

Help and Advice for Victims



WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THE POLICE?

Under the Victims' Code:

You will be provided with written confirmation of your report, including basic details of the offence, crime reference number and contact details of the police officer dealing with your case, within 5 working days of your report to us.

The officer dealing with your case will:

- Keep you informed as progress is made in the investigation and let you know if any arrests are made and if suspects are charged.
- Let you know what support is available and refer you to Greater Manchester Victims' Services if you are happy for them to do so.
- Ask how often you would like to be given updates during the investigation and how you would like to be contacted (e.g. by phone, email, text).
- And tell you if an investigation has been concluded, explaining what enquiries have been conducted.

Further information on your rights under the Victims' Code is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime>

Your rights as a victim under the Victims' Code are:

1. To be able to understand and to be understood
2. To have the details of the crime recorded without unjustified delay
3. To be provided with information when reporting the crime
4. To be referred to services that support victims and have services and support tailored to your needs
5. To be provided with information about compensation
6. To be provided with information about the investigation and prosecution
7. To make a Victim Personal Statement
8. To be given information about the trial, the trial process and your role as a witness
9. To be given information about the outcome of the case and any appeals
10. To be paid expenses and have property returned
11. To be given information about the offender following a conviction
12. To make a complaint about your rights under the Victims' Code not being met

SUPPORT AVAILABLE IN GREATER MANCHESTER

If you have been affected by crime, you can access independent and confidential support at any point from Greater Manchester Victims' Services, who will provide practical and emotional support to help you cope and recover.

You can contact them by telephone on 0161 2001950 or you can request a call back via www.gmvictims.org.uk

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS

If a suspect is charged with an offence you may be asked to attend court to give evidence, however if your statement is agreed by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the defence as being a full enough account, then they may choose to rely solely on your statement.

You will only have to go to court if the defendant:

- Denies the charge and pleads 'not guilty'
- Pleads guilty but denies an important part of the offence which might affect the type of sentence they receives

If you are required to go to court, the prosecution and defence lawyers will ask you questions about your evidence.

You will be able to read your statement to refresh your memory first.

If you have given a statement and are then asked to go to court to give evidence, you must do so as it is a legal requirement.

THE CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE (CPS)

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) will decide whether or not to prosecute certain cases. To find out more about the CPS, visit www.cps.gov.uk or call 0203 357 0000.

GOING TO COURT

Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) is responsible for running all of the courts.

To find out more visit <https://www.gov.uk/going-to-court-victim-witness> where you can also view the video 'Going to Court – A Step by Step Guide to Being a Witness', which explains what happens at court.

The Witness Service, run by Citizens Advice, helps victims and witnesses attending court. They will explain what to expect when going to court,

arrange a pre-trial visit and will support you at court. They cannot discuss the case or the contents of your evidence with you.

More information about the Witness Service can be found at <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/legal-system/going-to-court-as-a-witness1/>

VICTIM PERSONAL STATEMENT (VPS)

The police officer dealing with your case will ask you whether or not you would like to make a Victim Personal Statement (VPS). This provides an opportunity for you to have a voice in the criminal justice process.

It enables you to tell the court and the Parole Board how the offence has affected you or your family. You can make a VPS at any time throughout the court proceedings.

Visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/victim-personal-statement> for more information, or search Victim Personal Statement online.

SPECIAL MEASURES AT COURT

Special measures are available to help vulnerable and intimidated witnesses give their best possible evidence in court. They are provided at the discretion of the judge or magistrate.

There are three main areas where special measures will be considered for victims and witnesses - the first is for victims and witnesses of the most serious crime, secondly persistently targeted victims and finally vulnerable or intimidated victims or witnesses.

Special measures may include a video link to the court room, the use of screens inside the court room, video recorded evidence, the removal of wigs and gowns, or video recorded cross examination.

Other measures are available to assist witnesses with communication difficulties, such as the use of an intermediary who will explain the questions put to them and help the court understand their answers.

APPLYING FOR SPECIAL MEASURES

The police officer in your case can make an application on your behalf to the CPS, so it is important to inform them if you feel you need this consideration.

The prosecutor will then consider applying for

special measures to help you when giving evidence in court. If you are eligible the judge at that hearing will decide whether you should be allowed to use special measures in court.

ALTERNATIVES TO GOING TO COURT

OUT OF COURT DISPOSALS

An out of court disposal can be offered as an alternative to going to court, often for lower level crimes and where the offender has little previous offending history.

Out of court disposals give the victim the opportunity to have a say in how their crime is dealt with.

Wherever possible the outcome should focus on repairing the harm caused and addressing the reasons behind the offending behaviour so that it is less likely to happen again.

WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

Following a crime, restorative justice enables communication between the victim and the offender.

The process is overseen by trained practitioners and is completely voluntary, doesn't cost anything and is led by the people involved. Restorative justice can be used for all crime types and at any stage of the criminal justice system.

Taking part in restorative justice doesn't mean that you have to meet the other person, you can communicate indirectly through the practitioners to get questions answered or provide statements on how the offence has impacted you.

If you do want to meet face to face, it will be fully risk assessed before this meeting proceeds.

If you would prefer not to meet face to face, then video calls or phone-calls can also be facilitated.

More information on this service and how to access it can be found at <https://www.gmvictims.org.uk/restorative-justice>

CRIMINAL INJURIES CLAIMS

If you are a victim of a violent crime, you may be entitled to claim compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA).

You can apply for compensation if you, or someone you know, has been hurt in a violent crime, but you must apply within two years of when the attack happened.

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-criminal-injury/make-claim>

VICTIMS' RIGHT TO REVIEW - POLICE DECISIONS

The Victims' Right to Review scheme gives victims the right to request a review of a police decision not to prosecute a suspect.

Only cases where the decision to take no further action was made after 1 April 2015 qualify for the scheme.

In order to qualify for the scheme the case must be one in which:

- You have been the victim of crime
- A suspect has been identified and interviewed under caution, either following an arrest or by voluntary arrangement.

Your right to request a review arises where the police:

- Make a decision not to bring proceedings in cases where the police have authority to charge; or Make a decision that the case does not meet the test for referral to the CPS for a charging decision and you are the victim of that crime. Victims will be notified by police of the decision not to bring proceedings.

The request for review can be made up to three months following the decision to take no further action being made.

Further information on this for Greater Manchester Police can be found here: <https://www.gmp.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/acr/vrr/victims-right-review-scheme/>

VICTIMS' RIGHT TO REVIEW - CPS DECISIONS

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) also operates a process called the Victims' Right to Review scheme, which makes it easier for you to seek a review of a CPS decision not to bring charges against a suspect or to terminate proceedings.

If this is the case, you will be contacted to inform you about the CPS decision not to charge and they will advise you who you can contact to review your case.

More detailed information about this can be found at <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/victims-right-review-scheme#a04>

VICTIM CONTACT SCHEME

The National Probation Service runs the Victim Contact Scheme.

You'll be invited to join the scheme if the offender in your case has committed a violent or sexual crime and been sentenced to 12 months or more in prison.

This could include receiving a hospital order under the Mental Health Act.

If you join the scheme, you'll be given a Victim Liaison Officer (VLO) who'll keep you up to date with what's happening with the offender.

This could include; important changes in their sentence e.g. if they're moved to an open prison, and how and when they'll be released.

Further information is available at www.victimsinformation.service.org.uk

CRIME AFFECTING YOUR BUSINESS

The Victims' Code also entitles you to make a further impact statement if your business or enterprise (*such as a charity*) has been the victim of crime.

The Business Impact Statement allows you to detail how the crime has affected your business in terms of the direct financial impact (*assets stolen or damaged*), indirect financial impact (*loss of custom, loss of staff time etc.*) and non-financial damage such as loss of reputation.

CONTACT US

- To report a crime go online or use our live chat facility
- If you would like to thank us or make a complaint you can do this easily online via the feedback tab.
- If you have been provided with a contact card, you can contact the officer dealing with your case directly to get an update on your crime

You can find out more information on our website here: <https://www.gmp.police.uk/>