

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR LEICESTERSHIRE

JOINT AUDIT, RISK & ASSURANCE PANEL

PAPER MARKED

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Report of	THE CHIEF CONSTABLE
Subject	THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME
Date	
Author	DETECTIVE SUPERINTENDENT CHRIS BAKER

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Panel with an update on the force's performance against the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales*.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members note the contents of this report.

Background

2. In November 2020 HM Ministry of Justice presented a revised Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales (VCOP) required by the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. A new Code was enacted in April 2021 with an expectation that police and Criminal Justice Partners ensure they comply with the 12 Rights of the Code, namely:
 1. The right 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, 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 not being met

3. Parliament is currently considering enshrining the rights in statute under a Victims' Bill.
4. Furthermore, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published two reports on victims' services for all forces, with a third report from the 2021/2022 PEEL inspection making Leicestershire-specific recommendations:

The Poor Relation: The Police and Crown Prosecution Service's response to crimes against older people (HMICFRS: 2019)

5. Recommendation: *The police don't consistently assess the needs of victims as set out in the relevant codes of practice and so the needs of victims aren't always met. Within six months, chief constables should make sure that victim needs assessments are always completed*

A Joint Thematic Inspection of the Police and Crown Prosecution Service's response to rape – Phase two: Post Charge (HMICFRS: 2022)

6. Recommendation 1: *Immediately, police and prosecutors should review and significantly improve communications with victims from the point of charge onwards*

PEEL 2021/2022 – An Inspection of Leicestershire Police

AFI: *The force doesn't always comply with the Code of Practice for victims of crime*

7. A significant amount of work has been undertaken by Leicestershire Police to improve the service provided to victims, embed the 12 Victims' Rights and achieve compliance. This report serves to consolidate the recommendations and Areas for Improvement and detail the work completed that has enabled Leicestershire Police to improve from a position to 36.2% compliance with police specific Rights in January 2022 to achieve consistently over 80% compliance for the last six months, indicating an increase in officer knowledge and understanding of VCOP resulting in improved victim service.

Governance

8. Governance of VCOP activity is through the VCOP Delivery Group held every six weeks- chaired by the Detective Superintendent with strategic responsibility for Victims' Services and attended by key stakeholders from across the force and from key commissioned services.
9. The VCOP Delivery Group addresses a number of issues associated with performance, training, increasing awareness and improving processes. Data from this meeting also feeds into the Force Crime and Operations Board, the Strategic Performance Development Board and the Local Policing STEPs performance meetings. It is also held to account through the Force's Investigations, CJ and Disclosure Board, chaired by DCC Sandall.

Performance Framework/ Compliance

10. A performance framework has been developed by the VCOP Delivery Group to enable a comprehensive understanding of the Force's compliance against the

12 Rights for the victim. The framework consists of a quantitative performance dashboard using the Microsoft PowerBi app and a qualitative audit regime. The framework has provided a baseline and enabled the identification of areas where processes could be changed and where gaps were present in frontline officer knowledge.

PowerBi Data

11. In January 2022 a VCOP Information Dashboard was created within PowerBi, linked to victim-based open investigations. The dashboard displays compliance with key police-specific elements of the Rights (one to seven), including the assessment of victims' support needs and provision of information.
12. The Force's policy is that a victim of crime should be updated at least every 28 days. For an investigation to be fully compliant, the victim's needs assessment and timely provision of updates (28 days) must both be achieved.
13. Completed needs assessments and victim updates are now routinely above 90% (93% and 91. 6% respectively at the time of writing). The overall compliance rate is affected if one of those two elements has not been completed.
14. *NOTE: The PowerBI data is drawn from "live" victim-based cases recorded in the Niche system. These include crimes which have been recorded, for example by the Crime Bureau having been received through WebStorm or Single Online Home, but contact has yet to be made with a victim. For this reason compliance can never be 100%.*

The full compliance figures are as follows:

Jan 2022	VCOP Fully compliant: 36.8%
Feb 2022	VCOP Fully compliant: 54.8%
May 2022	VCOP Fully compliant: 76.2%
July 2022	VCOP Fully Compliant 80.3%
Aug 2022	VCOP Fully Compliant 80.1%
Oct 2022	VCOP Fully Compliant 80.7%
Nov 2022	VCOP Fully Compliant 80.4%
Dec 2022	VCOP Fully Compliant 85.9%
Jan 2023	VCOP Fully Compliant 85.8%
Feb 2023	VCOP Fully Compliant 84.3%

15. The PowerBi Dashboard is both a performance monitor and an operational tool for officers to monitor their VCOP tasks using a traffic light system as it includes the capability to drill down from Force to departmental to individual officer level.

VCOP Audit

16. As a member of the NPCC Victims and Witnesses Performance Subgroup, the force adapted audit methodology from South Wales Police to track performance and understand compliance against the Victim Rights with a more

qualitative, “deep dive” assessment. This is now embedded with qualitative audits taking place every six months and which is reported to the VCOP Delivery Group. The VCOP audit examines charged and not charged crimes in the following categories:

- Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO)
- Domestic Abuse (DA)
- Violent Crime (excluding DA)
- Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC)
- Hate Crime

17. Alongside the needs assessment and victim update questions, the audit examines whether a victim was referred to an appropriate support service and the timeliness of this referral. This included referrals to Victim First, Project 360, Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA), Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy (ISVA), Social Care, etc. It has been shown that referrals through to support services have increased from 58.3% to 79.7% in the last audit.
18. The audit also examines the force’s compliance around Victim Personal Statements and use of Special Measures. A quantitative measure is also now available for VPS via PowerBi using file quality data.

Victim Satisfaction Data

19. Victim satisfaction data that is also used by the VCOP delivery group to triangulate the force’s victim service from the victim’s feedback against the quantitative and qualitative performance metrics.
20. The compliance figures remain above 70% for overall victim confidence, and the VCOP related questions satisfaction rate is an average of 87.3% for the last six months.

Training & Internal Communications

21. Training packages have been delivered to frontline officers to ensure comprehensive understanding of the 12 Rights, the use of VPS and the tools available to officers to support their service provided to victims. This training was supported by an internal communications campaign which included Intranet latest news articles, direct emails and a video outlining the VCOP performance dashboard and initial contact Occurrence Enquiry Log on the Niche crime recording system. The success of this training and communications has been evident in the increased VCOP compliance shown by the dashboard.

Specialist RASSO Training

22. For RASSO offences, a bespoke RASSO training course has been developed and attended by all specialist rape investigators (Signal Team). Service to victims and victim care were a key part of this input, including in addition to the 12 Rights; the enhanced rights to vulnerable or intimidated victims, delivering a trauma-informed approach, the role of intermediaries, available special measures and their application (including special measures meetings), understanding the role of the ISVA and the purpose, requirements and use of the VPS. It also reiterated that officers and ISVAs maintain communication with

victims throughout the case to trial, that this is a core part of their responsibilities. This is “business as usual” for Signal officers.

VCOP Booklet

23. To coincide with the launch of the new Code in April 2021, the force designed its own Information for Victims of Crime booklet, detailing the 12 Rights in English and translated into the five non-English languages most spoken in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (Punjabi, Gujarati, Urdu, Polish and Somali). The booklet is available in both digital and physical formats. The booklet was highly regarded by the NPCC who then adopted this and rebranded (with force permission) in order to share nationally with all forces.
24. With regard to Right 1, the delivery group recognised that children and young people would benefit from a bespoke tool tailored to use of mobile devices and commissioned through the De Montfort University two innovative apps, developed by students as part of their IT development degree, to deliver the rights in a game format. This innovation is nearing completion.

Bespoke Victim Handbook for RASSO Offences

25. The Victim Handbook: Reporting Sexual Offences - Information and Support Guide from Leicestershire Police has been finalised and published. It is available in both digital and hard copies. Options and costings to translate the booklet into different languages are currently being scoped.

Victim Notification Service

26. Compliance with the Right of the Victim to have their crime recorded and be informed of the crime reference number is improved by the automated notification system that has been implemented. For appropriate offences, a message with their crime number, a link to the VCOP booklet and Victim First is sent to the victim automatically as soon as the crime is recorded on the force's Niche crime recording system. The development went live in August 2022.

Victim Support Services

27. The force works with a number of commissioned services and charities that provide support to the victims. The OPCC and Local Authorities contract manage the commissioning services, however the force is included in associated meetings for example DCI Batchelor is included attends as a key stakeholder for DA and RASSO requirements. There are a number of commissioned services offering both general victim support (Victim First) and more specialist services. These specialist services include a variety of support, for example: Freeva (ISVA/ Child ISVA or CHISVA and IDVA provision), Project 360 (DA), Turning Point (substance misuse) and Victim Navigators (Modern Slavery).

Victim First

28. Commissioned by the OPCC, Victim First is a free, independent and confidential service for victims and witnesses of crime across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The referral data is captured from Victim First and

used within the VCOP Delivery Group to ensure that referrals are being made where necessary, and victims are given the opportunity to access the support available.

Total referrals: Oct – Dec 2022: 4,948
= Police referrals 4,223 (85%), Third Party referrals 686 (14%), Self-referrals 39 (1%)

Support provided: Enhanced Support – 407

Restorative Justice Referrals: 21

29. Communications have recently been published on the force intranet to ensure that officers are indicating on Pronto (a crime recording app on mobile devices) the services that have been discussed with the victim to ensure that the victim is referred to the correct service in a timely manner. The officers also include any services already involved or in place to ensure a collaborative approach is achieved.

Sexual Violence Advocacy

30. ISVA and CHISVA support is provided by Freeva for children and adult victims of sexual offences respectively. Alongside the officer referrals, the Sexual Offence Referral centre (SARC) reviews Sexual Offence Act Section 1 and 2 offences in their daily review to ensure that appropriate support has been offered to all victims of RASSO offences. At the point of charge, Signal and CAIU officers revisit the offer of support of an ISVA/CHISVA if previously declined to ensure support through the trial process.
31. An ISVA/ CHISVA, Police and CPS working group is in place, and is linked in to implementing the ISVA/ CHISVA framework alongside the Joint National Action Plan. An ISVA forum has been held between police and ISVAs to identify issues, to obtain feedback on the victim's experience and explore ways in which the relationship between the police, ISVAs (and CPS) could be improved. Findings from this forum have been shared with supervisors, and communications have been disseminated to the team regarding communication with the ISVAs and the remit of the ISVA role (covered in RASSO training).
32. The VOICES Project has been publicly launched and recruitment has been successful. This work will establish a diverse sexual violence and lived experience group for LLR. The group enables the voices of survivors to be heard and to take an active part in shaping key policy and recommendations in this area. The group met face to face for the first time on March 3rd 2023, agreed the TOR, and provided good contributions and insight. The group also worked through issues within the Sexual Violence and Abuse Partnership and services which were noted and categorised across a scale of importance and urgency. These themes will be used to create a draft delivery plan to take to the next Response to Sexual Violence (R2SV) multi-agency meeting, where priorities will be added and work commenced.

The Witness Care Unit

33. Leicestershire Witness Care Unit makes contact with victims of crime from after the First Court Appearance through to when the cases concluded. They provide updates after significant hearings: First Court Appearance, defendant bail applications and bail variations, outcome of sentence hearings, guilty plea adjournments for sentence or not guilty plea adjournments for trial. They will discuss the court process if the victim is required to give evidence, discuss a referral to the Witness Service for a pre-trial visit and special measures, childcare, interpreting services, travel requirements and accommodation. Each case is allocated to a nominated Witness Care officer who remain the victim's single point of contact.
34. The recent performance information provided to the Force VCOP Delivery Group is shown below.

Witness Service referrals		
Victims/Witnesses Supported at Court (108 vulnerable and/or intimidated)	310	
Vulnerable/ intimidated victims & witnesses supported by Outreach	6	
Victims/ Witnesses who had a pre-trial visit	47	
Victims/ Witnesses who were referred to support agencies	17	
Referrals made by Witness Care to Witness Service	69	
Witness Care Referrals to Victim Contact Scheme		
October 2022	65 % on time	35% late
November 2022	63% on time	37% late

35. The WCU are building some very good working relationships with Freeva and Living Without Abuse so that the support offered to victims of serious sexual offences are more comprehensive.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority

36. Quarterly performance data for compensation applied for by victims, including applications received, processed and returned are also reported to the VCOP Delivery Group. These are monitored to ensure that applications are made by victims where appropriate, as well as ensuring that the number of applications yet to be processed is not an unmanageable backlog with lengthy timescales.

The most recent data for Oct-Dec 2022 is below:

Applications received	344
Applications processed & returned	226
Applications awaiting officer replies	19
Applications yet to be processed	99

Victim Personal Statements

37. Since June 2022 VPS training has been rolled out to all frontline officers as part of the CJ Improvement Programme (Op Excel). Communications about the right to make a VPS has been cascaded to all supervisors and reinforced in briefings along with key messaging published on the Intranet. Information regarding the VPS process is also available to the victim in the Victim Information Booklet. VPS compliance is monitored through the internal VCOP audit and through the Prosecution Team data now available on PowerBi. Current processes dictate that at the point of submitting a file to CPS the victim should have been offered the opportunity to make a VPS. If the victim declines this, the reasons should be recorded.
38. The July – Dec 2021 VCOP audits indicated 80%+ compliance in 4/6 questions.
39. File quality data for the last 12 months (March 2022 to March 2023) identified out of 1,493 case files submitted to the Prosecution Team, 837 (56.6%) were fully compliant with witness needs specifically: Is a Victim Personal Statement attached If not, was it offered and refused?; Does form MG6 detail person to read the VPS in court? If Special Measures are required, has the relevant form (MG2) been submitted.
40. This is an area for focussed improvement by the Prosecutions Team, particularly with regard to frontline police responders with the majority of non-compliant cases (831) being submitted by officers in the Local Policing Directorate.
41. In addition, all specialist RASSO investigators have received VPS inputs as part of their RASSO training programme. RASSO investigators offer and support victims of rape to make a VPS during their initial statement/video interview. All VPS will be taken in advance of any first court hearings and revisited throughout the investigation. In conjunction with investigator support, all victims of rape are referred and actively encouraged to engage with our ISVA support scheme. Part of the ISVA role is to support the victims throughout the investigation and court processes which includes supporting the victim to provide a second VPS if appropriate.

The Victim Right To Review (VRR) Scheme

42. The force has a robust procedure for the management of VRRs in place. Requests are triaged by the Crime Bureau Detective Inspector and allocated to an officer of a rank higher than the decision-maker, usually an Inspector, for review. Findings of the review and provided by the reviewer directly and are shared with the Serious Case review team to ensure that any themes and learning are captured and processed accordingly. The data regarding VRRs is also tracked by the VCOP Delivery Group to ensure oversight and understanding of the volume and content of requests.

43. Between Oct and Dec 2022:

- 28 VRR requests were received
- 16 were eligible for review
- 4 were re-opened for further investigation,
- A further 3 resulted in the decision being overturned but were prevented from further progression due to being statute-barred
- 9 resulted in the decision being upheld.
- All applications were triaged within the prescribed 10 working days
- Two Inspector reviews were not completed within the 30-day time scale – one due to volume of material for review, one agreed with victim that timescale to be increased.

Future Progress

44. Whilst Leicestershire Police have made significant progress on services to victims, work is still ongoing to identify further areas that could be enhanced, alongside continually reviewing performance and current processes.
45. One area that work is still continuing in is building upon VPS awareness for frontline officers and the specialist departments. The provision of the Prosecution Team data in a PowerBi dashboard is enabling a more targeted approach in understanding the use of VPS and when/if officers are offering victims the option to complete one. Enhancing awareness is a priority of the VCOP Delivery Group, and performance is being monitored for cases where a VPS is appropriate. This will continue through 2023/24.
46. A New Outcome 16 template for investigations in which a named suspect is identified but the victim withdraws support for prosecution or other police action has been developed to ensure auditable records are signposted, demonstrate through the consideration of investigative and support opportunities, and capture key information which will help the Force understand why and when victims withdraw their support. This as a specific area for improvement identified by HMICFRS. This innovation has been shared with East Midlands forces through their Heads of Public Protection to develop a standard approach to ensure investigations are robust, decisions are rationalised and justified and will in time provide vital information to help us better safeguard victims and bring offenders to justice. The template was introduced in February 2023, with plans to develop a PowerBI app to ensure compliance with its creation.

Implications

Financial None

Equality impact assessment None

Risks and impact Probability of Risk = 2 Unlikely
Impact of Consequences (reputational / legal) = 3 Major
Overall risk = 6 Low

Link to Police and Crime Plan “Supporting Victims of Crime” – Because Victims Matter
P.27 of the LLR Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024

Appendices

Appendix A:Leicestershire Police Information for Victims Leaflet

Persons to contact

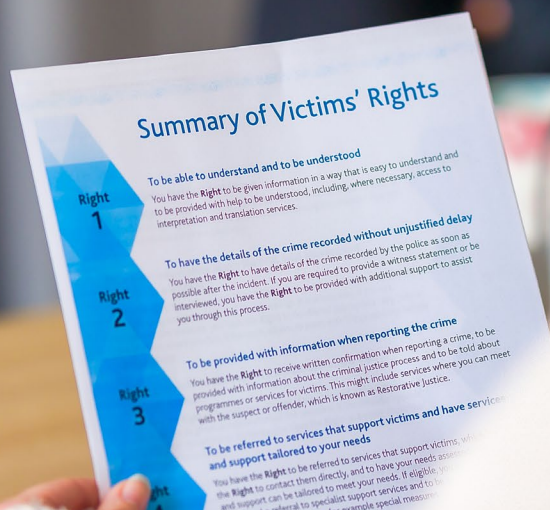
Detective Superintendent Chris Baker

Email: christopher.baker@leics.police.uk



Leicestershire
Police
Protecting our communities

Information for Victims of Crime



Crime/occurrence/
incident number:

Type of offence:

Officer attending:

Officer investigating:

Officer's investigating
contact details:

Date

occurred:

Date

reported:



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Introduction

Leicestershire Police is committed to providing an outstanding service to victims and witnesses by putting them at the heart of what we do.

This booklet is designed to help people affected by crime understand the services on offer in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and sets out what you can expect from the police and others whose job it is to help you.

There are a range of local services available to you through a free, independent and confidential service called Victim First. They help people cope and recover from crime whether they need access to information and advice over the phone or more specialist services such as one-to-one counselling. You may not want contact from Victim First at the moment but please keep this booklet in case you might like to do so in the future.

Victims of crime have 12 rights that are set out in a national Code of Practice called the Victims' Code. These include the right to have written confirmation when reporting a crime; have services and support tailored to your needs; information on what to expect from the Criminal Justice System and being provided with information about the investigation and any possible prosecution.

We know that being a victim of crime, or a witness, can be distressing and at times a life changing event. It can affect different people in different ways.

Please be reassured that you do not have to face this situation on your own; there are teams of people who will help you every step of the way and the information in this booklet should help you know more about what is on offer.

What are you entitled to under the Victims' Code?

If you are a victim of crime in England or Wales you are entitled to support from the criminal justice agencies under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime if you are an individual or business, even if you don't report the incident to the police.



1 To be able to understand and to be understood

You have the **Right** to be given information in a way that is easy to understand and to be provided with help to be understood, including, where necessary, access to interpretation and translation services.



2 To have the details of the crime recorded without unjustified delay

You have the **Right** to have details of the crime recorded by the police as soon as possible after the incident. If you are required to provide a witness statement or be interviewed, you have the **Right** to be provided with additional support to assist you through this process.



3 To be provided with information when reporting the crime

You have the **Right** to receive written confirmation when reporting a crime, to be provided with information about the criminal justice process and to be told about programmes or services for victims. This might include services where you can meet with the suspect or offender, which is known as Restorative Justice.



4 To be referred to services that support victims and have services and support tailored to your needs

You have the **Right** to be referred to services that support victims, which include the **Right** to contact them directly, and to have your needs assessed so services and support can be tailored to meet your needs. If eligible, you have the **Right** to be offered a referral to specialist support services and to be told about additional support available at court, for example special measures.



5 To be provided with information about compensation

Where eligible, you have the **Right** to be told about how to claim compensation for any loss, damage or injury caused as a result of crime.



6 To be provided with information about the investigation and prosecution

You have the **Right** to be provided with updates on your case and to be told when important decisions are taken. You also have the **Right**, at certain stages of the justice process, to ask for decisions to be looked at again by the relevant service provider.

What are you entitled to under the Victims' Code?



7 To make a Victim Personal Statement

You have the **Right** to make a Victim Personal Statement, which tells the court how the crime has affected you and is considered when sentencing the offender. You will be given information about the process.



10 To be paid expenses and have property returned

If you are required to attend court and give evidence, you have the **Right** to claim certain expenses. If any of your property was taken as evidence, you have the **Right** to get it back as soon as possible.



8 To be given information about the trial, trial process and your role as a witness

If your case goes to court, you have the **Right** to be told the time, date and location of any hearing and the outcome of those hearings in a timely way. If you are required to give evidence, you have the **Right** to be offered appropriate help before the trial and, where possible, if the court allows, to meet with the prosecutor before giving evidence.



11 To be given information about the offender following a conviction

Where eligible, you have the **Right** to be automatically referred to the Victim Contact Scheme, which will provide you with information about the offender and their progress in prison, and if/when they become eligible for consideration of parole or release. Where applicable, you also have the **Right** to make a new Victim Personal Statement, in which you can say how the crime continues to affect you.



9 To be given information about the outcome of the case and any appeals

You have the **Right** to be told the outcome of the case and, if the defendant is convicted, to be given an explanation of the sentence. If the offender appeals against their conviction or sentence, you have the **Right** to be told about the appeal and its outcome.



12 To make a complaint about your Rights not being met

If you believe that you have not received your **Rights**, you have the **Right** to make a complaint to the relevant service provider. If you remain unhappy, you can contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

These are the statutory rights of victims and witnesses set down in law from April 2021. You can find more detailed information here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936239/victims-code-2020.pdf

What is Victim First and how can they help me?



As a victim of crime, the police will ask your permission to pass on your information, and contact details, to Victim First who will make contact with you within 48 hours. This will form part of a 'Victim Contract' with the investigating team.

This victim-led service is designed to ensure that the needs of the victim and witness are put first and foremost at every stage of the justice process. It is free, independent of the police and confidential. Victim First have a team of professional caseworkers, supported by a team of dedicated and highly trained volunteers, to help support victims through their journey of recovery.

Victim First works in partnership with Leicestershire Police and other agencies offering support, information and guidance across a wide range of areas. The service is commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and delivered by Catch22.

Victim First offers:

- Someone to talk to in confidence (face to face meetings or telephone support)
- Information and advice
- Advocacy with the police and other organisations on behalf of victims
- Signposting to specialist organisations
- Practical support (target hardening, personal alarms)
- Mental health support (in-house mental health nurse)
- Facilitation of restorative justice (Restorative justice gives victims the chance to meet or communicate with their offenders to explain the real impact of the crime – it empowers victims by giving them a voice. It also holds offenders to account for what they have done and helps them to take responsibility and make amends)

You can call Victim First whether the crime is recent or in the past. They will support you even if you choose not to report the incident to the police.

Victim First Helpline: 0800 953 95 95

Email: support@victimfirst.pnn.gov.uk

Online: www.victimfirst.org

If you have been a victim of a violent offence or your crime involves injury, loss or damage, you may be eligible for compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA). You can apply for compensation whether someone has been prosecuted for the offence or not. To find out more, visit: www.cica.gov.uk or call CICA on 03000 033601.

You will need to give accurate details of the injury, loss or damage and keep any relevant receipts so compensation can be claimed.

Other useful contacts

Citizens Advice

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Crimestoppers

www.crimestoppers-uk.org 0800 555 111

Her Majesty's Court's and Tribunal Service

www.gov.uk/going-to-court-victim-witness/help-getting-to-the-court

Crown Prosecution Service

www.cps.gov.uk 0116 204 6700

Leicestershire Police Witness Care Unit

Witness.CareUnit@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk
or call 101, ask for Leicestershire Police Witness Care Unit

Neighbourhood Link – sign up to our community messaging scheme to receive regular emails about what is happening in your area
www.neighbourhoodlink.co.uk

What happens now I've reported a crime?

You will be asked to provide additional details about what happened so that the police can establish whether there is sufficient information available to start a criminal investigation. If there isn't sufficient information, or a decision is later made to close a criminal investigation without taking any further action, you will be given a reason why.

Your crime will be dealt with by an investigating officer who will seek to obtain evidence to support a potential prosecution, or out of court disposal, for those responsible for your crime. Evidence could include forensic material; witness statements/video-recorded testimony; house-to-house enquiries and CCTV footage (among other things).

The investigating officer will agree to keep you updated at least every 28 days by your preferred method of contact. You can request more regular updates.

The officer will also discuss with you whether an appeal in the media and/or on social media might help to find other witnesses or appeal for information which could help the investigation. If this is the case, your personal details will not be released. Appeals are not issued for all crimes.

For vulnerable and intimidate victims and witnesses there are special measures that can be put in place to support you giving evidence.

So what will happen with my witness statement?

By making a statement, or providing a video-recorded account, you are assisting the investigation which may help to bring any offenders to justice.

If a suspect is charged with an offence you may be asked to attend court in order to give evidence. If your statement is agreed by the CPS and defence then they may choose to rely solely on your statement and you will not be asked to go to court.

To help the police investigate your crime you should let them know:

- If you remember something that is not already included in any statement you give
- If your contact details change

- If the crime involved any type of hostility, for example if you were targeted because of your race, sexuality, religion, disability or gender identity, or perceived race, sexuality, religion, disability or gender identity
- If you have any specific needs, for example, mobility, communication or religious requirements

Who will see my witness statement?

Everyone involved in the case will see your statement / testimony, so when you provide a statement your personal details will be withheld. When you provide a statement please do not include personal information, unless it is relevant to the circumstances of the incident. More information about giving a witness statement is available at; www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-new-leaflet-giving-a-witness-statement-to-the-police-what-happens-next



Dealing with your crime

During an investigation, if someone is arrested they may be questioned and a decision will be made about what will happen to them.

Depending on the offence, this decision is taken either by the police or the Crown Prosecution Service.

There are several ways the offender can be dealt with including:

- being charged or summonsed and brought before the courts or required to attend court
- being subject to an out of court disposal such as a caution
- undertaking a community resolution or restorative justice
- being released with no further action

If you are unhappy with a decision not to prosecute, you may be entitled to The Victims' Right to Review (VRR) Scheme www.leics.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/acr/vrr/victims-right-review-scheme/

If someone is charged or summonsed and sent to court, we will contact you and advise you of the first court date and explain the process. If after the first hearing there has been a guilty plea we will inform you of the outcome.

If a not guilty plea is entered by the defendant, the Witness Care Unit at Leicestershire Police will contact you following the first court date. They will update you, provide you with the necessary information and practical support should you be required to attend court to give evidence and refer you, with your permission, to other organisations who may be able to offer other types of support.

If your case is sent to the Crown Court for further hearings, the Witness Care Unit will maintain contact with you and provide updates and support in line with the Victims' Code of Practice.

It is important that you contact the Witness Care Unit if your contact details change.

Making a Victim Personal Statement (VPS)

A Victim Personal Statement (VPS) is a written or recorded statement that explains in your own words how a crime has affected you, physically, emotionally, financially or in any other way.

The VPS is considered by the judge or magistrate when determining what sentence the defendant should receive and can also help service providers to consider what additional support you and / or your family may require.

To help you decide whether you wish to make a VPS, you have the right to be provided with information about the VPS process by the police when reporting a crime. If you decide to make a VPS, you will be asked whether you would like to read your statement aloud in court or have it read on your behalf. You can request a copy from the police and will be given an opportunity to make an additional personal statement to reflect the changing impact of the crime. You do not have to read your VPS yourself or have it read on your behalf. You can change your mind. Your VPS will be considered by the judge or magistrate in the same way, whether or not it is read (or played) aloud in court.

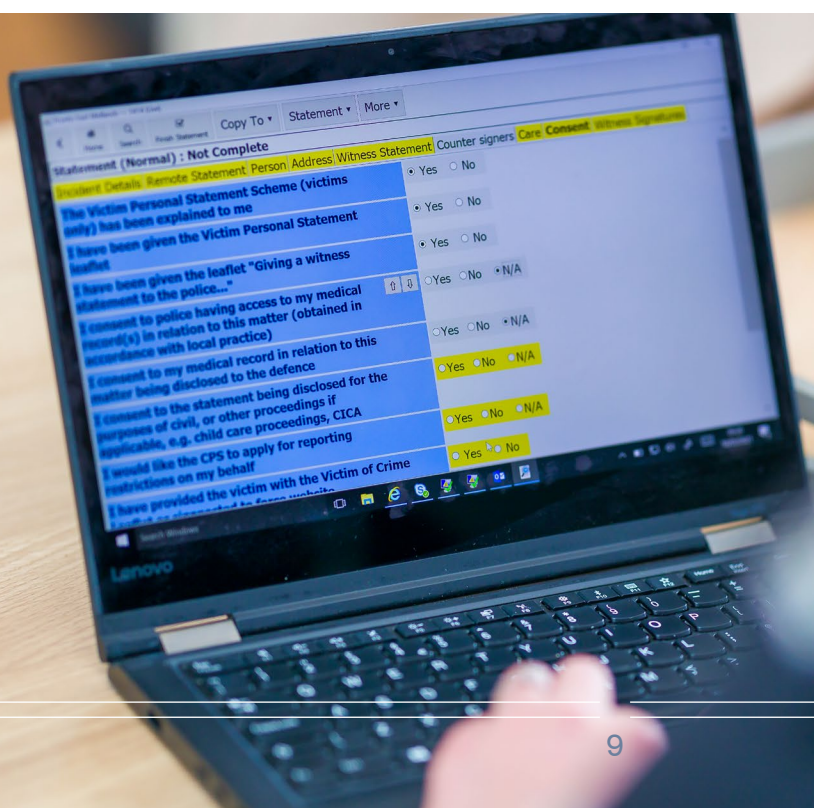
All victims of crimes are entitled to make a VPS if they wish to do so.

If you are a bereaved close relative, you also have the right to make a VPS and the right to have someone with you when you do so.

If the defendant pleads guilty, or is found guilty, and you have asked that your statement is read aloud (or played) in court, the judge or magistrate will decide whether and what sections of your personal statement should be read aloud (or played), and who should read it. The judge or magistrate will always take your preference into account when making their decision, unless there is a good reason not to do so. The Witness Care Unit will let you know the judge's or magistrate decision.

The judge or magistrate will consider your VPS and the level of harm caused to you by the offence, along with the other evidence.

For further information, visit: www.gov.uk/government/publications/victim-personal-statement



Business Impact Statement (BIS)

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.

Will I have to go to court?

It is important to say at this point that in the event that you are required to go to court, you will be given support through Leicestershire Police, Witness Care Unit and Victim First, if requested.

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 he or she 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. If you are asked to go to court, you will be sent a letter telling you when and where to go and an explanatory leaflet.

Extra help is available to support vulnerable or intimidated witnesses. The Witness Care Unit, Witness Service, the police or the CPS will tell you what type of help is available. More information about being a witness is available from www.cjsonline.org/witness or www.cjsonline.org/victims for victims of crime.

As part of the initial investigation, the team will assess your case with a view to put in place further special provisions (such as screens), which may be requested to give you more confidence in giving evidence. This assessment will be completed at a very early stage for the request to be made prior to any court case. We know that this is often a very real fear of victims of crime, but we will get you through the court processes together.

Crime prevention advice and further information



We do understand that being a victim of crime can leave you feeling vulnerable. Victim First is there should you need them for support and free and independent advice about the investigation and criminal justice process.

There are ways in which you can make yourself feel safer by taking a few simple security measures and thinking carefully about what information you put online.

There is lots of very useful crime prevention advice on Leicestershire Police's website www.leics.police.uk/cp

You can also sign up to our community messaging scheme called Neighbourhood Link at www.neighbourhoodlink.co.uk. This will enable you to receive information and advice from the police and you can feedback on local policing priorities.

 [@LeicsPolice](https://twitter.com/LeicsPolice)

 [Leicestershire Police](https://www.facebook.com/LeicestershirePolice)

 [leicestershire_police](https://www.instagram.com/leicestershire_police)

www.leics.police.uk

Notes / further questions: