



## Putting Victims First

### Help and Advice for Victims

Crime / Incident number:.....

Type of Offence:.....

Attending Officer: .....

Officer's email address: .....

Officer's contact details:.....

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# Information for Victims of Crime

Becoming a victim of crime can be a distressing and upsetting experience. This leaflet explains what happens next and gives you information about organisations which provide support and advice. It also offers some practical tips on how you can protect your home and your property.

## What happens when you report a crime

Now that you have reported a crime a police officer will ask you for full details of the incident.

### **Please help the officer by:**

- Giving as much information as possible about what happened, when and where, and what you saw and heard
- Tell the officer if you are worried about the safety of yourself and others
- Tell the officer if you have recently suffered from any similar incident(s)
- Tell the officer if the crime was made worse because of abuse relating to race, faith, disability, or sexual orientation or any other factor
- Tell the officer if you have any specific needs, for example a health problem
- Tell the officer if you remember anything else about the offence after the initial report
- Tell the officer if you change your contact details.



We are committed to doing our best for you.

At the back of this booklet there is a page for you to record things that you have remembered or questions you may wish to ask the next time we contact you.

The officer will carry out an initial investigation which could include statement taking, house to house enquiries, scene examination and intelligence checks. They will tell you if the crime investigation can be progressed and will keep you informed of what is happening. They will also tell you if the investigation is closed and give you a reason why. If a more in depth enquiry is needed this will be undertaken by specially trained investigators.

If your crime involves injury, loss or damage, retain any receipts as you may be eligible for compensation.

## The Media

We may release details of the crime to local media and on force social media such as   [cumbriapolice](#)

to help trace any witnesses or appeal for information.

We will not disclose your name or full address unless we have your permission. If you would have no objection to talking to the media about the crime, please tell the investigating officer. However, you are under no obligation whatsoever to talk to the press.

## Dealing with your crime

After you have reported your crime it will be investigated. If a suspect is identified they will be questioned and a decision will be made about what will happen to them. Depending on the offence, this decision is made either by the police or the Crown Prosecution Service.

There are several ways they can be dealt with including:

- Being released with no further action
- Undertaking a community resolution
- Being subject to an out of court disposal such as a caution
- Receiving a penalty notice
- Being charged or summonsed to court.

If someone is charged and sent to court, the Witness Care Unit will contact you. They will inform you about progress of the case, and if necessary make arrangements for you to attend court and offer support.

## Restorative Justice

We may also suggest a Restorative Justice approach. This is a process which brings consenting victims and offenders together in a safe environment with support from a specially trained facilitator.

Victims have the chance to tell the offender the real impact of the offending behaviour and request answers to their questions through a direct face-to face meeting, a conversation through their supporter or even via a letter.

The Restorative Justice approach holds offenders to account for what they have done, directly to their victim.

For more details you can speak with the officer in charge of your case.

## Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

This Code sets out the services that must be provided to victims of crime by the Police and other organisations in England and Wales.

For the purposes of this Code, a “victim” is:

- a natural person who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss which was directly caused by a criminal offence
- a close relative of a person whose death was directly caused by a criminal offence.

Legal persons (e.g. businesses) are not included within the definition of a victim.

Enhanced entitlements are provided to victims of the most serious crime, persistently targeted victims and vulnerable or intimidated victims. These three categories are explained in paragraphs 1.1-1.12 of Chapter 1 of this Code. Please [click here](#) for more information.

## EASY READ VICTIMS CODE

This is an Easy Read guide to the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime which may be useful for victims who have learning or reading difficulties. Please [click here](#) to view document.

### Victim Personal Statement (VPS)

A VPS is a statement that victims can give to the police (or any agency or organisation assigned by the police to take the VPS on their behalf) if they have been a victim of crime. It is the victim's way of telling the criminal justice system about the crime they have suffered and the impact it has had on them physically, emotionally, psychologically, financially or in any other way. A VPS is important and gives victims a voice in the criminal justice process by helping others to understand how the crime has affected them.

A VPS is different from a witness statement which mainly focuses on the crime and what has happened. Please [click here](#) for more information.

## Witness Care Services

### WITNESS CHARTER

The Witness Charter sets out the standards of care victims and witnesses can expect if they are a witness to a crime or incident in England and Wales. This Charter applies to all witnesses of a crime and to character witnesses but not expert witnesses. Please [click here](#) for more information.

## EASY READ WITNESS CHARTER

This is an Easy Read guide to the **Witness** Charter, it explains what to expect if you are going to court to talk about something you saw or that happened to you. It tells you the support you can get and how you should be treated from when you first tell the police about a crime to after it has gone to court. These are called **standards**. Please [click here](#) for more information

## WITNESS CARE UNIT

If you're a victim of crime or a witness for the prosecution, a witness care officer will let you know the date of the trial. Witness care officers work for the police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Victims and witnesses can ask the witness care officer for any help they need going to court, eg with childcare or transport. The witness care officer can also provide information about the expenses associated with going to court, about reviewing statements and about the help and support that can be expected at court.

If Victims and witnesses would like to visit the court before the trial, so that they can have a look round and know what to expect on the day they can ask the Witness Care Unit to arrange that and for someone to go with them into the courtroom if they need it.

Victims and witnesses should let the witness care officer know if they have any medical conditions or disabilities.

The court will provide an interpreter if requested. They can translate what happens during the hearing but they can't represent victims or witnesses or give legal advice. Please [click here](#) for more information.

## **WITNESS SERVICE**

It is not unusual for people to feel anxious about giving evidence in court.

Before and during the trial victims and witnesses can get free help and support from the Citizens Advice Witness Service, which is separate from the police, the Witness Care Unit and the Crown Prosecution Service. They have trained volunteers who can help before court. Victims and witnesses can talk to the Witness Service in confidence (though they are not allowed to discuss the evidence) and they will make sure that all the information and support needed is available, either from them or from other organisations.

There will be a volunteer at the court on the day too, so even if victims and witnesses don't want any help in advance, they'll be there to offer support if it's needed on the day of the trial. They will also keep them updated and help with any problems. If required, the Witness Service can go into the court with victims and witnesses.

The Witness Service can also arrange for victims and witnesses to visit the court before the trial, so they know what to expect on the day and have an opportunity to ask any questions.

If a family member or friend will be coming to the court with you, we can give them support too. Please [click here](#) for more information.

## **REGISTERED INTERMEDIARIES**

Registered Intermediaries are specialists who help vulnerable victims and witnesses with an assessed communication difficulty to give their best evidence in court. They can also assist victims when they are being interviewed to help them communicate their evidence to the police. The intermediary is approved by the court and can help to explain the questions and answers so far as necessary to help the witness but without changing the substance of the evidence. Please [click here](#) for more information.

## **SPECIAL MEASURES**

Special Measures is the term used to describe the measures a court can order to assist vulnerable or intimidated witnesses to give their best evidence in court. The court can order that the following special measures be made available:



- Screens / curtains in the courtroom so the witness does not have to see the defendant, and, in some cases, the public gallery
- A live video link allowing a witness to give evidence away from the courtroom. This could be from a separate room within the court, or from a dedicated live-link site outside the court building.

Please [click here](#) for more information.

## Victims of Stalking and Harassment

Information will be provided advising of the steps you can take to protect yourself from harm. Please [click here](#) for more information.

You can also visit the Constabulary's website to find further links to the Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service and to the National Stalking Helpline,

<https://www.cumbria.police.uk/Advice-Centre/Personal-Safety/Stalking.aspx>

There are some practical steps that you can take to identify any sources of personal information that could be used by a suspect. These could include mailing lists, the electoral roll, school or work records, internet sites and wastepaper and refuse bins. You should never dispose of personal information via a refuse bin. Such items should be shredded, burnt or disposed of by some other means, which are not accessible to a suspect.

You should consider changing your passwords for gaining access to personal information via the telephone or internet. In particular, the use of your mother's maiden name and pet names as verification codes for access to personal details should be discouraged.

Anonymous voter registration is available for people at risk.

Please [click here](#) for more information.

There are also facilities to restrict the more general availability of your personal information. To find out more visit the Information Commissioner's website. Please [click here](#) to view.

### **CUMBRIA TOGETHER**

Cumbria Together is a website that provides an information portal bringing together services and information about what is available for those affected by crime irrespective of whether the crime has been reported or not. The Cumbria Together website can be searched via geographical area, crime type or directory and links can be made directly to agency websites. A dedicated section is available for children/young people and there is a multi-lingual facility. The website is not a reporting mechanism and if anyone using the Cumbria Together site wishes to report a crime they should ring 101 or 999 in an emergency. Please [click here](#) for more information.

### **VICTIM SUPPORT**

Victim Support gives emotional and practical help to people who have been affected by crime in Cumbria and can advocate on their behalf.

Their support is free, confidential and they can support all victims of crime. If you contact your Victim Support team, they will make sure you get the information and support you need.

If you've been affected by crime, one of the ways they can help you is by giving you the support you need to cope with emotional stress. Their staff and volunteers are trained to listen, give information and offer feedback. They can help you to make sense of what you've been through, discuss your options and help you to feel like you're getting your life under control again.

They can help with simple tasks like filling out forms (for compensation claims, for example), getting broken doors and windows fixed and installing burglar alarms. They can also assist with bigger problems such as getting medical treatment, getting rehoused or dealing with the criminal justice system over the course of your trial. They give you the information you need to understand your options and next steps.

Please [click here](#) for more information.

They can be contacted for support regardless of whether you have contacted the police, and no matter how long ago the crime took place. They will help you for as long as it takes to overcome the impact of crime.

Victim Support opening hours Monday- Friday 9 am – 7pm

Call 0300 30 30 157

Out of hours 08 008 1689 111

Online – [victimsupport.org.uk](http://victimsupport.org.uk)

## **THE BRIDGEWAY**

The Bridgeway is a dedicated service that aims to help men, women and children who have been raped or sexually assaulted either recently or in the past. The Bridgeway provides a range of services to help you through the difficult time following rape or sexual assault, including:

- 24 hour helpline 0808 118 6432
- Emotional and practical support
- Emergency contraception and access to screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections
- Medical examination and collection of forensic evidence
- Referral onto counselling and/or other support services
- Support in making a report to the police, if that's what you want
- Follow-up.

For help and advice please call 01768 800 670 during office hours.

Please [click here](#) for more information.

## **INDEPENDENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE ADVISORS (ISVA's)**

As part of The Bridgeway (Sexual Assault Referral Centre), trained Independent Sexual Violence Advisor's (ISVA's) provide specialist support to victims of rape and sexual abuse, whether reported to the police or not. They provide free and confidential support to people of all ages and regardless of when the crime happened.

## **INDEPENDENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVISORS (IDVA's)**

Independent Domestic Violence Advisors can assist with reducing high risk of harm and advocacy between other (if any) involved agencies. They can offer support to report incidents to police and provide on-going support throughout any criminal cases. They can also offer practical advice and referral onward where required. Outreach workers offer support to domestic abuse victims to address a whole range of issues and needs, including but not limited to housing, benefits advice, debt management, liaison and/or access to other services. Please [click here](#) for more information.

## Protecting your home and your property

Cumbria is one of the safest places to live and work. At Cumbria Constabulary we aim to keep it that way. There are steps you can take to protect your personal safety, your home and your property:

### Protect your home

- Fit good quality locks to all doors and windows
- Do not leave your house and car keys where they can be easily grabbed by an opportunist thief
- Post code your valuables - it will identify them if stolen
- Use light timer switches and draw curtains so your home does not look obviously empty after dark
- Check that all is secure before leaving your home
- Secure outdoor sheds with good quality locks and bolts
- Consider installing a house alarm.

### Protect your vehicle

- Always lock all doors and windows when parking
- Never leave your vehicle unattended with the engine running
- Park in well-lit areas or secure car parks
- Never leave valuables on display in parked cars - store them out of sight in the boot.

Please [click here](#) for more information.

## Other Useful Information

There are organisations in Cumbria that can help and support you or someone you know who may be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of age, gender, or sexuality.

- **Citizens Advice Bureau:**  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)
- **Crimestoppers:** 0800 555 111  
[www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

### Domestic Violence Helplines:

- **Women's Aid National Helpline:** 0808 200 0247  
[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)
- **Male Advice Enquiry Line:** 0808 801 0327  
[www.mensadviceline.org.uk](http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk)
- **Rape Crisis:** 0808 802 9999  
[www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)

The check list below will help you to confirm that our staff have provided you with all the information you need.

Have we .....

- Given practical help?
- Offered advice?
- Explained what is going to happen next and why?
- Left written details of the name and phone number of the officer dealing with your case?
- Left Crime/Incident reference number?
- Explained what further contact you should expect- when, how, and who by?
- Established a 'Victim contract agreement' with you?
- Checked if you had any further questions
- Explained that your details will be given to Victim support and why?

## How did we do?

In Cumbria we want to do our best for you. By working with external agencies and gathering and sharing information we are able to be pro-active in our approach, prevent crime happening, protect you and your property and bring criminals to justice. By providing this service we are helping to keep Cumbria safe.

We would welcome your feedback on the way we provide our service to you and your community. We believe it is essential that you and others have confidence in the police and are satisfied with the service we give you. With this in mind, we would like to hear from you. How did we do? You can do this by using the contact methods below.

**By Phone:**

call 101 (999 in an emergency)

**In person:**

at your local police station

**Letter:**

Police Headquarters,  
Carleton Hall,  
Penrith,  
Cumbria  
CA10 2AU

You can also follow us on Facebook and twitter



cumbriapolice

I have explained the contents of this booklet to the Victim.

Officer name & collar number: .....

Signature: .....

Date:.....



## This is for your use

Please use this page to keep a record of any additional thoughts you may have.

### For example:

- Anything you have remembered and wish to bring to our attention with regard to the crime/incident
- Anyone who has given you information about your crime/incident
- Any questions you may have for us.

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