this applies; and
- any further sentences relating to the case.

**120.** You are also **entitled** to choose how you receive this information (for example, face-to-face, by phone or in writing) and to discuss any concerns you may have with a Victim Information Unit staff member. In certain cases the Unit will also offer you the opportunity to give your views and concerns in a victim report, so they can be considered by the Parole Commissioners.

## Mentally Disordered Offenders Victim Information Scheme

**121.** This scheme provides information about any periods of leave of absence from hospital being considered for an offender and their conditional or absolute discharge from hospital. If you register for this scheme you are **entitled** to be informed by the Victim Information Unit, without unnecessary delay (where it has been informed of a decision or outcome):

- when a period of leave of absence is to be considered;
- that a period of leave of absence is to be granted, or an offender is to be discharged from hospital, within the next few weeks, along with any general conditions relevant to you; and
- of any relevant conditions that apply to the offender leaving hospital.

**122.** You are also **entitled** to have the opportunity to submit your views, in writing, to the Victim Information Unit on how the proposed leave or discharge may affect your safety or well being and also what conditions an offender might be subject to when leaving hospital.

## Section 8: Restorative justice

**123.** The aim of restorative justice is to try to help repair the damage (including mental and emotional damage) caused by the crime. Any restorative justice practices are completely voluntary – **you do not have to take part** – and are assisted by a trained facilitator. Restorative justice can involve direct or indirect contact between you and the offender. It might be written, verbal or involve an actual meeting. All parties have a chance to say what happened and to explain the impact of the offence. Before this, preparation will be carried out with you, by the relevant service provider, to make sure that you feel supported.

### Young people who offend

**124.** If the offender who has committed a crime against you is under the age of 18, the court or public prosecutor may refer them to a youth conference which is a form of mediation. The youth conference is a meeting, or a series of meetings, between the offender, the adult responsible for them, a police officer, you and any support person. There are others who may be there such as the offender's solicitor, a social worker or youth worker or someone who can represent the views of the community. A risk assessment is carried out in preparation for each meeting between you and the young offender.

#### Standard 8.1: Participation in a youth conference

If the offender is under the age of 18 you are **entitled** to the following from the Youth Justice Agency. To:

- be offered the opportunity to take part in a youth conference, where appropriate and available;
- be offered information about the youth conference process, so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to take part;
- have the youth conference led by a person that has been appropriately trained, with services delivered in line with recognised quality standards;
- meet with the youth conference co-ordinator before the youth conference, to help you prepare for it, should you want;
- have the opportunity to attend or to take part by video link, by phone or from behind a two-way mirror, should you want;
- be supported by a family member or someone else you choose to bring with you;
- send a representative to the meeting on your behalf; and
- have the youth conference arranged at a time and place that suits you, within reason.

**125.** At the youth conference you are **entitled** to:

- tell the offender how the crime has affected you; and
- ask for the young offender to apologise, pay restitution or take action to make amends for the crime, or for there to be restrictions on their behaviour or movements.

**126.** Following the youth conference, and once the court has ratified the plan, you will be told the outcome of the youth conference, as soon as possible, and whether the young person successfully completed the youth conference plan. If a young person who commits a crime against you receives either a Community Responsibility Order or Reparation Order, you are **entitled** to have the Youth Justice Agency contact you. This would enable you to have some say in how it will be undertaken.

**127.** If the young person is supervised by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland you are **entitled** to be offered the opportunity to be involved in a restorative intervention.

## Adult offenders

**128.** You may be offered the opportunity to participate in restorative justice interventions by the Probation Board or prison service, where a person has been given a prison sentence or subsequently receives a Probation Board supervised order or licence. Restorative justice services are typically offered to all victims registered with the Probation Board for Northern Ireland Victim Information Scheme. Restorative justice interventions can only take place where both you and the offender want to take part and the offender has accepted responsibility for his/her actions. This is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. A restorative justice intervention could involve direct or indirect communication between you and the offender. It might be written or verbal or an actual meeting. Those involved in undertaking restorative justice interventions are trained to assess the suitability of cases, explore opportunities and risk and prepare both you and the offender for the intervention.

## Restorative justice protections

### **Standard 8.2: Protections for those who participate in restorative justice**

If you choose to take part in restorative justice practices, as laid out in this section, you are **entitled** to have access to safe and competent restorative justice services operated by service providers (including the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland and the Youth Justice Agency), subject to at least the following conditions:

- you are safeguarded from victimisation, intimidation and retaliation;
- restorative justice practices are used only if they are considered to be in your interest, subject to any safety considerations for those participating, and are based on your free and informed consent. You can withdraw your consent at any time;
- before agreeing to take part in restorative justice services you are provided with information about that process, the potential outcomes and how the implementation of any agreement would be supervised;
- the offender acknowledges the basic facts of the case;
- any agreement reached, including on the way forward, is arrived at voluntarily and may be taken into account in any further criminal proceedings; and
- discussions that are part of restorative justice practices are confidential (unless they take place in public) and are not to be shared with others, unless those involved agree or there is a legal requirement for this on a public interest basis.

Where restorative justice services are provided by the Youth Justice Agency, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland or the Northern Ireland Prison Service they will have procedures or guidelines in place to facilitate the referral of cases, where appropriate, including the conditions for how this will be undertaken.

## Section 9: Compensation

**129.** If you are a victim of a violent crime you may be able to claim compensation. Unless there are good reasons, you should report the incident to the police as soon as possible after it happened and submit an application for compensation within two years (of the date of the incident that caused the injury). The two year time limit may be waived if Compensation Services consider that there is a good reason for the delay and it is in the interests of justice to do so. Further information about compensation for victims of violent crime can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/compensation-for-victims-of-crime](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/compensation-for-victims-of-crime) or by contacting Compensation Services (see **Annex B**).

### Making an application

#### Standard 9.1: Making an application for compensation

You are **entitled** to apply for compensation and have your application considered, if you are a victim of a violent crime. If you indicate to Compensation Services that you want to make an application for compensation you are **entitled** to have them:

- deal directly with you or, if you prefer, work with a victim support service provider or any other representative acting for you;
- give you information that you need to help you fill in the application form, including clear information on how and under what conditions you can access compensation;
- treat your information confidentially;
- acknowledge your application, provide you with a reference number and the name of the person responsible for processing your claim;
- provide you with contact details;
- provide information on the progress of your application;
- make a decision on your application as quickly as possible and clearly explain the decision made;
- respond to all correspondence needing a reply;
- issue an offer of award or denial notification, including reasons for the decision, following enquiries with the police, medical authorities and any other relevant sources; and
- tell you about your right to request a review of the decision, including the procedure and time limits for this.

#### Standard 9.2: Access to free compensation advice

Victim Support NI can give you information, advice and support during the compensation claim process. While you can make use of a solicitor if you wish, the confidential Victim Support NI service is free. Any award will be paid to you without a deduction for their help. You can ask Victim Support NI for help with completing and progressing your application.

## Reviews

### Standard 9.3: Review of a decision on a compensation application

If you do not agree with the decision on your compensation application you are **entitled** to the following from Compensation Services:

- to request a review of the decision, within 90 days from the original decision;
- to have your application for a review acknowledged;
- to have the review processed efficiently, fairly and afresh by a different claims officer than the officer who made the first decision;
- a clear explanation of the review decision, covering points raised in the review application; and
- information on appealing the decision, including the procedure and time limits.

## Appeals

**130.** You can appeal the result of the review, if you consider that there are grounds for this, to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals Panel for Northern Ireland, within 90 days of the date of the letter informing you of the decision made at the review. This panel is independent of Compensation Services and their decision is final. After you have submitted an appeal you are **entitled** to the following from the panel. To:

- have your appeal acknowledged, a hearing granted and an information booklet provided, within two days of your completed appeal form being received.

**131.** Where a hearing is granted, you are **entitled** to the following from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals Panel for Northern Ireland. To:

- receive a copy of the review decision evidence used by Compensation Services;
- be informed that you have a further 10 weeks to submit any additional evidence to the panel;
- request an extension of this giving details of why it is needed;
- receive a copy of any new evidence submitted by Compensation Services within two days of receipt by the panel;
- be informed at the end of the 10 week period, that the appeal will be listed for hearing;
- ask panel staff to invite any witnesses you wish to attend on your behalf, based on the information (on, for example, names and addresses) that you provide to them – this information must be current;
- ask the panel for help to meet your particular needs;
- be informed by the panel of the date, time and location of your appeal hearing;
- bring any witnesses to the hearing that you believe can help your case, subject to the panel's discretion; and
- withdraw your appeal at any time before the hearing, by writing to the panel.

**132.** At the hearing, you will usually be told what the outcome is and will be provided with a decision notice. This will confirm the decision but will not give detailed reasons. Following the hearing, you are **entitled** to request, from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals Panel for Northern Ireland, the reasons for their decision about your appeal. You will need to make this request within one month of the decision.

### **Criminal injuries received outside Northern Ireland**

**133.** If you are applying for compensation for a criminal injury you received outside Northern Ireland, Compensation Services can tell you who you need to contact to make a claim, or you can apply directly by contacting the Criminal Injury Compensation Authority.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> You can contact CICA through their website ([www.cica.gov.uk](http://www.cica.gov.uk)) or through the European Commission's website ([www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)).

## Section 10: If we don't meet your expectations

### What if we don't meet your expectations

**134.** The Victim Charter sets out your entitlements to services from various service providers and how you should be treated by them. All the service providers who provide information and services to you under the Charter must recognise and treat you in a respectful, sensitive, tailored, and professional manner without discrimination of any kind. If they fail to do so, or fail to provide the services set out under the Charter, you are **entitled** to have them look into the matter. You are **entitled** to be informed by all service providers about their complaints mechanism.

### Informal process

#### Standard 10.1: Service providers' role in meeting your expectations

Service providers have a number of ways in which they can be contacted. Contact details are set out in **Annex B** or at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimcontacts](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimcontacts). If you don't get the services or standard of services that you expect to receive under the Charter you can raise this issue, in the first instance, with the relevant service provider and then subsequently with an independent body (if necessary). Most service providers have a dedicated complaints officer.<sup>46</sup>

#### Standard 10.2: How you will be dealt with

Where you have concerns about a specific service provider, you are **entitled** to the following. To:

- raise your concerns with the person you have been dealing with at that service provider, where you feel comfortable doing so and without any negative impact on the case, if you are not happy about the level of service provided;
- advise them that you feel that your entitlements under the Charter haven't been met;
- receive information on how to make a complaint using their internal procedures, including contact details, and the process for dealing with this (including how to take a complaint forward if you are not satisfied with the outcome of the initial investigation);
- have your complaint dealt with seriously and in a prompt, open and fair way;
- receive a timely response in an accessible language and format; and
- be informed what further steps are available if you are not satisfied with the outcome, including contacting an independent body.

**135.** This section sets out how service providers will deal with any concerns that you have, in terms of informal consideration and review by an independent body. Section 32 of the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 also deals with non-compliance with the Charter.

**136.** In addition, if there is legislation governing service provision (for example, compensation, information schemes or special measures) the entitlements in the Charter apply in so far as they are compatible with that legislation.

<sup>46</sup> In respect of the police, complaints are dealt with by the independent Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

## Independent Review

- 137.** If you are not satisfied with the response to your concerns from the service provider, you are **entitled** to raise the issue with an independent organisation who will investigate the matter on your behalf. Contact details for the independent organisations listed below, who deal with complaints about the service providers, are set out in **Annex B** or at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimcontacts](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimcontacts).
- 138. Compensation Services/Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service/Northern Ireland Prison Service/Probation Board for Northern Ireland/Youth Justice Agency:** The Northern Ireland Ombudsman investigates complaints against a range of Government Departments and their agencies. This includes Compensation Services (as part of the Department of Justice), the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service, the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland and the Youth Justice Agency. If your complaint to the Ombudsman is about a government department or agency it must be supported by a Member of the Legislative Assembly. Contact details for your local Member of the Legislative Assembly can be found at [www.niassembly.gov.uk/Your-MLAs/](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Your-MLAs/).
- 139.** The Ombudsman has no legal powers to enforce actions. However, organisations will almost always accept recommendations in full. If the Ombudsman's recommendations are rejected a report can be provided to the Northern Ireland Assembly. If you disagree with the findings in the report, you can challenge the decision in the High Court.
- 140. Public Prosecution Service:** The Independent Assessor of Complaints investigates complaints against the Public Prosecution Service. The Assessor does not deal with complaints of a prosecutorial nature (i.e. complaints about why the Public Prosecution Service has, or has not, prosecuted someone).
- 141. Police:** The Police Ombudsman investigates all complaints against the police.
- 142. NSPCC Young Witness Service/Victim Support NI:** Victims and Witnesses Branch in the Department of Justice will investigate complaints made about services provided by NSPCC Young Witness Service and Victim Support NI, that are not resolved internally by those bodies.
- 143.** If you are not sure which service provider is responsible for dealing with your concerns you can contact Victim Support NI for advice.

## Media complaints

- 144.** There may be media interest in the case. If you consider that this is intrusive, you are getting unwanted press attention or are unhappy with media coverage, you can contact the Independent Press Standards Organisation which regulates the UK's newspapers and magazines. Further information is available at [www.ipso.co.uk](http://www.ipso.co.uk) or by phone (0300 123 2220). In relation to radio and television, Ofcom deals with complaints. It has a duty to ensure that you are protected from being treated unfairly in television and radio programmes and from having your privacy invaded. Further detail about the types of complaints Ofcom deals with can be found at <http://consumers.ofcom.org.uk/complain/tv-and-radio-complaints/> or by phoning 0300 123 3333. Some decisions may rest with the individual broadcaster rather than Ofcom.

## Section 11: Duties on service providers

**145.** Earlier sections set out the services to be provided to you by a range of service providers and the conditions of these. This section provides an overview of the information, help and services that service providers must provide to enable them to meet victims' entitlements. The relevant service providers must provide the entitlements and services as set out in the **Introduction** through to **Section 10**. An overview of the service providers is set out at the start of the Charter, while their contact details and complaints mechanisms can be found in **Section 10** and **Annex B** respectively.

**146. All service providers** must provide the entitlements relating to:

- those entitled to get services under the Charter (paras 20 – 28)
- ensuring fair treatment (standard I.1)
- understanding and being understood (standard I.2)
- interpretation and translation (standard I.3)
- having someone to support you (standard I.4)
- contact point for service providers (standard I.5)
- the provision of information (standard I.6)
- being dealt with by professional and trained staff (standard I.7)
- residents in another EU Member State (standard I.8)
- bereaved families (paras 52 – 54)
- information provided when reporting a crime and as you move through the criminal justice system (para 70)
- meeting your expectations (para 134 and standard 10.1)
- how you will be dealt with (standard 10.2)
- independent review (para 137)

**147. Compensation services** must provide the relevant entitlements relating to:

- making an application for compensation (standard 9.1)
- review of a decision on a compensation application (standard 9.3)

**148. The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service** must provide the relevant entitlements relating to:

- additional support for victims with particular needs (para 54)
- court familiarisation and preparation for attendance (standard 4.4)
- attending court to give evidence (para 99)
- support available at court where you are giving evidence (para 99 and standard 5.1)
- safety at court (standard 5.3)

**149. The Northern Ireland Prison Service** must provide the relevant entitlements relating to:

- the release of an offender (paras 115 – 118)
- protections for those who participate in restorative justice (standard 8.2)

**150. The police** must provide the relevant entitlements relating to:

- an assessment of your needs (paras 40 – 44)
- additional support for victims with particular needs (paras 46, 49, 50, 52 and 55)
- vulnerable and intimidated victims (paras 46 and 49)
- children and young people (para 50)

- bereaved families (para 52)
- support services for victims of certain crimes (paras 55, 61, 62 and 63)
- special measures (para 65)
- reporting a crime or incident (standard 1.1 and para 67)
- information provided when reporting a crime and as you move through the criminal justice system (standard 1.3 and paras 69 and 70)
- crime reference information (standard 1.4)
- referral to a victim support service provider (standard 1.5)
- making a statement to the police (including any interviews or questioning) on a crime (standard 1.6)
- interview procedures for those identified with particular needs (standard 1.7)
- update from the police about the investigation (standard 1.8)
- information on charges, bail and summons (standard 1.9)
- return of property (standard 1.10)
- information on a decision to prosecute (para 79)
- information on alternatives to prosecution (standard 2.1)
- changes to charges (para 83)
- information on hearings (standard 2.3)
- victim personal statement (para 90)
- privacy and protection (para 103)
- the escape or release of an offender (para 118)

**151.** The **Probation Board for Northern Ireland (including Victim Information Unit)** must provide the relevant entitlements relating to:

- privacy and protection (para 103)
- information on the outcome of proceedings (para 106)
- access to victim information schemes (para 114)
- contact with the Victim Information Unit (standard 7.2)
- the Prisoner Release Victim Information Scheme (PRVIS) (paras 115 - 117)
- the Probation Board for Northern Ireland Victim Information Scheme (paras 119 and 120)
- the Mentally Disordered Offenders Victim Information Scheme (paras 121 and 122)
- restorative interventions (para 127)
- protections for those who participate in restorative justice (standard 8.2)

**152.** The **Public Prosecution Service** must provide the relevant entitlements relating to:

- additional support for victims with particular needs (para 46)
- bereaved families (paras 52 and 53)
- special measures (para 65)
- information on alternatives to prosecution (standard 2.1)
- information on a decision to prosecute/not prosecute (paras 79, 80 and 81 and standard 2.2)
- changes to charges (standard 8.3)
- meetings with the Public Prosecution Service (paras 85 and 87)
- consideration of special measures and additional support (para 97)
- support available at court where you are giving evidence (standard 5.1)
- waiting times at court (standard 5.2)
- privacy and protection (para 102)

- information on the outcome of proceedings (para 105 and standard 6.1)
- payment of expenses (standard 6.3)

**153.** The **Victim and Witness Care Unit** must provide the relevant entitlements relating to:

- an assessment of your needs (paras 40 – 44)
- additional support for victims with particular needs (paras 46, 49, 50 and 55)
- vulnerable and intimidated victims (paras 46 – 49)
- children and young people (para 50)
- special measures (para 65)
- referral to a victim support service provider (standard 1.5)
- the Victim and Witness Care Unit (para 78)
- information on a decision to prosecute/not prosecute (standard 2.2)
- changes to charges (para 83)
- information on hearings (standard 2.3)
- making a victim personal statement (standard 3.1)
- enhanced needs assessment (standard 4.1)
- information provision about attending court (standard 4.3)
- court familiarisation and preparation for attendance (standard 4.4)
- consideration of special measures and additional support (para 97)
- information on the outcome of proceedings (standard 6.1 and para 105)
- post trial support (standard 6.2)
- appeals (para 107)
- payment of expenses (standard 6.3)
- access to victim information schemes (para 114)
- contact with the Victim Information Unit (standard 7.2)

**154.** **Victim support service providers** (NSPCC Young Witness Service and Victim Support NI) must provide the relevant entitlements relating to:

- additional support for victims with particular needs (paras 50, 55 and 63)
- support services for victims of certain crimes (paras 55 and 63)
- help from victim support service providers (whether or not you report a crime) (para 76)
- access to general and specialist victim support services (standard 1.11 and para 77)
- court familiarisation and preparation for attendance (standard 4.4)
- witness services (victim support services where you give evidence) (para 96)
- attending court to give evidence (para 99)
- support available at court where you are giving evidence (standard 5.1)

Entitlements related to NSPCC Young Witness Service only apply in so far as they relate to giving evidence at court.

**155.** The **Youth Justice Agency** must provide the relevant entitlements relating to:

- privacy and protection (para 103)
- restorative justice (standard 8.1 and para 126)
- participation in a youth conference (standard 8.1)
- protections for those who participate in restorative justice (standard 8.2)

## Annex A: Summary of Terms used in the Charter

This section provides an explanation of the key words or phrases found in the Charter.

### Acquit

A formal finding by the court that the accused person is not guilty.

### Acquittal

The decision of a court following a verdict or direction that the accused person is not guilty or where the case has been dismissed.

### Adjournment

The deferment of legal proceedings to a later date, by order of the court.

### Appeal

An application to a higher court for a review of a decision (such as a conviction and/or a sentence) taken by a lower court, for example a conviction made in a Magistrates' Court will be appealed to the County Court or, if on a point of law, to the Court of Appeal. The higher court may overturn or uphold the lower court's decision. Often, permission is required for an appeal to occur.

### Arrest warrant

A document issued by a court authorising a person's arrest.

### Bail (and bail conditions)

The temporary release of a suspect from custody, until his or her next appearance in court. This is sometimes subject to security being given and/or compliance with certain bail conditions, such as periodically reporting to a police station. Decisions on granting bail are a matter for the judiciary, who are independent. The law states that there is a presumption that the accused person will be granted bail, unless there are relevant and sufficient reasons to justify their continued detention (substantial grounds for believing that the accused will fail to surrender to custody, will interfere with witnesses or otherwise obstruct the course of justice or commit offences while on bail). Also see 'police bail'.

### Barrister

A lawyer who represents a person as an advocate before a court (i.e. puts a case to the court on their behalf). A barrister speaks in court and presents the case before a judge or jury. Barristers specialise in courtroom advocacy and are sometimes referred to as 'counsel'.

### Caution

A formal warning issued by a police officer or a facilitator from the police. A caution is recorded on a person's criminal record. It is sometimes referred to as a 'diversionary disposal'.

### Charge

A method for getting the defendant before the court e.g. 'charged to court with an offence'.

## **Child**

A person below 18 years of age.

## **Civil**

Civil court cases arise where an individual or a business believes their rights have been infringed. These deal with ordinary private, rather than criminal matters.

## **Complaint**

A formal accusation against a person alleging that they have committed a criminal offence.

## **Compensation**

Money paid in respect of personal injury, loss or damage resulting from an offence.

## **Compensation order**

An order of the court that an offender pay compensation for injury, loss, or damage resulting from a crime that they have committed. This can be instead of, or as well as, a fine.

## **Community responsibility order**

A court order requiring a young person to attend a Community Services centre for between 20 – 40 hours and to undertake specified activities. This involves measures for the young person to understand the impact of the crime, look at ways to prevent re-offending and, where appropriate, do practical things to make amends.

## **Conviction**

A finding of guilt in any criminal proceedings that a person has committed an offence.

## **Court of Appeal**

A court which hears appeals against the decisions of lower courts.

## **Court**

A body of people presided over by a judge, and acting as a tribunal in civil and criminal cases. There are different types of court in Northern Ireland. All criminal cases, even the most serious, such as murder begin in the Magistrates' Court.

## **Criminal conduct**

Behaviour constituting a criminal offence as governed by the Home Office Counting Rules and the National Crime Recording Standard. These recording practices are followed and applied in Northern Ireland. For the purpose of the Charter criminal conduct is referred to as a crime.

## **Crown Court**

The court in which trials in more serious (indictable) cases take place where criminal proceedings are usually heard before a judge and a jury. It hears the most serious cases.

**Defence**

The solicitor or barrister representing a defendant.

**Defendant**

A person who is accused in court of having committed an offence.

**Entitlement**

Service(s) that must be provided to victims of criminal conduct from the relevant service provider.

**Evidence**

Written or other material which is considered by a court when reaching a decision.

**Family liaison officer**

A police officer trained to work with bereaved families to secure their confidence and trust, to provide support and information about the investigation and support services, and to gather information which contributes to the investigation.

**Family member:** This refers to one of the following:

- the spouse;
- the partner (including a civil partner or a person who lives with the other person as if they were husband and wife or as if they were civil partners);
- a relative in direct line:
  - son or daughter or person that the victim has or had parental responsibility for (as provided for under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995);
  - father or mother or person who has or had parental responsibility for the victim (as provided for under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995);
  - grandparent or grandchild;
- the brother or sister (siblings); or
- dependant;

of the victim.

A person will also be treated as a family member where the relationship is by marriage, blood or half blood. If the victim has died it will include a person that, immediately prior to their death, was living together with them as their spouse or partner.

**Guardian**

A person appointed to safeguard, protect and manage the interests of a person under the age of 18 or a person who is not able to look after their own affairs.

**Guilty**

A plea entered by the defendant that he or she has committed the offence. The court may also find the defendant guilty after hearing the evidence in the case.

## **Hate crime**

Any criminal offence that is motivated by hostility or prejudice based on the victim's (actual or perceived) disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or transgender identity.

## **Hung jury**

A jury is a group of 12 people who have been selected for the trial of a criminal case, to try the defendant(s) and reach a verdict on matters of fact according to the evidence presented in court. A hung jury is where the jury is unable to reach a unanimous or majority verdict.

## **Information/Inform/Informing a victim**

The posting of a letter, the making of a telephone call, a face-to-face meeting or the sending of an e-mail, fax, text message or any other communication method that the service provider considers is most appropriate.

## **Judge**

A legally qualified person who administers the law and who has the authority to hear and try cases in a Court of Law. In this Charter a reference to a judge includes a reference to a District Judge (Magistrates' Court).

## **Jury**

A group of 12 people who have been selected for the trial of a criminal case, to try the defendant(s) and reach a verdict on matters of fact according to the evidence presented in court.

## **Licence**

This refers to when an offender is released from prison, is supervised by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland and will have to comply with certain conditions designed to protect the public, prevent reoffending and reintegrate the offender into the community.

## **Murder**

Unlawfully killing another person with intent to kill or cause grievous bodily harm.

## **Manslaughter**

There are two types of manslaughter. Voluntary manslaughter is when all the elements of murder are present but the crime is reduced by reason of impaired mental responsibility (known as 'diminished responsibility') or the existence of a suicide pact or the defendant's loss of control. Involuntary manslaughter is when the defendant did not intend to cause death or serious injury but caused the death of another through an unlawful act or gross negligence involving breach of duty.

## **National Crime Recording Standard**

The National Crime Recording Standard, along with the Home Office Counting Rules, provides a standard that governs police recorded crime. While the Police Service of Northern Ireland does not fall under the jurisdiction of the Home Office, the same recording practices are followed and applied within Northern Ireland. The rules provide a national standard for the recording and classifying of notifiable offences. Notifiable offences include all offences that could possibly be tried by a jury (these include

some less serious offences, such as minor theft that would not usually be dealt with in this way) plus a few additional closely-related offences, such as assault without injury. The National Crime Recording Standard is designed to take a more victim-oriented approach to crime recording, with the police being required to record any allegation of crime unless there is credible evidence to the contrary.

### **Needs assessment/Assessment of needs**

An evaluation carried out by service providers to determine the kind of support that a victim may need following a crime. This process is used to identify any additional support, special measures or protection that a victim might need if they are going to be giving evidence to the police or in court and to help them do so.

### **Not guilty**

The plea the defendant enters when they do not accept that they committed the offence. The court may also find the defendant not guilty after hearing the evidence in the case.

### **Offence**

Any act contrary to criminal law or statute.

### **Offender**

A person who committed a crime.

### **Ombudsman**

An independent person who investigates complaints that individuals have been treated unfairly or have received poor service from certain service providers.

### **Out of court disposal**

Alternatives to prosecution, such as cautions, informed warnings and penalty notices for disorder.

### **Plea**

The defendant's formal response to the charge that they have committed an offence.

### **Plead**

Where the defendant makes a formal response to the charge that they have committed an offence.

### **Police bail**

When the police release a suspect from custody with or without being charged, but require them to return to the police station or to the court on another day. Also see 'bail'.

### **Pre-trial hearings**

The part of the court process where people discuss elements of the case before the trial.

### **Prisoner**

A person convicted of crime(s) and given a sentence of imprisonment.

## **Probation**

A court order that may be imposed by the court instead of sending someone to prison, or as well as sending the person to prison. This involves the offender being supervised by a probation officer in the community.

## **Prosecution**

The term used when criminal legal proceedings are taken against someone. In Northern Ireland that role is performed by the Public Prosecution Service, who are sometimes referred to as 'the Prosecution'.

## **Prosecutor**

A lawyer employed by the Public Prosecution Service who conducts criminal prosecutions on behalf of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

## **Remand**

Where an accused person is kept in custody or placed on bail pending a further court appearance.

## **Reparation Order**

An order of the court which requires a young person who committed an offence to carry out an agreed activity to benefit the victim or wider community, for up to 24 hours.

## **Restorative justice**

A process where those harmed by crime, and those responsible for the harm, are enabled to collectively resolve how to find a positive way forward. This is usually with the help of an impartial third party and is voluntary. Where the victim takes part they would freely consent to this.

## **Sentence**

A punishment or penalty given to a person found guilty by a court of an offence.

## **Sentencing**

The process of passing the sentence on a guilty person. In all court cases only the judge can decide on the sentence given to an offender.

## **Service provider**

A body required to provide services under the Charter, as set out in the Introduction to the Charter. These can also be referred to as competent authorities.

## **Sexual offences prevention order**

An order to protect the public from sexual harm from a defendant.

## **Solicitor**

Member of the legal profession who advises clients and prepares their cases, representing them in some courts.

## Special measures

The various measures that a court can order to assist vulnerable or intimidated witnesses to give their best evidence in court, as set out under the Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1999. These measures include live video links, video recorded evidence, screens around the witness box and assistance with communication, including the use of an intermediary. The full list of special measures, with an explanation, is included in **Section 4** and at [www.psni.police.uk/special\\_measures\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.psni.police.uk/special_measures_leaflet.pdf).

## Statement

A written or video account about the facts and details of a crime or an incident.

## Summons

Order to appear before, or to produce evidence to, a court.

## Suspect

Someone who the police believe may have committed the crime.

## Temporary release

A period of release from prison to which prisoners may be entitled, usually of short duration and as they near the end of their time in custody. This may be to help them prepare for their return to the community. Prisoners are subject to an assessment of their risk to the public and their likelihood of re-offending and must agree to comply with specified conditions. In certain circumstances prisoners can be released briefly on compassionate grounds (for example due to serious illness or the death of a family member).

## Trial

The process in which the evidence of a case is presented in court so that a judge or jury can decide whether or not someone who is accused of a crime is guilty.

## Verdict

Where a decision is reached that a person is guilty or not guilty.

## Victim and Witness Care Unit

A Unit set up to provide information and support to victims and witnesses in cases progressing through the criminal justice system.

## Victim information scheme

A statutory scheme allowing eligible victims to be given information on the offender's sentence or their release. It also allows them to make representations on conditions to which the offender may be subject on release.

## Victim liaison officer

Probation staff who work with victims in the Victim Information Unit. They keep victims informed about key stages or events in the offenders' sentence and ensure that victims' views and concerns are considered.

## **Victim support services**

Organisations providing emotional and practical support services to victims of crime.

## **Without unnecessary delay**

Within this Charter this means within five working days. This includes within five working days of a service provider being informed or notified of a decision, making a decision, or being informed of the outcome of a case, as appropriate.

## **Witness**

A person who is called to give evidence in court because they saw or heard something relevant to the case.

## **Young person**

A person below 18 years of age.

## **Youth conference**

This aims to balance the needs of the victim and the young offender by agreeing plans of action which satisfy the victim and create opportunities for the young person to make amends and stop committing crime.

## Annex B: Further information on service providers

Below are details of the service providers covered by the Charter. Details of support organisations and other relevant information can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations) and [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimcontacts](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimcontacts) as well as in the **Northern Ireland Guide to the Criminal Justice System for victims and witnesses of crime**<sup>47</sup> and the **Northern Ireland Guide to the Criminal Justice System for bereaved family members following murder and manslaughter**.<sup>48</sup>

If you have any difficulties getting in touch with the organisations you may wish to refer to their website, in case their contact details have changed.

### Belfast Harbour Police

Belfast Port Security Authority Limited,  
Milewater Basin,  
Dufferin Road,  
Belfast, BT3 9AF  
**Phone:** 028 9055 3000

### Compensation Services

6th Floor,  
Millenium House,  
25 Great Victoria Street,  
Belfast, BT2 7AQ  
**Phone:** 0300 200 7887  
**E-mail:** [compensationservices@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:compensationservices@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk)  
**Website:** [www.dojni.gov.uk/compensation-services](http://www.dojni.gov.uk/compensation-services)

### Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service

Laganside House,  
23-27 Oxford Street,  
Belfast, BT1 3LA  
**Phone:** 028 9032 8594  
**Website:** [www.courtsni.gov.uk](http://www.courtsni.gov.uk)

### Northern Ireland Prison Service

Prisoner Release Victim Information Scheme,  
Victim Information Unit,  
Unit 4, Wallace Studios,  
Wallace Avenue,  
Lisburn, BT27 4AE  
**Phone:** 0300 1233 269  
**E-mail:** [niprvis@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:niprvis@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk)  
**Website:** [www.nidirect.gov.uk/prisoner-release-victim-information-scheme](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/prisoner-release-victim-information-scheme)

### Belfast International Airport Constabulary

Belfast International Airport,  
Belfast, BT29 4AB  
**Phone:** 028 9448 4400 (extension 4412)  
**Mobile:** 077 1081 9183  
**E-mail:** [duty.sergeant@bfs.aero](mailto:duty.sergeant@bfs.aero)

### Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals Panel for Northern Ireland

The Tribunals Hearing Centre,  
3rd Floor, Bedford House,  
16-22 Bedford Street,  
Belfast, BT1 2LG  
**Phone:** 028 9072 4823 or 028 9072 4824  
**Email:** [CICAPNICustomer@courtsni.gov.uk](mailto:CICAPNICustomer@courtsni.gov.uk)  
**Website:** [www.cicapni.org.uk](http://www.cicapni.org.uk)

### NSPCC Young Witness Service\*

Antrim Courthouse,  
30 Castle Way,  
Antrim, BT41 4AQ  
**Phone:** 028 9448 7533  
**Email:** [kagnew@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:kagnew@nspcc.org.uk)

### Police Service of Northern Ireland

65 Knock Road,  
Belfast, BT5 6LE  
**Phone:** Non-emergency calls and general enquiries dial 101 (if you are a Tesco mobile or giffgaff user call 028 9065 0222) In an emergency dial 999  
**E-mail:** [info@psni.pnn.police.uk](mailto:info@psni.pnn.police.uk)  
**Website:** [www.psni.police.uk](http://www.psni.police.uk)  
**Crimestoppers:** 0800 555 111

47 [www.dojni.gov.uk/index/a\\_guide\\_to\\_the\\_northern\\_ireland\\_criminal\\_justice\\_system\\_for\\_victims\\_and\\_witnesses\\_of\\_crime.pdf](http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/a_guide_to_the_northern_ireland_criminal_justice_system_for_victims_and_witnesses_of_crime.pdf). This guide is due to be updated in 2016.

48 [www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications/publication-categories/pubs-criminal-justice/a\\_guide\\_to\\_the\\_northern\\_ireland\\_criminal\\_justice\\_system\\_for\\_bereaved\\_families\\_and\\_friends.pdf](http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications/publication-categories/pubs-criminal-justice/a_guide_to_the_northern_ireland_criminal_justice_system_for_bereaved_families_and_friends.pdf). This guide is due to be updated in 2016.

## **Probation Board for Northern Ireland Victim Information Unit**

Unit 4, Wallace Studios,  
27 Wallace Avenue,  
Lisburn, BT27 4AE

**Phone:** 0300 1233 269

**E-mail:** [victiminfo@pbni.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:victiminfo@pbni.gsi.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.pbni.org.uk/site/Content.aspx?x=U/6/W3TJDxk=&y=o/e2w3LLg4c=#sthash.T2LkzkL7.dpbs](http://www.pbni.org.uk/site/Content.aspx?x=U/6/W3TJDxk=&y=o/e2w3LLg4c=#sthash.T2LkzkL7.dpbs)

## **Public Prosecution Service**

Newry Chambers,  
1 Downshire Close,  
Newry, BT34 1FD

**Phone:** 028 3083 2500

## **Public Prosecution Service**

Eastern Region,  
Lisburn Chambers,  
Linen Hill House,  
23 Linenhall Street,  
Lisburn, BT23 1FJ

**Phone:** 028 9262 5555

## **Public Prosecution Service**

Foyle Chambers,  
35 Limavady Road,  
Londonderry, BT47 6LP

**Phone:** 028 7134 0648

## **Victim and Witness Care Unit Foyle Office**

Foyle Chambers,  
35 Limavady Road,  
Londonderry, BT47 6LP

**Phone:** 028 7134 0632

**Email:** [vwcufoyle@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:vwcufoyle@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Youth Justice Agency (Youth Conference Service)**

41-43 Waring Street,  
Belfast, BT1 2DY

**Phone:** 028 9031 6400

**E-mail:** [info@yjani.gov.uk](mailto:info@yjani.gov.uk) or [info@yicsni.gov.uk](mailto:info@yicsni.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk](http://www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk) and [www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk/youth\\_conference\\_service/](http://www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk/youth_conference_service/)

## **Public Prosecution Service**

Belfast Region, Belfast Chambers,  
93 Chichester Street,  
Belfast, BT1 3JR

**Phone:** 028 9054 2444

**E-mail:** [info@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.ppsni.gov.uk](http://www.ppsni.gov.uk)

## **Public Prosecution Service**

Northern Region,  
Ballymena Chambers,  
4 Parkway,  
Ballymena, BT43 5ET

**Phone:** 028 2566 6500

## **Public Prosecution Service**

Western and Southern Region,  
Omagh Chambers,  
2 Townhall Square,  
High Street,  
Omagh, BT78 1BL

**Phone:** 028 8224 8733

## **Victim and Witness Care Unit Belfast Office**

Linum Chambers,  
2 Bedford Square,  
Belfast, BT2 7ES

**Phone:** 028 9054 4797

**Email:** [vwcubelfast@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:vwcubelfast@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Victim Support NI\***

Annsgate House,  
70-74 Ann Street,  
Belfast, BT1 4EH

**Phone:** 028 9024 3133

**Supportline:** 0845 3030 900

**E-mail:** [info@victimsupportni.org.uk](mailto:info@victimsupportni.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.victimsupportni.co.uk](http://www.victimsupportni.co.uk)

\* Details of regional offices can be found in **Annex C**.

## Who to contact if you are not satisfied with service provision

### Internal investigation

#### Compensation Services

The Complaints Officer,  
Compensation Services,  
6th Floor Millenium House,  
25 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AQ  
**Phone:** 0300 200 7887

#### Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service

Write to the relevant court in the first instance.  
If you are still not happy, you can contact:

Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service  
Complaints Co-ordinator,  
Communications Group,  
Laganside House, 23-27  
Oxford Street,  
Belfast, BT1 3LA  
**Phone:** 028 9041 2386  
**Email:** [communicationsgroup@courtsni.gov.uk](mailto:communicationsgroup@courtsni.gov.uk)

#### NSPCC Young Witness Service\*

Antrim Courthouse,  
30 Castle Way,  
Antrim, BT41 4AQ.  
**Phone:** 028 9448 7533  
**Email:** [kagnew@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:kagnew@nspcc.org.uk)

#### Police Service of Northern Ireland/Belfast Harbour Police/Belfast International Airport Constabulary

The Independent Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland is responsible for recording and dealing with complaints made against the police.

The Police Ombudsman,  
New Cathedral Buildings,  
Writer's Square,  
11 Church Street,  
Belfast, BT1 1PG  
**Phone:** 028 9082 8600 or 0845 601 2931  
**Fax:** 028 9082 8659  
**Email:** [complaints@policeombudsman.org](mailto:complaints@policeombudsman.org)

## Probation Board for Northern Ireland Victim Information Schemes

Contact the manager of the person you are dealing with in the first instance or write to:

Complaints Officer,  
Probation Board for Northern Ireland,  
Unit 4,  
Wallace Studios,  
27 Wallace Avenue,  
Lisburn, BT27 4AE

**Phone:** 0300 1233 269

**E-mail:** [victiminfo@pbni.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:victiminfo@pbni.gsi.gov.uk)

## Victim Support NI\*

You can:

- write to Victim Support NI (see above);
- tell someone at your nearest Victim Support NI or Witness Service office. They will record your complaint; or
- contact the Complaints Officer on 028 9024 3133 In order to ensure a timely investigation you should raise any issues as soon as possible. If you aren't happy with the decision you can appeal by writing to the Victim Support NI Chief Executive. An investigation will be carried out and a final response will be issued within one month.

## The Public Prosecution Service

You can contact the service by:

- Writing to Central Co-ordination Branch, Public Prosecution Service, Room 10.08, Linum Chambers, Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7ES;
- Phone 028 9054 4797 for complaints concerning Belfast Region, Eastern Region or any of the PPS Headquarters functions. Phone 028 7134 0632 for complaints concerning Northern Region (Ballymena & Foyle offices) or Western and Southern Region (Omagh & Newry offices);
- An SMS text service is available for those who are deaf or hard of hearing on 07795 675 528;
- **Email:** [complaints@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk);
- **Online:** [www.ppsni.gov.uk](http://www.ppsni.gov.uk)
- **Fax:** 028 9089 7069;
- speaking to any Public Prosecution Service staff at court; or
- contacting the Public Prosecution Service to make an appointment to visit one of their regional offices.

## Youth Justice Agency

Corporate Headquarters,  
Youth Justice Agency,  
41-43 Waring Street,  
Belfast, BT1 2DY

**Phone:** 028 9031 6400

**Fax:** 028 9031 6402

**Email:** [info@yjani.gov.uk](mailto:info@yjani.gov.uk)

**Website:**

[www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk/about\\_us/complaints](http://www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk/about_us/complaints)

\* Details of regional offices can be found in **Annex C**.

## Independent investigation

### Compensation Services/Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service/Northern Ireland Prison Service/Probation Board for Northern Ireland

Write to:

The Northern Ireland Ombudsman, Freepost BEL 1478, Belfast, BT1 6BR

Visit:

The Ombudsman's Office, Progressive House, 33 Wellington Place, Belfast, BT1 6HN

**Freephone:** 0800 343 424

**Fax:** 028 9023 4912

**Email:** [ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk)

### Police Service of Northern Ireland/Belfast Harbour Police/Belfast International Airport Constabulary

The Police Ombudsman, New Cathedral Buildings, Writer's Square, 11 Church Street, Belfast, BT1 1PG

**Phone:** 028 9082 8600 or 0845 601 2931

**Fax:** 028 9082 8659

**Email:** [complaints@policeombudsman.org](mailto:complaints@policeombudsman.org)

The Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (PONI) is responsible for recording and dealing with complaints made against the police. If you have a complaint about the conduct of a police officer, contact the Police Ombudsman directly. You can:

- call into the Police Ombudsman's Office between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Please call 0845 601 2931 to make an appointment;
- write to the Police Ombudsman at the above address;
- phone the Police Ombudsman on 0845 601 2931 or 028 9082 8600;
- Email [complaints@policeombudsman.org](mailto:complaints@policeombudsman.org); or
- Complete the [PONI online complaints form \(www.policeombudsman.org/Complaints/English/Complaint\)](http://www.policeombudsman.org/Complaints/English/Complaint)

Alternatively, you can call into your local police station. They will not deal with your complaint, but will refer it to PONI as soon as possible.

### NSPCC Young Witness Service/Victim Support NI

Contact:

Victims and Witnesses Branch,  
Department of Justice, Castle Buildings, Stormont Estate, Belfast, BT4 3SG

**Phone:** 028 9052 0550

**Text phone:** 028 9052 7668

**Email:** [DOJVictW@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:DOJVictW@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk)

### Public Prosecution Service

The Independent Assessor of Complaints for the Public Prosecution Service,  
PO Box 928,  
Belfast, BT1 9AN

**Email:** [independent.assessor@gmail.com](mailto:independent.assessor@gmail.com)

## Annex C: Contact details for support organisations

Below is a list of organisations that may be able to provide help. This information is also available at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations).

For service providers covered by the Charter – including criminal justice organisations and victim support service providers (currently Victim Support NI and NSPCC Young Witness Service) – see **Annex B** or [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimcontacts](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimcontacts).

If you have any difficulties getting in touch with the organisations you may wish to check their website in case their contact details have changed.

### NSPCC

#### ChildLine

Free and confidential 24-hour helpline for children in danger or distress.

**Phone:** 0800 1111

**Email:** [www.childline.org.uk/Talk/Pages/Email.aspx](http://www.childline.org.uk/Talk/Pages/Email.aspx)

**Website:** [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

#### NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

If you are worried about a child and need advice.

**Phone:** 0808 800 5000

**E-mail:** [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

**Text phone:** 0800 056 0566 or 0800 1111

#### NSPCC Young Witness Service

Newry Courthouse, 23 New Street,  
Newry, BT35 6AD

**Phone:** 028 3083 4849

#### NSPCC Young Witness Service

Omagh Courthouse, High Street,  
Omagh, BT78 1DU

**Phone:** 028 8224 7856

#### NSPCC Young Witness Service

17-21 Bishop Street,  
Londonderry, BT48 6PR

**Phone:** 028 7127 9555

#### NSPCC Northern Ireland

Lanyon Building, Block 1, Unit 7,  
Jennymount Business Park, North Derby Street,  
York Road, Belfast, BT15 3HN

**Phone:** 028 9035 1135

**Email:** [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

#### NSPCC Young Witness Service

Craigavon Courthouse, Central Way,  
Portadown, BT64 1AP

**Phone:** 028 3834 9381

#### NSPCC Young Witness Service

Antrim Courthouse, 30 Castle Way,  
Antrim, BT41 4AQ.

**Phone:** 028 9448 7533

#### NSPCC Young Witness Service

1st Floor, Laganside House, Oxford Street,  
Belfast BT1 3LL

**Phone:** 028 9024 0847

## Victim Support NI

### Victim Support NI

Annsgate House, 70-74 Ann Street,  
Belfast, BT1 4EH

**Phone:** 028 9024 3133

**Supportline:** 0845 3030 900

**E-mail:** [info@victimsupportni.org.uk](mailto:info@victimsupportni.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.victimsupportni.co.uk](http://www.victimsupportni.co.uk)

### Regional offices

#### Victim Support NI Belfast office

70-74 Ann Street,  
Belfast, BT1 4EH

**Phone:** 028 9024 3133

**E-mail:** [belfast@victimsupportni.org.uk](mailto:belfast@victimsupportni.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.victimsupportni.co.uk](http://www.victimsupportni.co.uk)

#### Victim Support NI Omagh office

22 Campsie Rd,  
Omagh, BT79 0AG

**Phone:** 028 8224 0012

**E-mail:** [omagh@victimsupportni.org.uk](mailto:omagh@victimsupportni.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.victimsupportni.co.uk](http://www.victimsupportni.co.uk)

### Witness Service offices

#### Victim Support NI Witness Service

Antrim Court Office, 30 Castle Way,  
Antrim, BT41 4AQ

**Phone:** 028 9448 8631

#### Victim Support NI Witness Service

Craigavon Court Office, Central Way,  
Craigavon, BT64 1AP

**Phone:** 028 3834 3553

#### Victim Support NI Witness Service

Dungannon Court Office, 46 Killyman Road,  
Dungannon, BT71 6FG

**Phone:** 028 8775 1550

#### Victim Support NI Derry/Londonderry office

Embassy Building, 3 Strand Rd,  
Londonderry, BT48 7BH

**Phone:** 028 7137 0086

**E-mail:** [foyle@victimsupportni.org.uk](mailto:foyle@victimsupportni.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.victimsupportni.co.uk](http://www.victimsupportni.co.uk)

#### Victim Support NI Witness Service

Laganside Courts,  
45 Oxford Street,  
Belfast, BT1 3LL

**Phone:** 028 9023 2523

#### Victim Support NI Witness Service

Downpatrick Court Office, 21 English Street,  
Downpatrick, BT30 6AB

**Phone:** 028 4461 6233

#### Victim Support NI Witness Service

Foyle Courts, 17-21 Bishop Street,  
Londonderry, BT48 6PR

**Phone:** 028 7127 9440

## Citizens Advice

### Website:

[www.citizensadvice.co.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.co.uk)  
[www.citizensadvice.co.uk/pages/bureaux/](http://www.citizensadvice.co.uk/pages/bureaux/)

### Armagh

9 McCrums Court,  
Armagh, BT61 7RS  
**Phone:** 028 3752 4041

### Belfast

Merrion Business Centre,  
58 Howard Street,  
Belfast, BT61 6PJ  
**Phone:** 0300 1233 233  
**Email:** [amyinbelfast@citizensadvice.co.uk](mailto:amyinbelfast@citizensadvice.co.uk)

### Cookstown

The Enterprise Centre,  
Derryloran Industrial Estate,  
Sandholes,  
Cookstown, BT80 9LU  
**Phone:** 028 8676 6126

### Dungannon

5-6 Feeney's Lane,  
Dungannon, BT70 1TX  
**Phone:** 028 8772 5299

### L'Derry

Embassy Court,  
3 Strand Road,  
Derry, BT48 7BJ  
**Phone:** 028 7136 2444

### Newtownabbey

Dunanney Centre,  
Rathmullan Drive,  
Newtownabbey, BT37 9DQ  
**Phone:** 028 9085 2271

### Strabane

17 Dock Street,  
Strabane, BT82 8EE  
**Phone:** 028 7138 2665

### Antrim District

Farranshane House, Ballygore  
Road, Antrim, BT41 2RN  
**Phone:** 028 9442 8176  
**Email:**  
[antrimdistrictcab@citizensadvice.co.uk](mailto:antrimdistrictcab@citizensadvice.co.uk)

### Banbridge & District

77 Bridge Street,  
Banbridge, BT32 3JL  
**Phone:** 028 4062 2201

### Carrickfergus

65 North Street,  
Carrickfergus, BT32 7AE  
**Phone:** 028 9335 1808

### Craigavon District

The Town Hall, 6 Union Street,  
Craigavon, BT66 8DY  
**Phone:** 028 3835 3260

### Fermanagh

Fermanagh House, Broadmeadow  
Place, Fermanagh, BT74 7HR  
**Phone:** 028 6632 4334

### Lisburn

Bridge Community Centre,  
50 Railway Street,  
Lisburn, BT28 1XP  
**Phone:** 028 9266 2251

### North Down Bangor

1A Springfield Avenue,  
Bangor, BT20 5BY  
**Phone:** 0300 1233 233

### Ards

75 West Street,  
Newtownards, BT23 46N  
**Phone:** 028 9181 9257

### Ballymena

4 Wellington Court,  
Ballymena, BT43 6EQ  
**Phone:** 028 2564 4398

### Causeway

24 Lodge Road,  
Coleraine, BT52 1NB  
**Phone:** 028 7034 4817

### Down District

Magh-Inis House,  
8-10 Irish Street,  
Downpatrick, BT30 6BP  
**Phone:** 028 4461 4110

### Larne

Park Lodge,  
Victoria Road,  
Larne, BT40 1RT  
**Phone:** 028 2826 0379

### Newry and Mourne

Ballybot House,  
28 Cornmarket,  
Newry, BT35 8BG  
**Phone:** 028 3026 2934

### North Down Holywood

Queens Hall,  
Sullivan Place,  
Holywood, BT18 9JF  
**Phone:** 0300 1233 233

## Domestic abuse and violence

### 24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Violence

**Helpline Phone:** 0808 802 1414 (Freephone)

**Email:** [24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org](mailto:24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org)

**Website:** [www.womensaidni.org](http://www.womensaidni.org)

**Text:** Text support to 07797 805 839.

Confidential, caring service 24/7, 365 days a year.  
Open to all women and men affected by domestic and sexual violence

### Domestic Violence Officers (PSNI)

**Phone:** 101 and ask to speak to a local domestic violence officer.

### Relate

3rd and 4th floors, 3 Glengall Street,  
Belfast, BT12 5AB

**Phone:** 028 9032 3454

**Email:** [office@relateni.org](mailto:office@relateni.org)

**Website:** [www.relateni.org](http://www.relateni.org)

### Women's Aid in Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Larne and Newtownabbey

2 Cullybackey Road,  
Ballymena, BT43 5DF

**Phone:** 028 2563 2136

**Email:** [womensaidareaoffice@btconnect.com](mailto:womensaidareaoffice@btconnect.com)

**Website:** [www.womens-aid.org.uk](http://www.womens-aid.org.uk)

### Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid

30 Adelaide Park, Belfast, BT9 6FY

**Phone:** 028 9066 6049

**Email:** [admin@belfastwomensaid.org.uk](mailto:admin@belfastwomensaid.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.belfastwomensaid.org.uk](http://www.belfastwomensaid.org.uk)

### Fermanagh Women's Aid

19 Darling Street, Enniskillen, BT74 7DP

**Phone:** 028 6632 8898

**Email:** [womensaidfermanagh@btopenworld.com](mailto:womensaidfermanagh@btopenworld.com)

**Website:** [www.fermanaghwomensaid.com](http://www.fermanaghwomensaid.com)

### Domestic Violence Unit

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

**Phone:** 028 9052 0597

### Men's Advisory Project (MAP)

5th Floor, Glendinning House, 6 Murray Street,  
Belfast, BT1 6DN

**Phone:** 028 9024 1929

**Email:** [info@mapni.co.uk](mailto:info@mapni.co.uk)

**Website:** [www.mapni.co.uk](http://www.mapni.co.uk)

### Women's Aid Federation NI

129 University Street,  
Belfast, BT7 1HP

**Phone:** 028 9024 9041

**Email:** [info@womensaidni.org](mailto:info@womensaidni.org)

**Website:** [www.womensaidni.org](http://www.womensaidni.org)

### Women's Aid Armagh-Down

7 Downshire Place, Belfast Road,  
Newry, BT34 1DZ

**Phone:** 028 3025 0765

**Email:** [newrywomensaid@btconnect.com](mailto:newrywomensaid@btconnect.com)

**Website:** [www.womensaidnewry.co.uk](http://www.womensaidnewry.co.uk)

### Causeway Women's Aid

23 Abbey Street, Coleraine, BT52 1DU

**Phone:** 028 7035 6573

**Email:** [womensaidcoleraine@btinternet.com](mailto:womensaidcoleraine@btinternet.com)

### Foyle Women's Aid

Pathways, 24 Pump Street, Derry, BT48 6JG

**Phone:** 028 7141 6800

**Email:** [admin@foylewomensaid.org](mailto:admin@foylewomensaid.org)

**Website:** [www.foylewomensaid.org](http://www.foylewomensaid.org)

## Mid-Ulster Women's Aid

27 Old Coagh Road, Cookstown, BT80 8QG

**Phone:** 028 8676 9300

**Email:** [admin@midulsterwomensaid.org.uk](mailto:admin@midulsterwomensaid.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.midulsterwomensaid.org.uk](http://www.midulsterwomensaid.org.uk)

## Omagh Women's Aid

27 Market Street, Omagh, BT78 1EL

**Phone:** 028 8224 1414

**Email:** [info@omaghwomensaid.org](mailto:info@omaghwomensaid.org)

**Website:** [www.omaghwomensaid.org](http://www.omaghwomensaid.org)

## North Down and Ards Women's Aid

Bangor Resource Centre, 18 Bingham Street,  
Bangor, BT20 5DW

**Phone:** 028 9127 3196

**Email:** [info@ndawomensaid.org](mailto:info@ndawomensaid.org)

**Website:** [www.ndawomensaid.org](http://www.ndawomensaid.org)

## Hate Crime Advocates

### Bi-lingual advocate – Belfast and Mid Ulster

c/o NICEM, 1st Floor, Ascot House,  
24-31 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast, BT2 7DB

**Phone:** 028 9043 8962

**Mobile:** 07827 299 347

**Email:** [Bilingualsupportworker@nicem.org.uk](mailto:Bilingualsupportworker@nicem.org.uk)

### Bi-lingual advocate – County Antrim

Ballymena Inter-Ethnic Forum, 20 William Street,  
Ballymena, BT43 6AW

**Phone:** 028 2564 3605

**Mobile:** 07525 142 205

**Email:** [ivy.ridge@bief.org.uk](mailto:ivy.ridge@bief.org.uk) or [admin@bief.org.uk](mailto:admin@bief.org.uk)

### Bi-lingual advocate – Northwest

c/o NICEM The Old Church, Clarendon West,  
Londonderry, BT48 7ES

**Phone:** 028 7137 2235

**Mobile:** 07827 297 119

**Email:** [bilingualsupportworker@nicem.org.uk](mailto:bilingualsupportworker@nicem.org.uk)

### Disability Advocate

'Be Safe, Stay Safe', Leonard Cheshire Disability,  
2 Derryvolgie Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6FL

**Phone:** 028 9066 1291

**Mobile:** 07827 318 631

**Email:** [Advocacy@lcdisability.org](mailto:Advocacy@lcdisability.org)

### LGB&T (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender)

Advocate The Rainbow Project, 1st Floor,  
9-13 Waring Street, Belfast, BT1 2DX

**Phone:** 028 9031 9030

**Email:** [advocacy@rainbow-project.org](mailto:advocacy@rainbow-project.org)

### Hate Crime Advocacy Co-ordinator

Victim Support NI, Annsgate House,  
70-74 Ann Street, Belfast, BT1 4EH

**Phone:** 028 9027 7767

**Email:** [hatecrime@victimsupportni.org.uk](mailto:hatecrime@victimsupportni.org.uk)

## Sexual abuse and violence

### Nexus NI Belfast Office

119 University Street, Belfast  
**Phone:** 028 9032 6803  
**Email:** [info@nexusni.org](mailto:info@nexusni.org)  
**Website:** [www.nexusni.org](http://www.nexusni.org)

### Nexus NI Londonderry Office

38 Clarendon St, Londonderry, BT48 7ET  
**Phone:** 028 7126 0566  
**Email:** [info@nexusni.org](mailto:info@nexusni.org)  
**Website:** [www.nexusni.org](http://www.nexusni.org)

### The Rowan – Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

Antrim Area Hospital, 45 Bush Road, Antrim, BT41 2RL  
**Phone:** 0800 389 4424 (Freephone)  
**Email:** [therowan@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:therowan@northerntrust.hscni.net)  
**Website:** [www.therowan.net](http://www.therowan.net)

## Support following bereavement

### Brake (Road Safety Charity)

**Phone:** 0845 603 8570  
**Email:** [helpline@brake.org.uk](mailto:helpline@brake.org.uk)  
**Website:** [www.brake.org.uk](http://www.brake.org.uk)

### Support after Murder and Manslaughter (SAMM NI)

**Phone:** 028 9442 9009  
**Email:** [pam.surphlis\\_samm.ni@live.co.uk](mailto:pam.surphlis_samm.ni@live.co.uk)  
**Website:** [www.samm.org.uk](http://www.samm.org.uk)

### Nexus NI Enniskillen Office

104 Irvinestown Rd, Enniskillen, Fermanagh, BT74 6DN  
**Phone:** 028 6632 0046  
**Email:** [info@nexusni.org](mailto:info@nexusni.org)  
**Website:** [www.nexusni.org](http://www.nexusni.org)

### Nexus NI Portadown Office

6 Portmore Street, Portadown, Craigavon, County Armagh, BT62 3NG  
**Phone:** 028 3835 0588  
**Email:** [info@nexusni.org](mailto:info@nexusni.org)  
**Website:** [www.nexusni.org](http://www.nexusni.org)

### 24 Hour Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Helpline

**Phone:** 0808 802 1414 (Freephone)  
**Email:** [24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org](mailto:24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org)  
**Website:** [www.womensaidni.org](http://www.womensaidni.org)  
**Text:** Text support to 07797 805 839

### Cruse Bereavement Care

Prince Regent Commercial Centre, 8 Prince Regent Road, Belfast, BT5 6QR  
**Phone:** 028 9079 2419 or 0844 4779 400  
**Email:** [northern.ireland@cruse.org.uk](mailto:northern.ireland@cruse.org.uk)  
**Website:** [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

### Care for the Family

Ravenhill House, 103-113 Ravenhill Road, Belfast, BT6 8DR  
**Phone:** 028 9262 8050

## Trafficking

### 24 Hour Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Helpline

**Phone:** 0808 802 1414 (Freephone)

**Email:** [24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org](mailto:24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org)

**Website:** [www.womensaidni.org](http://www.womensaidni.org)

**Text:** Text support to 07797 805 839

### Modern Slavery Helpline

**Phone:** 0800 0121 700

**Website:** [www.modernslavery.co.uk](http://www.modernslavery.co.uk)

### Salvation Army

**Phone:** 0300 303 8151 (confidential referral hotline)

**Email:** [info@salvationarmy.org.uk](mailto:info@salvationarmy.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.salvationarmy.org.uk/uki/trafficking](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/uki/trafficking)  
[www.nidirect.gov.uk/human-trafficking](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/human-trafficking)

### Migrant Help

Charlton House, Dour Street, Dover,  
Kent, CT16 1AT

**Phone:** 01304 203 977 or 077 6666 8781 (24  
hour helpline)

**Email:** [mhl@migranthehelpline.org](mailto:mhl@migranthehelpline.org)

**Website:** [www.migranthehelpuk.org](http://www.migranthehelpuk.org)

### NSPCC Child Trafficking Advice Centre (for professionals)

**Phone:** 0808 800 5000

**Email:** [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.nspcc.org.uk/ctac](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/ctac)

## Other Support Organisations

### Age Sector Platform

Merrion Business Centre, 58 Howard Street,  
Belfast, BT1 6PJ

**Phone:** 028 9031 2089

**Email:** [info@agesectorplatform.org](mailto:info@agesectorplatform.org)

**Website:** [www.agesectorplatform.org](http://www.agesectorplatform.org)

### Alternatives (a restorative justice organisation)

Northern Ireland Alternatives, 64 Woodvale Road,  
Belfast, BT13 3BT

**Phone:** 028 9031 1420

**Email:** [tom@alternativesrj.co.uk](mailto:tom@alternativesrj.co.uk)

### Barnardo's Safe Choices

230b Belmont Road, Belfast, BT42 2AW

**Phone:** 028 9065 8511

**Email:** [Jacqui.montgomery@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:Jacqui.montgomery@barnardos.org.uk)

### Age NI

3 Lower Crescent, Belfast, BT7 1NR

**Phone:** 0808 808 7575

**Email:** [info@ageni.org](mailto:info@ageni.org)

**Website:** [www.ageni.org](http://www.ageni.org)

### Alzheimer's Society

Unit 4, Balmoral Business Park,  
Boucher Crescent, Belfast, BT12 6HU

**Phone:** 028 9066 4100

**Email:** [nir@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:nir@alzheimers.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)

### Belfast Migrant Centre

1st Floor, Ascot House, 24-31 Shaftesbury Square,  
Belfast, BT2 7DB

**Phone:** 028 9043 8962

**Email:** [info@belfastmigrantcentre.org](mailto:info@belfastmigrantcentre.org)

**Website:** [www.belfastmigrantcentre.org](http://www.belfastmigrantcentre.org)

### Disability Action

Portside Business Park, 189 Airport Road West,  
Belfast, BT3 9ED

**Phone:** 028 9029 7880

**Email:** [hq@disabilityaction.org](mailto:hq@disabilityaction.org)

**Website:** [www.disabilityaction.org](http://www.disabilityaction.org)

### Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities

1st Floor, Ascot House,  
24-31 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast, BT2 7DB

**Phone:** 028 9023 8645

**Email:** [info@nicem.org.uk](mailto:info@nicem.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.nicem.org.uk](http://www.nicem.org.uk)

### Rainbow Project Belfast Office

1st Floor, 9-13 Waring Street,  
Belfast, BT1 2DX

**Phone:** 028 9031 9030

**Email:** [info@rainbow-project.org](mailto:info@rainbow-project.org)

**Website:** [www.rainbow-project.org](http://www.rainbow-project.org)

**Sure Start Service** (outreach, family support and childcare service that some victims with young children are directed to)

**Website:** [www.nidirect.gov.uk/sure-start-services](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/sure-start-services)

### The Samaritans

Chris, PO Box 9090, Stirling, FK8 2SA

**Phone:** 028 9066 4422

**Email:** [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

**Website:** [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

### Migrant Help

Charlton House, Dour Street, Dover,  
Kent, CT16 1AT

**Phone:** 01304 203 977 or 077 6666 8781 (24 hour helpline)

**Email:** [mhl@migranthepline.org](mailto:mhl@migranthepline.org)

**Website:** [www.migranthepline.org](http://www.migranthepline.org)

### Queer Space

1st Floor, Old War Memorial Building,  
9-13 Waring Street, Belfast, BT1 2DX

**Phone:** 028 9066 4111

**Email:** [info@queerspace.org.uk](mailto:info@queerspace.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.queerspace.org.uk](http://www.queerspace.org.uk)

### Rainbow Project Foyle Office

Orlan House, 20 Strand Road,  
Londonderry, BT48 7AB

**Phone:** 028 7128 3030

**Email:** [info@rainbow-project.org](mailto:info@rainbow-project.org)

**Website:** [www.rainbow-project.org](http://www.rainbow-project.org)

### The Law Society of Northern Ireland

96 Victoria Street, Belfast, BT1 3GN

**Phone:** 028 9023 1614

**Email:** [info@lawsoc-ni.org](mailto:info@lawsoc-ni.org)

**Website:** [www.lawsoc-ni.org](http://www.lawsoc-ni.org)

If you have been a victim of crime in the Republic of Ireland, you may want to get help from the following.

The Crime Victims Helpline

**Email:** [info@crimevictimshelpline.ie](mailto:info@crimevictimshelpline.ie)

**Website:** [www.crimevictimshelpline.ie](http://www.crimevictimshelpline.ie)

## Services for Victims and Survivors of the Conflict

The Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 defines a victim and survivor as someone who:

- is or has been physically or psychologically injured as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident;
- someone who provides a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for an individual mentioned above; or
- someone who has been bereaved as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident.

An individual may also be psychologically injured as a result of or in consequence of:

- witnessing a conflict-related incident or the consequences of such an incident; or
- providing medical or other emergency assistance to an individual in connection with a conflict-related incident.

If you meet one of the above definitions help may be available to assist you and to ensure that you have access to the best services and support available.

### Advice & information

The Commission for Victims and Survivors exists to promote an awareness of matters relating to the interests of victims and survivors. The Commission also provides advice and information on matters concerning victims and survivors. For further information visit [www.cvsni.org](http://www.cvsni.org) or telephone 028 9031 1000.

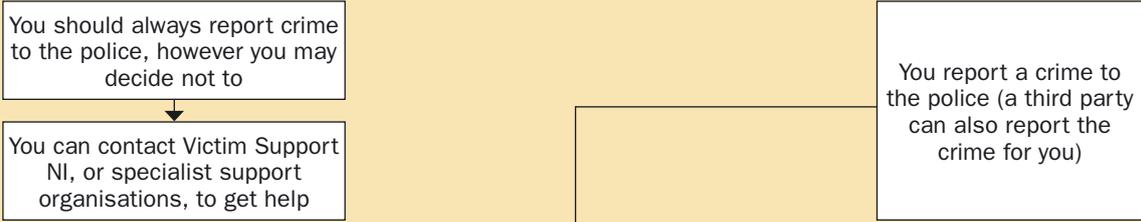
### Practical support

The Victims and Survivors Service is responsible for assessing the needs of individual victims and survivors, in order to provide tailored services and support. They also allocate resources to organisations that provide services and support to victims and survivors.

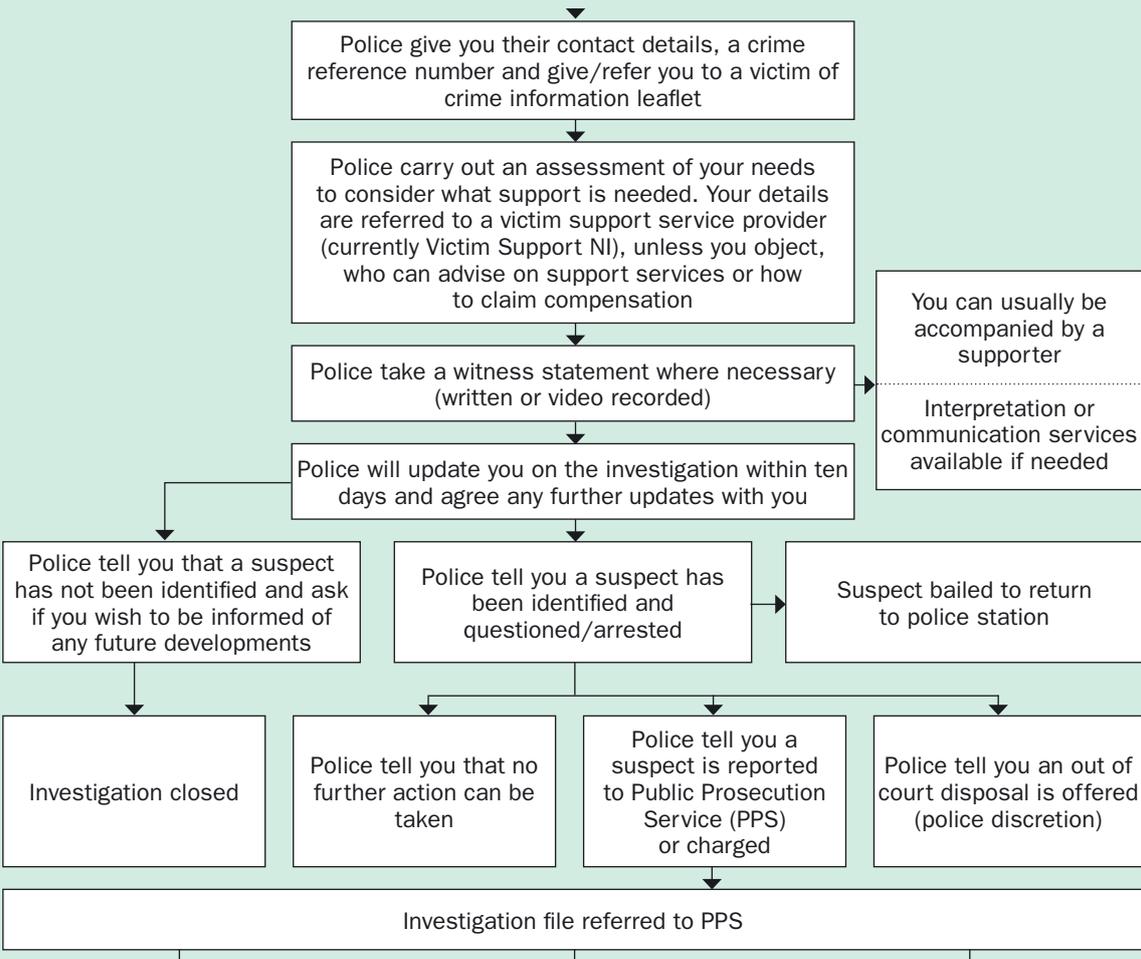
For further information visit [www.victimsservice.org](http://www.victimsservice.org) or telephone 028 9027 9100.

# Flowchart of the Criminal Justice Process

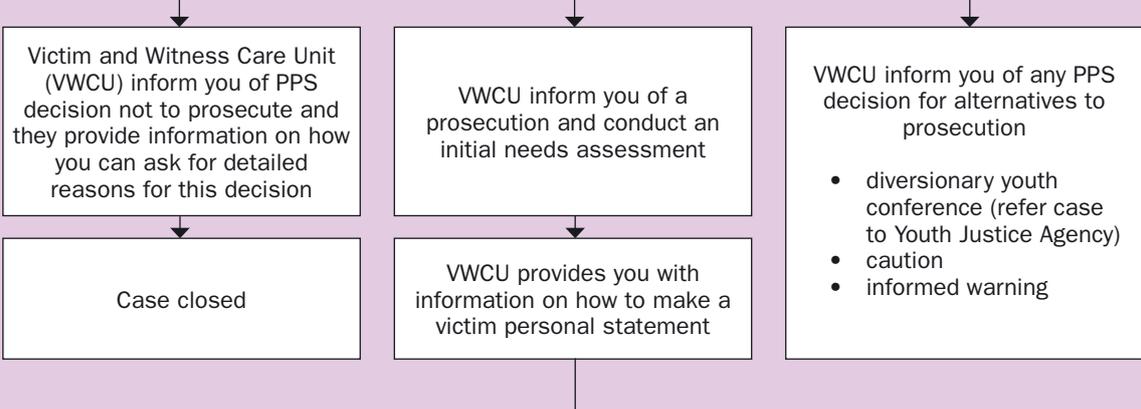
## Reporting a crime



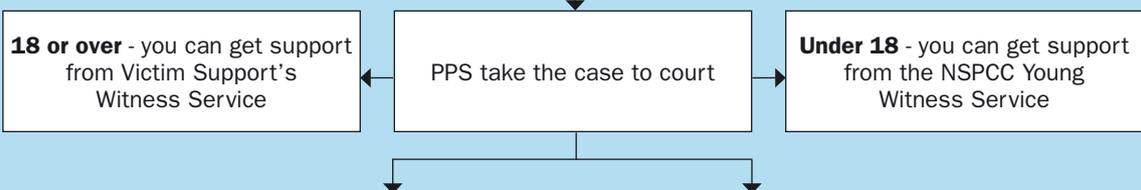
## Police investigation



## Will it go to court?

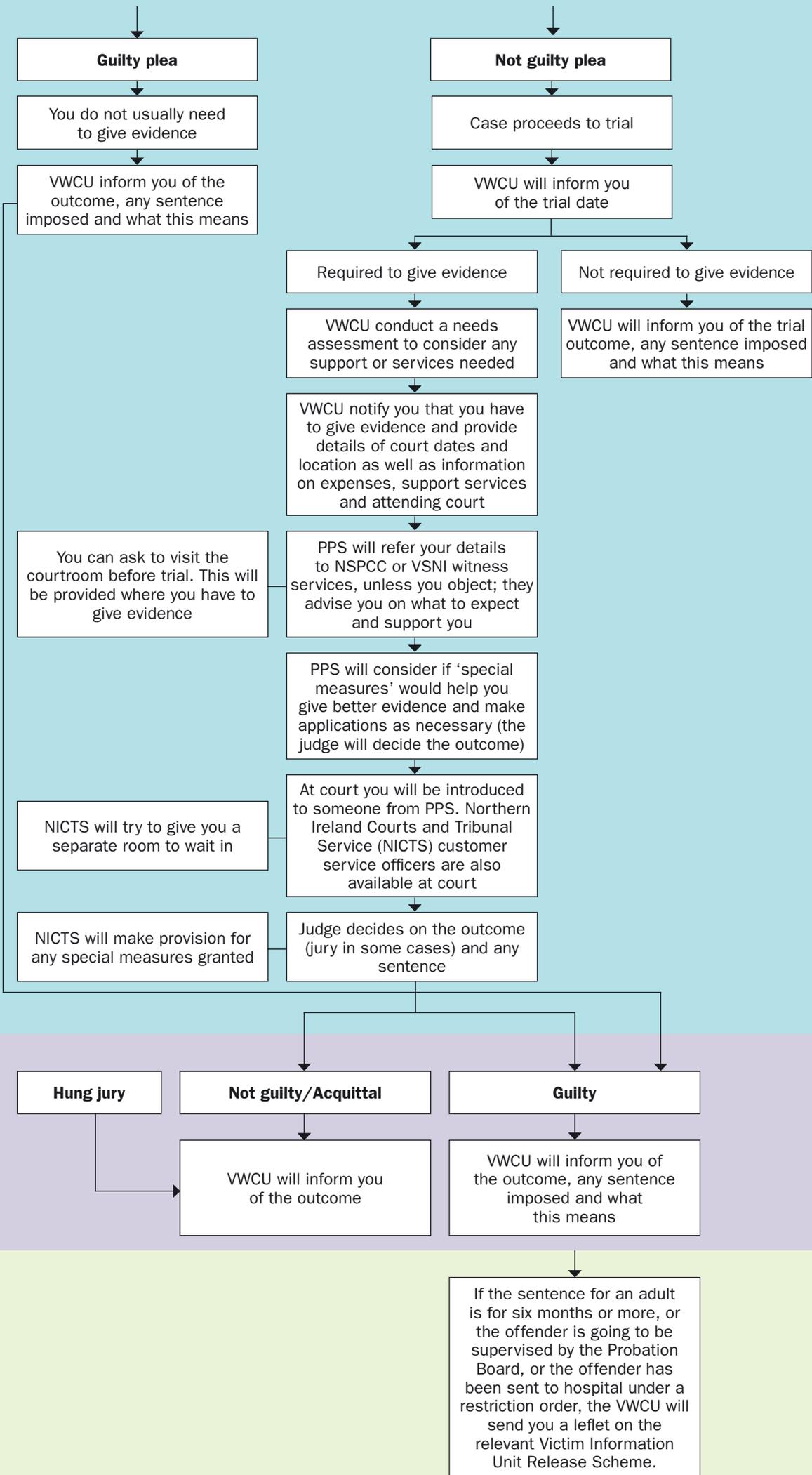


## Preparing for court



Access to support services, including voluntary sector organisations and specialist support (Victim Support NI - 028 9024 3133, NSPCC - Young Witness Service - 028 9448 7533 and 24 hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline 0808 802 1414). Victim Support NI can be contacted even if you do not report the crime to the police. Further details of relevant support organisations can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimsupportorganisations).

# The trial and giving evidence



# Outcome

# After the trial - Release and supervision of offenders

Access to support services: Witness support services are available if you are giving evidence at court. You can contact the witness support services at Victim Support NI – 028 9024 3133 and NSPCC Young Witness Service 028 9448 7533. Further details of the witness support services can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimcontacts](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/victimcontacts)



**Copies available from:**

Victims and Witnesses Branch  
Department of Justice  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast  
BT4 3SG

Email: DOJVictW@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk  
Telephone: 028 9052 0550

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