Fil-qasam tal-ġustizzja ċivili, il-proċeduri u l-proċedimenti pendenti mibdija fi tmiem il-perjodu ta' tranżizzjoni se jkomplu skont il-liġi tal-UE. Il-Portal tal-e-Ġustizzja, abbażi tal-ftehim reċiproku mar-Renju Unit, se jżomm l-informazzjoni rilevanti marbuta mar-Renju Unit sa tmiem l-2024.

Drittijiet tal-vittmi - skont il-pajjiż

L-Irlanda ta' fuq

Jekk kont **vittma ta' reat**, il-liġi tagħtik ċerti drittijiet individwali, qabel, matul u wara l-proċedimenti tal-qorti (proċess). Tista' tibbenifika wkoll minn diversi forom ta' assistenza u tkun tista' titlob kumpens għad-danni kkawżati mir-reat.

Il-proċedimenti kriminali fl-Irlanda ta' Fuq jibdew b'investigazzjoni, fejn il-pulizija jiġbru l-evidenza. Ladarba l-pulizija jkunu temmew l-investigazzjoni tagħhom, il-każ jgħaddi għand is-servizz tal-prosekuzzjoni. Il-prosekutur pubbliku jeżamina jekk hemmx biżżejjed evidenza kontra l-persuna suspettata għal prospett raġonevoli ta' kundanna u jekk huwiex fl-interess pubbliku li ssir prosekuzzjoni. Jekk il-prosekutur jiddeċiedi li ma għandux jipproċedi bi prosekuzzjoni, il-każ jingħalaq. Inkella, il-prosekutur iħejji l-każ għas-smigħ u jipproċedi għall-prosekuzzjoni fil-qorti. Fi kwalunkwe sitwazzjoni, tiġi nnotifikat(a) bid-deċiżjoni tal-prosekuzzjoni u, jekk il-każ imur fil-qorti, tiġi kkuntattjat(a) dwar id-data tas-smigħ.

Il-kawżi għal reati inqas serji jinstemgħu fil-qrati tal-maġistrati. Il-kawżi għal reati aktar serji (bħal stupru jew serq) jinstemgħu fil-Crown Court minn imħallef u ġurija. Il-ġurija tkun magħmula minn 12-il persuna magħżula b'mod aleatorju mir-reġistru elettorali, li jisimgħu x-xhieda ppreżentata matul il-proċess u jiddeċiedu jekk il-konvenut huwiex ħati tar-reat. L-imħallef jiddeċiedi dwar punti ta' liġi matul il-proċess, bħal jekk il-preżentazzjoni ta' ċerta evidenza hijiex permessa. Fi tmiem il-proċess, jekk il-ġurija ssib lill-konvenut ħati, l-imħallef jiddeċiedi s-sentenza għar-reat skont il-liġi.

Ikklikkja fuq il-links ta' hawn taħt sabiex issib l-informazzjoni li teħtieġ

1 - Drittijieti bħala vittma ta' reat
2 - Ir-rappurtar ta' reat u d-drittijiet tiegħi waqt l-investigazzjoni jew il-proċess
3 - Id-drittijiet tiegħi wara l-proċess
4 - Kumpens
5 - Id-drittijiet tiegħi f'dak li għandu x'jaqsam ma' appoġġ u assistenza

L-aħħar aġġornament: 14/03/2019

Il-verzjoni bil-lingwa nazzjonali hija ġestita mill-Istat Membru rispettiv. It-traduzzjonijiet saru mis-servizz tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea. Jista' jkun hemm xi tibdil imdaħħal fl-oriġinal mill-awtorità nazzjonali kompetenti li jkun għadu ma jidhirx fit-traduzzjonijiet. Il-Kummissjoni Ewropea ma taċċettax responsabbilta jew kwalunkwe tip ta' tort fir-rigward ta' kull informazzjoni jew dejta li tinsab jew li hemm referenza għaliha f'dan id-dokument. Jekk jogħġbok irreferi għall-avviż legali sabiex tiċċekkja r-regoli dwar id-drittijiet tal-awtur għall-Istati Membri responsabbli minn din il-paġna.

(OLD)1 - My rights during the investigation of a crime

How and where can I report a crime?
How can I follow up on what the authorities do after I report a crime?
How can I be involved in the investigation of the crime?
What are my rights as a witness?
I am a minor. Do I have additional rights?
What information can I obtain from police or victim support organisations during the investigation of the crime?
Can I receive legal aid?
How can I get protection, if I am in danger?
What services and assistance can I be given during the investigation of the crime?
Are there opportunities to reach settlement/conciliation or to start mediation between the offender and myself?
How will my case continue after the end of the investigation?
Can I appeal if my case is closed without reaching the court?
I am a foreigner. How are my rights and interests protected?
More information

How and where can I report a crime?

If you have suffered from a crime in the United Kingdom you can **report** it to the enforcement body responsible for this type of crime. For most crimes (e.g. theft, assault) this will be the **police**.

Depending on where the crime was committed you can report it by calling or going in person to the nearest police station in Northern Ireland. In urgent cases you can dial the emergency number 999 or 112.

If you are an asylum seeker or a refugee, you can also contact one of the One Stop Services, which will help you to find the nearest police station and can arrange an interpreter free of charge if you need one.

If you do not feel comfortable to report the crime yourself you can ask another person to report it for you or file an **anonymous report** to Crimestoppers by calling 0800 555 111 or by filling in their online form.

More detailed information about how to report a crime to the police is also available online at the Police Service of Northern Ireland's website. This site provides some information in alternative languages.

Crimes are usually reported in English. If you do not speak English you can report the crime in your own language or any other language you understand. Translation services will be provided free of charge, if necessary.

In the report you have to include all relevant details about the crime, the person you think committed the crime (if known), and relevant personal details (e.g. your name, address, and other contact details).

There is no obligatory form you have to follow. The police officer to whom you report the crime will record it on a special form.

How can I follow up on what the authorities do after I report a crime?

You will receive the reference number of your report and you can use it to follow the progress of your case. You can check what is being done on your case by going to the police station or calling by phone.
You are entitled to be contacted by the person dealing with your case at regular intervals to update you on the investigation (or a decision not to proceed with, or end an investigation; or not to prosecute the offender) and the details of any trial. If you require further information you can call using the non emergency 101 number. You can also go to the police station but, if doing so without an appointment, the person dealing with your case may not be available.

How can I be involved in the investigation of the crime?

You may wish to make a Victim Personal Statement (1), in which you can detail the financial, emotional, physical and psychological impact of the crime on you (and, where applicable, your family). You can do this when reporting the crime or at any time thereafter.
Depending on your needs you will be provided free of charge with an interpreter, medical examination, and other services. However, this does not include legal advice and/or representation as the victim is not a party to the proceedings.
During the investigation you are entitled to regular up-dates on progress, and to be told of any arrests. Any further involvement in the investigation is at the request of the police (e.g. responding to additional questions or participation in an identity parade).
If you are worried about the defendant being given bail, you should inform the Public Prosecution Service so that they are aware of this when determining whether to oppose a bail application or not.
You are not specifically entitled to representation by anyone. However, if you choose to instruct a lawyer (which will be at your own expense) to put information or arguments before the authorities they will generally take such representations into account.
You will be informed when formal charges have been brought against a suspect and it is possible to put points to the prosecution service. However, the decision to prosecute is for the Public Prosecution Service to decide after considering the evidence and if it is in the public interest to do so.
Expenses incurred at this stage are not generally reimbursed.

What are my rights as a witness?

During the investigation the police may ask you to give a **witness statement**. Usually you will be invited to tell what happened and the police officer will write an account of what you have said. Then you will be asked to verify if your statement was recorded correctly and sign it.
If you are providing a statement, the police will carry out an assessment of your needs as a witness. This will cover when and how you can be contacted and what language and communication needs you may have. The police will also assess whether a communication specialist (called a Registered Intermediary) might help you to give your statement or whether your witness statement will be video recorded.
Your witness statement may be used as evidence in court in certain circumstances such as if your evidence is not being challenged by the defence but you may be requested to give evidence at the hearing in person.

I am a minor. Do I have additional rights?

If you are a child **under 18 years of age** you are able to receive enhanced support and assistance in giving evidence in court if you are required to do so. You will be referred to the NSPCC's Young Witness Service, who will give you further support.
Your witness statement will be video recorded unless you ask to make a written statement. However, you may still be required to attend court to be questioned about your evidence.

What information can I obtain from police or victim support organisations during the investigation of the crime?

When you report a crime to the police you will be asked if you wish to receive follow up contact form the police.
You will be asked if you wish to receive further information (e.g. about prosecution decisions and court proceedings). The police will keep you regularly updated on progress during the investigation for example about the suspect's arrest. You will be informed on the conclusion of the investigation (e.g. whether the defendant has been charged or cautioned).
For further support you will be referred, to Victim Support Northern Ireland.
Where applicable you will also be referred to other specialist services (e.g. the Sexual Assault Referral Centre in relation to sexual assualt. A 24hour helpline is also available to victims of domestic assault or sexual assault on 0808 802 1414).

Can I receive legal aid?

Anyone can make an application for legal aid. However, whether it is granted or not will depend on the nature of the case, your status in it and a financial assessment. Witnesses are generally not "parties" to a case in a legal sense and generally do not have a legal representative. So unless a particular application (such as a judicial review) is being made as a side issue in the case, it is unlikely that an application for legal aid would be made.

How can I get protection, if I am in danger?

You and anyone else with whom you have a close relationship and believe yourselves to be at risk as a result of having reported a crime should report your concerns to the police. The police will make an assessment and, where necessary and reasonable, bearing in mind the level, probability and immediacy of the risk, take steps to reassure and safeguard those at risk.
Protective measures can take different forms, e.g. regular patrols near your home, or an alarm that will ring in the local police station. Only in the most serious cases are more drastic protective measures taken (such as anonymity during trials or witness protection programmes).

What services and assistance can I be given during the investigation of the crime?

If the allegation is a police matter, you will be referred to Victim Support Northern Ireland, who will contact you to further support and guidance as appropriate.
Where applicable you will also be referred to other specialist services (e.g. in relation to domestic violence or sexual assault).
Services are free of charge.

Are there opportunities to reach settlement/conciliation or to start mediation between the offender and myself?

The police and the prosecution service will consider diversion from prosecution, if the offender is under the age of 18 years. If a diversionary Youth Conference is decided as appropriate diversionary action you, as the victim in the case, will be contacted and invited to participate. This type of formal Youth Conference is supervised by professionally qualified staff in the Youth Justice Agency. Equally, you will be invited to participate if the court orders a youth conference.

How will my case continue after the end of the investigation?

Once the police have completed the investigation, the case will be passed to the prosecution service. The public prosecution service will examine whether there is enough evidence against the defendant and whether it is in the public interest to prosecute him/her. If the public prosecution service decides that a prosecution should go ahead the suspect will be charged, or served with a summons, and the case will go to court.

Can I appeal if my case is closed without reaching the court?

You can request that the PPS review a decision not to prosecute. Where no additional evidence is provided this will be done by someone other than the person who took the original decision.
You can also ask the High Court to **review** the decision. It is very difficult to succeed in this process (which is known as "judicial review") because the High Court will not substitute its view of the preferable course of action for that of the decision-maker. It will only make a ruling against the decision-maker if it

decides that the decision was completely unreasonable (as distinct from undesirable). Even if the victim succeeds, the court will not order that the prosecution go ahead. It will, instead, order the decision-making organisation to review its decision in the light of the court's findings. If you are considering this course of action you will need legal representation. Legal aid is available in some circumstances, but only if stringent criteria are satisfied (particularly concerning financial circumstances).

In rare cases some people pursue a **private prosecution**. Such prosecutions can be taken over and continued or discontinued by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

I am a foreigner. How are my rights and interests protected?

If you are a foreigner you have all the rights listed above.

In addition, if you do not speak English the authorities will endeavour to ensure that a translation or interpreter is provided where information is given to you if this is necessary.

More information:

Victim Charter: a charter for victims of crime

A Guide to Northern Ireland's Criminal Justice System for Victims and Witnesses of Crime – in English

A Guide to Northern Ireland's Criminal Justice System for bereaved families and friends following murder or manslaughter – in English

Crime, justice and the law section of the NIDirect Website – in English

Notes:

1. Victim Personal Statement

The Victim Personal Statement is a written statement, in which you can explain how the crime has affected you. In the Victim Personal Statement you can explain how the crime has affected you physically, emotionally or financially, whether you feel vulnerable or intimidated, etc. The Victim Personal Statement is not used to determine guilt or innocence but to inform the court of the harm caused to the victim.

You can make your Victim Personal Statement at any time before the court hearing.

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(OLD)2 - My rights during the trial

How can I be involved in the trial?
What are my rights as a witness?
I am a minor. Do I have additional rights?
Can I receive legal aid?
How can I get protection, if I am in danger?
How can I claim damages from the offender or receive compensation from the State?
Are there opportunities to reach settlement/conciliation or to start mediation between the offender and myself?
I am a foreigner. How are my rights and interests protected?
More information

How can I be involved in the trial?

You will be informed of the decision to prosecute in writing by theVictim and Witness Care Unit. They will contact you to check your availability to attend court before a trial date is set and later inform you of the date set for the court hearing. They will also appoint a case officer to look after your case.

You may take part in trial proceedings:

as a **witness** (if the defendant pleads not guilty and if you are required to give oral evidence);

as an **observer**;

by making a Victim Personal Statement (1) if you wish to do so.

You have the right to be present throughout court proceedings unless:

it is held in private (usually only juvenile court hearings); or

you will be giving evidence.

You do not have to attend trial proceedings unless you are requested to be a witness and you are compelled to give evidence.

What are my rights as a witness?

You will also be told if you will be needed to give evidence as a **witness**, which will generally only be if the defendant contests guilt. As a witness you have to attend the hearing and answer the questions you will be asked.

If you have made a witness statement during the investigation and you have been requested to give oral evidence at the trial, you will be allowed to see the statement before you testify.

In the beginning of your hearing you will be asked to take an oath or make an affirmation that you will tell the truth. During the hearing the prosecutor and the defendant's lawyer will ask you questions. When there are no more questions the judge will release you. You can leave or, if you wish, you can remain in the courtroom and listen during the remainder of the hearing.

If you feel vulnerable or intimidated and you meet the relevant criteria, the prosecutor may apply to the court before the hearing, for special measures to assist you give evidence. These measures include a screen to shield you from the defendant when in court and giving evidence by CCTV from outside the courtroom. The court decides what measures you can use but must take your views into account when making the decision.

Usually you will be heard as a witness only once. However, if necessary, you may be requested to go to court again and answer additional questions.

You can claim certain expenses for travelling to court and an allowance for meals.

In Northern Ireland you can benefit from the assistance of the witness services. If you are a victim or witness for the prosecution, the witness services will be available before, during and after the trial to make sure that you are well informed and supported. There are two types of witness service available – one for adult witnesses, which is run by Victim Support (the Witness Service), and one for witnesses under the age of 18 (the Young Witness Service), which is run by the NSPCC.

The aim of these services is to help prosecution victims and witnesses, and their families and friends, to deal with the experience of going to court and giving evidence. Both witness services normally phone witnesses before the court hearing to offer their services. Trained volunteers and staff from the services provide a free and confidential service including:

having someone to talk to;

providing information on court procedures;

going with you to the court and letting you look around the courtroom before you are called as a witness;
providing a quiet place for you to wait before and during the hearing;
having someone to go with you into the courtroom or the live TV link room when you give evidence;
giving practical help with things such as expense forms;
putting you in touch with people who can answer specific legal questions (the witness services do not discuss evidence with witnesses); and
giving you a chance to talk over the case once it is over, to get more help or information.
For further information please read the booklet Attending as a Witness in a Criminal Court.

I am a minor. Do I have additional rights?

If you are a child **under 18 years of age** you can ask the prosecutor to apply to the court before the trial for special measures to assist you give evidence in court.
The special measures available include:
giving evidence through a TV link while sitting outside the courtroom (you will be able to see the courtroom and those in the courtroom will see you on a television screen);
giving video recorded evidence (if your statement to the police was video recorded it will be played to the court);
giving evidence behind a screen (a screen will be placed around the witness box to prevent you seeing the defendant);
removal of wigs and gowns (the judge and lawyers will not wear gowns and wigs so that the court feels less formal);
giving evidence in private – in sex offence cases and those involving intimidation (members of the public will not be allowed in the court room);
use of communication aids such as an alphabet board.
examination through an intermediary if you have communication difficulties, e.g. someone who can help you understand the questions being asked.

Can I receive legal aid?

An assessment is made based on the case and financial eligibility.

How can I get protection, if I am in danger?

The police will provide such protective measures, as are necessary and reasonable, bearing in mind the level, probability and immediacy of the risk. Protective measures can take different forms e.g. regular patrols near your home. Only very exceptionally and in the most serious cases are more drastic protective measures considered (such as anonymity during trials or witness protection programmes).

How can I claim damages from the offender or receive compensation from the State?

In some circumstances you may be able to **claim damages from the offender, in these cases** you will have to provide details of your losses to the police when you report the crime or soon after. The police will pass these details on to the prosecution service and the Public Prosecution Service can ask the court to make a compensation order in appropriate cases. If someone is convicted of the crime the sentencing court may order that the offender pays all, or a proportion, of the losses you have suffered unless he/she is unable to do so. This may be on a weekly or monthly basis. This compensation order takes priority over any fine that the offender may have to pay.
If you are a victim of violent crime you may be eligible to apply for **financial compensation from the State**. Your application has to be submitted to the Northern Ireland Compensation Services. Please consult the factsheet on compensation to victims of crime in Northern Ireland (available in English and multiple other languages) of the European Judicial Network.

Are there opportunities to reach settlement/conciliation or to start mediation between the offender and myself?

There are no opportunities to reach settlement/conciliation or to start mediation with offender other than a diversionary Youth Conference.

I am a foreigner. How are my rights and interests protected?

If you are a foreigner you have all the rights listed above.
In addition, if you do not speak English the authorities will endeavour to ensure that a translation or interpreter is provided where information is given to you if this is necessary, in particular when you are called to give evidence in court as a witness.

More information:

Victim Charter: a charter for victims of crime
A Guide to Northern Ireland's Criminal Justice System for Victims and Witnesses of Crime – in English
A Guide to Northern Ireland's Criminal Justice System for bereaved families and friends following murder or manslaughter – in English
Crime, justice and the law section of the NIDirect Website – in English

Notes:

1. Victim Personal Statement

The Victim Personal Statement is a written statement, in which you can explain how the crime has affected you. In the Victim Personal Statement you can explain how the crime has affected you physically, emotionally or financially, whether you feel vulnerable or intimidated, etc. The Victim Personal Statement is not used to determine guilt or innocence but to inform the court of the harm caused to the victim.

You can make your Victim Personal Statement at any time before the court hearing.

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(OLD)3 - My rights after the (first) trial

Can I appeal against a sentence or if the defendant is declared not guilty?
Is further appeal possible?
What rights do I have after the court sentence enters into force?
More information

Can I appeal against a sentence or if the defendant is declared not guilty?

At the end of the trial you will be told about the sentence of the court.
It is not possible for you to appeal against any decisions of the courts but for certain serious offences if you are not satisfied with the sentence imposed by the court following conviction, you can approach the Director of Public Prosecutions who has the right to make a referral to the High Court, if he considers that the sentence was unduly lenient.

Is further appeal possible?

You should be aware that the defendant may appeal the outcome of the case (the verdict and/or the sentence). Depending on the nature of the appeal, you may be required to give evidence again if the appeal amounts to a re-hearing. The Public Prosecution Service will notify you if this is the case.

What rights do I have after the court sentence enters into force?

You can receive information from the Victim Information Unit under the following victim information schemes by calling **0300 1233 269**.

The **Prisoner Release Victim Information Scheme** offers victims the chance to receive and provide information about adult offenders who have been convicted of a crime against them and have received a sentence of six months or more.

Victims can receive details of:

periods of temporary release granted to the offender;

the month and year in which the offender is expected to be released from custody;

any conditions of their release; and

any breaches of those conditions, which would result in the offender being returned to custody.

The **Probation Board for Northern Ireland Victim Information Scheme** aims:

to empower victims of crime and contribute to community safety by providing relevant information about Probation Supervised Sentences in a manner which is accessible, understandable, respectful and supportive;

to work in partnership with other Criminal Justice agencies and Victim organisations to provide an integrated service to victims when a Probation Supervised Sentence is imposed.

The Victim Information Scheme provides the following:

information about the specific sentence in your case and general information about PBNI's supervision of offenders;

the opportunity to discuss your concerns which may inform the management of the offender;

information can be provided to you in writing, by phone or in a face-to-face meeting with a PBNI Victim Liaison Officer;

information can be provided, if appropriate about any organisation which may be able to offer your specific support in relation to your own experiences/needs as a victim of crime;

the opportunity to be involved, on a voluntary basis, in direct or indirect restorative contact with the offender if this would help you address issues resulting from the offence.

The **Mentally Disordered Offenders' Victim Information Scheme** provides a service for victims of offences committed by mentally ill offenders who are held for treatment in hospital in Northern Ireland under a hospital order and a restriction order.

More information:

Victim Charter: a charter for victims of crime

A Guide to Northern Ireland's Criminal Justice System for Victims and Witnesses of Crime – in English

A Guide to Northern Ireland's Criminal Justice System for bereaved families and friends following murder or manslaughter – in English

Crime, justice and the law section of the NIDirect Website – in English

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(OLD)4 - Help and support for victims of crime

Victim Support Northern Ireland

Women's Aid Federation of Northern Ireland

NSPCC

SAMM NI (Support after murder and manslaughter)

Victim Support Northern Ireland

Victim Support is a local charity giving free and confidential help to victims of crime, witnesses, their family, friends and anyone else affected across Northern Ireland.

Victim Support Northern Ireland

provides emotional and practical support to victims of crime

provides support to prosecution witnesses in all criminal courts across Northern Ireland

speaks out as the Northern Ireland voice for victims and witnesses and campaigns for change

CONTACTS:

Website: http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/help-and-support-for-victims-of-crime

For the contact details of the local offices of Victim Support click here.

Women's Aid Federation of Northern Ireland

Women's Aid Federation of Northern Ireland **is a key local charity working to end domestic violence against women and children.**

Women's Aid Federation of Northern Ireland

believes that women and children have a right to live their lives free from all forms of violence and abuse, and society has a duty to recognise and defend this right

aims to empower women who have been affected by domestic violence

provides services run by women which are based on listening to survivors

supports and reflects diversity and promote equality of opportunity

aims to meet the needs of children affected by domestic violence

promotes cohesive inter-agency responses to domestic violence and develop partnerships

CONTACTS:

Website: http://www.womensaidni.org/

NSPCC

The NSPCC Young Witness Service provides support before, during and after a trial to children under 18 years who have to give evidence in court.

The NSPCC aims

to provide direct support, assistance and information to children and young people under the age of 18 years who may have to give evidence in Crown Courts

to complement the support to young witnesses with support to their carers and/or families

to provide a consistent, structured service in a tailored manner, this takes account of each young witness' individual needs and the legal context

to provide support before, during and after trial, including undertaking the role of accompanying adult in TV link cases

to create through the support process an opportunity for the young witness to feel empowered by the experience thus increasing the likelihood of positive therapeutic outcomes
to understand the impact of testifying on young witnesses and their families, taking into account the young witness' age, level of understanding, race, culture, gender and ability, having regard to the research on young witness' understanding of courts
to articulate a young witness' needs and requirements within the court process and secure arrangements that will alleviate the adverse effects of giving evidence
to ensure that issues relating to onward referral are identified and actioned
CONTACTS:
Website: http://www.nspcc.org.uk/
Childline: 0800 1111 (free and confidential 24-hour helpline for children in danger or distress) or http://www.childline.org.uk/

SAMM NI (Support after murder and manslaughter)

Support after murder and manslaughter is a registered independent charity, which offers emotional support to those bereaved through murder and manslaughter.
SAMM NI (Support after murder and manslaughter)
works to promote for the benefit of the public any charitable purpose directed to assisting those who have lost through death resulting from murder, manslaughter or unlawful killing of their relative or friend
aims to promote and protect good health, both mental and physical, to relieve poverty and sickness and to advance education in matters of the nature of grieving and bereavement
supports, through contact between members, those who have lost a member of their family or close friend as a result of homicide
aims to promote good health, both mental and physical, for those bereaved through homicide that they may eventually become strong enough to live positively in the future
CONTACTS:
Website: http://www.samm.org.uk/

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1 - My rights as a victim of crime

What information will I get from the authority after the crime occurred (e.g. police, public prosecutor) but before I even report the crime?

You are entitled to receive 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 that information.
Depending on the type of crime, your personal circumstances, or its relevance to the particular stage of the investigation or criminal proceedings access to the following information must be offered to you from your first contact with the police:
where and how to get advice or support, including access to medical support, any specialist support (such as psychological support) and alternative accommodation;
what you need to do to report a criminal offence, and who you should contact in case you have any questions about the case;
how to seek compensation;
the arrangements available if the victim is not present in Northern Ireland;
the availability of interpretation and translation services;
how to make a complaint about a service provider;
the availability of restorative justice services;
how to recoup expenses incurred as a witness in a criminal trial.
You are entitled to access victim support services at any time, whether you have reported a crime or not, and after the conclusion of the investigation and prosecution.

I don't live in the EU country where the crime took place (EU and non-EU citizens). How are my rights protected?

You are entitled to receive the services set out in the Victim Charter if the crime took place in Northern Ireland, or if the services relate to criminal proceedings that are taking place in Northern Ireland. [1]
[1] *Eligibility for compensation from the Compensation Services may depend on your residency or nationality unless you are conclusively identified as a victim of human trafficking, or granted asylum, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave to remain.*

If I report a crime, what information will I receive?

You are entitled to receive the following from the police:
a written acknowledgement that you have reported a crime including the basic details of the offence. The written acknowledgement could be in the form of a letter, an electronic notification such as an email or text, or it could be written by hand. You may request not to receive such acknowledgement. Where the police consider there may be a risk of harm to you from sending the written acknowledgement (for example in domestic violence cases), they may agree with you not to send one;
a clear explanation of what to expect from the criminal justice system when you report a crime or are contacted as a victim in the course of investigations;
an assessment of whether you want support, and if so what help or support you may need. This will help to identify whether you are in one of the three categories of victim who may need enhanced support, and to determine whether and to what extent you may benefit from Special Measures. Victim support services may do a more detailed assessment on behalf of the police;
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, as soon as possible, and not later than 5 working days after reporting the crime or being contracted as a victim in the course of investigations;
to be informed how often you will receive updates on the status of the case following discussion with the police;
an explanation, without unnecessary delay, of a decision not to investigate a crime;
to be advised when an investigation into the case has been concluded with no person being charged and to have the reasons explained to you.
You are entitled to receive information about victim support services including their contact details from the police so that you can access their support at any time.

You are entitled to be informed by the police of the following information and to have the reasons explained to you without unnecessary delay, of a suspect being:
arrested;
interviewed under caution;
released without charge;
released on police bail, or if police bail conditions are changed or cancelled.

Am I entitled to free interpreting or translation services (when I contact the police or other authorities, or during the investigation and trial)?

If you do not understand or speak English, you are entitled to request interpretation into a language you understand:
when reporting a criminal offence [1]
when being interviewed by the police; and
when giving evidence as a witness.
If you do not understand or speak English, you are entitled on request to translation of the following information:
the written acknowledgement of the reported crime;
where it is essential for the purposes of the interview or court hearing to see a particular document that is disclosed to you, a copy of the relevant parts of the document;
the document informing you of the date, time and place of trial; and
the outcome of criminal proceedings where so entitled under this Code and at least brief reasons for the decisions where available.
[1] You are entitled to report the crime in a language you understand or with the necessary linguistic assistance if you don't speak English.

How does the authority ensure that I understand and that I am understood (if I am a child; if I have a disability)

Service providers under the Victim Charter must communicate with you in simple and accessible language, taking appropriate measures (e.g. EasyRead, Braille or the use of a Registered Intermediary) to assist you to understand and be understood. In considering appropriate measures, service providers must take account of any relevant personal characteristic which may affect your ability to understand and be understood.
A range of information leaflets are available using simple language, in a variety of formats.

Victim support services

Who provides victim support?

Para 76 of the Victim Charter provides an entitlement for victims to access victim support services whether or not they have reported the crime to the police. 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.

Will the police automatically refer me to victim support?

The police will explain to you that they will automatically pass your details to victim support services when you report the crime. You are entitled to ask the police not to pass on your details to victim support services.

How is my privacy protected?

Where required to share information under the Victim Charter, service providers must do so effectively and in accordance with their obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation.

Do I have to report a crime before I can access victim support?

No - you are entitled to access victim support services at any time, whether you have reported a crime or not, and after the conclusion of the investigation and prosecution.

Personal protection if I'm in danger

What types of protection are available?

Where a victim reports a crime to a service provider responsible for investigating offences, the service provider must ensure that the victim is individually assessed to identify any specific protection needs and to determine whether and to what extent the victim would benefit from specific protection measures or Special Measures in the course of being interviewed or Special Measures when giving evidence.
The nature of the assessment will depend on all the circumstances, including the severity of the crime and the degree of apparent harm suffered by the victim. The assessment must take into account the victim's personal characteristics, his or her views, and the nature and circumstances of the crime.
Where, as a result of the individual assessment, a service provider has identified a victim as having specific protection needs and who would benefit from specific protection measures in the course of being interviewed, the service provider responsible for investigating an offence must also ensure, subject to operational and practical constraints, that the following are available:
if possible, ensure that the same person conducts all the interviews with the victim, unless doing so would prejudice the proper handling of the investigation;
that the interview takes place, where necessary, in premises designed or adapted for the purpose;
that interviews are carried out by or through professionals trained for the purpose; and
that in cases of sexual violence, gender-based violence or domestic violence, victims are offered the opportunity to have their interview conducted by a person of the same sex. Any such request should be agreed to if possible, unless doing so would be likely to prejudice the proper handling of the investigation.
In the unlikely event of a suspect escaping from custody, the police, once aware of the escape or notified of it by the prison, will notify you wherever possible of the escape and any measures taken for your protection if it is assessed that the suspect poses a significant risk of harm to you.

Who can offer me protection?

Where a victim reports a crime to a service provider responsible for investigating offences must ensure that the victim is individually assessed to identify any specific protection. In most cases this will be the police.

Will someone assess my case to see if I am at risk of further harm by the offender?

All victims of a criminal offence are entitled to an assessment by the police to identify any needs or support required, including whether and to what extent they may benefit from Special Measures. The length and content of this assessment depends on the severity of the crime and your individual needs. The assessment will take into account your personal characteristics, the nature and circumstances of the crime, and your views. The more information you are able to provide during the assessment, the more tailored the level of support will be to your individual needs.

Will someone assess my case to see if I am at risk of further harm by the criminal justice system (during investigation and trial)?

All victims of a criminal offence are entitled to an assessment by the police to identify any needs or support required, including whether and to what extent they may benefit from Special Measures. The length and content of this assessment depends on the severity of the crime and your individual needs. The assessment will take into account your personal characteristics, the nature and circumstances of the crime, and your views. The more information you are able to provide during the assessment, the more tailored the level of support will be to your individual needs.

What protection is available for very vulnerable victims?

You are entitled to enhance entitlements under the Victim Charter as a vulnerable victim [1] if the quality of your evidence is likely to be affected because you suffer from:

mental health issues;

learning or communication difficulties;

a neurological disorder; or

a physical disability.

[1] 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.

I am a minor – do I have special rights?

You are eligible for enhanced entitlements under the Victim Charter as a vulnerable victim [1] if you are under 18 years of age at the time of the offence. This includes eligibility for Special Measures if you give evidence at court.

[1] 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.

My family member died because of the crime – what are my rights?

Close relatives of the deceased are entitled to receive services under the Victim Charter as victims of the most serious crime.

My family member was a victim of crime – what are my rights?

The family spokesperson for victims of crime who have a disability or for victims who have been so badly injured as a result of a criminal offence that they are unable to communicate.

If you have a disability or have been so badly injured as a result of a criminal offence that you are unable to communicate, you or your close relatives are entitled to nominate a family spokesperson to act as the single point of contact to receive services under the Victim Charter.

The parent or guardian of a victim who is under 18 years of age.

If you are a victim who is under the age of 18 you, and usually your parent or guardian, are entitled to receive services under the Victim Charter. [1]

[1] Unless your parent or guardian is under investigation or has been charged by the police in connection with the crime or if the reasonable opinion of the service provider involved it is not in your best interests for your parent or guardian to receive such services.

Can I access mediation services? What are the conditions? Will I be safe during mediation?

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 and 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. Appropriate measures will be put in place to make sure that anything you agree to take part in is safe; a trained facilitator will always be present during any meeting between you and the offender. If the offender has admitted guilt and is willing to participate in a meeting or communicate with you, you may be able to explain to the offender how the incident has affected you. You may then decide to seek an apology, or agree an activity that the offender has to undertake as part of making good the harm that has been done.

Where can I find the law stating my rights?

The Victim Charter was laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly by the Department of Justice under Section 31(2) of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2015.

The Victim Charter sets out the services that are to be provided in Northern Ireland to victims of crime by the main criminal justice organisations and other organisations with relevant functions. These organisations are referred to as 'service providers'.

The entitlements in the Victim Charter apply to all victim, regardless of their residence status.

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2 - Reporting a crime and my rights during the investigation or trial

How do I report a crime?

You should in the first instance report a crime to the police.

You can do this in a number of ways:

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 http://www.psni.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.

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.

How do I find out what's happening with the case?

If you are a victim of crime you are entitled to be informed by the police of the following information and to have the reasons explained to you without unnecessary delay of a suspect being:

arrested;

interviewed under caution;

released without charge;

released on police bail, or if police bail conditions are changed or cancelled.

You are entitled to be informed by the police of the following information without unnecessary delay of the police receiving it:

the date, time and location of the first court hearing;

where the suspect is released on police bail to appear in court, any bail conditions and any changes to these bail conditions.

Am I entitled to legal aid (during the investigation or trial)? Under what conditions?

Victims and witnesses are not parties to criminal proceedings and are therefore not eligible for legal aid in Northern Ireland.

Can I claim expenses (for taking part in the investigation/trial)? Under what conditions?

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.

Details of how, under what conditions expenses can be reimbursed by the Public Prosecution Service and the rates that apply can be found at http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Publications-7873.html.

Can I appeal if my case is closed before going to court?

If a decision is taken by the Public Prosecution service not to prosecute, and you do not agree with this, you are entitled to ask for a review of the Public Prosecution Service decision.

The right to a review of a Public Prosecution Service decision not to prosecute applies regardless of a 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 http://www.ppsni.gov.uk.

Can I be involved in the trial?

If you know something about an incident you may be asked to give evidence in court for the prosecution or defence.

What is my official role in the justice system? For example, am I or can I choose to be a: victim, witness, civil party or private prosecutor?

For the purposes of the Victim Charter, a "victim" is:

a 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.

If you know something about an incident you may be asked to give evidence in court for the prosecution or defence. If you know one of the people involved in the case, you may be asked to provide evidence as a character witness, usually by the defence. In either event, your evidence can be crucial to securing the conviction or the acquittal of the defendant.

What are my rights and obligations in this role?

The Victim Charter sets out the entitlements for victims. It is available here: https://www.garda.ie/en/victim-services/garda-victim-service/victim-charter-2020.pdf.

If you have witnessed a criminal offence, but are not a victim, you can access services under the Witness Charter. It is available here: https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/witness-charter.

Can I make a statement during the trial or give evidence? Under what conditions?

If you know something about an incident you may be asked to give evidence in court for the prosecution or the defence. If you know one of the people involved in a case, you may be asked to provide evidence as a character witness, usually by the defence.

If you are a victim of crime a Victim Personal Statement (VPS) gives you an opportunity to explain in your own words how a crime has affected you, whether physically, emotionally, financially or in any other way. This is different from a witness statement about what happened at the time, such as what you saw or heard.

You are entitled to be offered the opportunity to make a VPS once a decision has been made to prosecute someone for the crime.

The VPS gives you a voice in the criminal justice process. However 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.

What information will I receive during the trial?

You are entitled to:

be informed of the outcome of any bail hearing (any relevant bail conditions and any relevant changes to these bail conditions) with reasons without unnecessary delay;

be informed of the date, location and outcome of any criminal court hearings in the case by your Victim and Witness Care Unit;

be informed if an arrest warrant is issued for a suspect and the outcome of a hearing if the suspect is re-arrested. If a suspect is re-arrested after a warrant had been issued they normally attend court soon afterwards;

In cases where the suspect pleads not guilty, discuss any needs you may have with the Victm and Witness Care Unit and be referred to a relevant support group or agency where appropriate.

If you are a witness during the trial you are entitled to:

ask the court staff if you can enter the court building through a separate entrance from the suspect and their family and friends;

where circumstances permit, meet the PPS prosecutor and ask him or her questions about the court process. They will indicate where possible how long you may have to wait before giving evidence;

wherever possible, receive an explanation from the PPS prosecutor if there is a delay in proceedings on the day and how long the wait is likely to be;

wait and be seated in an area separate from the suspect and their family and friends - the court will ensure this is one wherever possible;

have any Special Measures set up for you where these have been ordered by the court;
be given a contact point at the court so you can find out what is happening in the case whilst it is being heard.
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3 - My rights after trial

Can I appeal against the ruling?

Victims have no right of appeal against the conviction or sentence of the offender.

What are my rights after sentencing?

Following the trial your are entitled to:
be paid any expenses the PPS have decided are due to you if you have attended court to give evidence;
be informed by the Victim and Witness Care Unit about the outcome of the trial including, where available, a brief summary of reasons for the decision;
be directed by the Victim and Witness Care Unit to victim support services where appropriate and where they are available.
(i) If an application is made to the Crown Court to appeal against a conviction or sentence in the Magistrates' Court.
You are entitled to be informed of the following information by your Victim and Witness Care Unit:
any notice of appeal that has been made;
the date, time and location of any hearing;
the outcome of the appeal, including any changes to the original sentence.
You are also entitled to:
wait and be seated in court in an area separate from the appellant and their family and friends. The court will ensure this is done wherever possible;
be provided with a contact point at the Crown Court;
receive information about victim support services where appropriate and available.
(ii) If an application is made to appeal against a conviction or sentence to the Court of Appeal, or an application or appeal is made to the UK Supreme Court in a criminal case on a point of law.
You are entitled to be informed of the following by your Victim and Witness Care unit:
be told that the appellant has been given leave to appeal;
receive information about the date, time and location of any hearing;
be told if the appellant is to be released on bail pre-appeal or if the bail conditions have varied;
receive an update on any changes to hearing dates;
be provided with a contact point for the Criminal Appeal Office or UK Supreme Court staff;
be told about the result of the appeal. This includes any changes to the original sentence.
wait and be seated in court in an area separate from the appellant and their family and friends. The court staff will ensure this is done wherever possible. It is rare for the appellant to attend hearings in the Supreme Court. Special arrangements will be made for you if the appellant is present and you do not wish to sit in the courtroom;
request a copy from the Criminal Appeal Office or UK Supreme Court staff of the court's judgement in the case once it has been published.
Following grant of leave to appeal, if you are a bereaved close relative, in a qualifying case, you are entitled to be offered a meeting with the PPS to explain the nature of the appeal and the court processes.
Criminal Cases Review Commission
On receiving an application from an offender, the Criminal Cases Review Commission undertakes reviews of convictions and sentences imposed as a result of the offender's criminal offending. The Commission may refer a conviction or sentence for a fresh appeal if there is some new information or new argument which might mean the conviction is unsafe or the sentence too long. The Commission receives about 1000 applications from convicted persons every year and refers about 30-40 cases for a fresh appeal. When reviewing a case , the Commission will assess the potential impact on you and decide if you should be notified. The Commission will record the reasons for its decisions as to the form of contact with you and in appropriate cases will notify the police of those decisions.
You are entitled to be notified by the Commission if it deems there is a reasonable prospect of a review coming to your attention.
If the Commission decides that it is appropriate to contact you during the course of the review, the Commission will notify you that an application has been received and that the case is under review. Following the review, the Commission will decide if the conviction or sentence should be referred to the courts, and will notify you of its decision unless you have expressly asked not to be informed.
If the Commission decides that it is not appropriate to contact you during the review, but subsequently decides to refer the conviction or sentence to the courts, the presumption is that the Commission will inform you of the referral.

Am I entitled to support or protection after the trial? For how long?

You are entitled to access victim support services at any time, whether you have reported a crime or not, and after the conclusion of the investigation and prosecution.

What information will I be given if the offender is sentenced?

You are entitled to be informed by the Victim and Witness Care Unit of the sentence given to the suspect (if convicted). This includes a short explanation about the meaning and effect of the sentence.
You are entitled to be referred to the PPS who will answer any questions you may have about the sentence which the Victim and Witness Care Unit is not able to answer.
In addition to the entitlements outlined above, if you are a bereaved close relative, in a qualifying case, you are also entitled to be offered a meeting with the PPS representative who will explain the sentence given. This meeting will usually take place at court.

Will I be told if the offender is released (including early or conditional release) or escapes from prison?

If 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.

Prisoner Release Victim Information Scheme (PRVIS)

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.
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.
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.
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

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.
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 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

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.
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.

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4 - Compensation

What is the process for claiming damages from the offender? (e.g. court case, civil claim, adhesion procedure)

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 http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/compensation-criminal-injuries.

Court-ordered compensation

A magistrates' court can make a compensation order up to a maximum of £5,000 per charge. The Crown Court has unlimited powers, but should have regard to the means of the offender.
Compensation orders shall be for such amount as the court considers appropriate, taking into account any evidence and representations by the prosecution and defence.
Courts attach considerable importance to the making of compensation orders and must give reasons where they do not make an order.

The court ordered the offender to pay me damages/compensation. How do I make sure the offender pays?

Enforcement of compensation orders is a matter for the courts.

If the offender does not pay, can the state pay me an advance? Under what conditions?

No - there is no up-front payment of court ordered compensation in Northern Ireland.

Am I entitled to compensation from the state?

You may be eligible under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme, more information is available https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/compensation-criminal-injuries

Am I entitled to compensation if the offender is not convicted?

Under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme you may still be eligible for an award even if your assailant is not known, or is not convicted. More information is available at https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/compensation-criminal-injuries

Am I entitled to an emergency payment while I wait for the decision on my compensation claim?

Where Compensation Services have decided that you are eligible for a payment but cannot make a final decision then, they may consider making an interim payment. If they are unable to make a final decision this is likely to be because they are waiting until the long term impact of your injury is understood.

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5 - My rights to support and assistance

I am a victim of crime who do I contact for support and assistance?

Victim Support NI offers information about support services near. See Victim Charter and Witness Charter. http://www.victimsupportni.com/

Victim support hotline

The Victim Information Service includes a victim information line: +44 808 168 9293.

Is victim support free?

Yes.

What types of support can I receive from state services or authorities?

The police and the Victim and Witness Care Unit must provide you with information about where and how to get advice or support, including access to medical support, any specialist support (such as psychological support) and alternative accommodation.

What types of support can I receive from non-governmental organisations?

Many non-government organisations and charities provide assistance, support advice, counselling and other general and specialised services to victims of crime, nationality, regionally and locally.

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