



Department of

Justice

www.dojni.gov.uk

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Contents

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Introduction | 3 |
| 1. Path through the Criminal Justice System | 11 |
| 2. Police Service of Northern Ireland | 15 |
| 3. Victim Support Northern Ireland | 19 |
| 4. NSPCC Young Witness Service | 23 |
| 5. Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland | 27 |
| 6. Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service | 33 |
| 7. Northern Ireland Prison Service | 37 |
| 8. Probation Board for Northern Ireland | 43 |
| 9. Youth Justice Agency of Northern Ireland | 47 |
| 10. Compensation Agency | 53 |
| 11. Monitoring Performance | 59 |
| 12. Complaints Procedures | 63 |
| 13. Organisations providing help and support to victims | 67 |

Introduction

If you have been a victim of a crime, or you lose a loved one through crime, you may come into contact with a number of different organisations and people who work in the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland.

This code of practice describes how you can expect to be treated by the criminal justice agencies (the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Public Prosecution Service, the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service, the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland, the Youth Justice Agency and the Compensation Agency) and voluntary-sector support organisations – Victim Support Northern Ireland (VSNI) and the NSPCC.

Each organisation wants to make sure that you receive relevant information and support, and they will treat you with dignity, respect and sensitivity.

Access to information

You will be given relevant information, at the appropriate time, throughout the criminal justice process. This includes information on:

- your role in the criminal justice process;
- the progress of your case at certain stages in the process (giving an explanation for any delays if possible);
- what you can expect if you are going to court;
- the outcome of criminal proceedings; and
- where you can get more information and help.

Each organisation will:

- make sure that the information they give you is easy to understand;
- provide information in other languages and formats (for example, in Braille, in large print, on CD) if possible;

- tell you who to contact if you want to discuss any of the information you receive;
- provide an interpreter or signer, or whatever help might be appropriate;
- tell you as much as they can about how a decision has been made; and
- take whatever steps are necessary to help you use their services.

Please tell the organisations if you have any special requirements, such as wheelchair access or induction loops.

Contacting you

An organisation may need to speak to you about what happened to you before, during or after the crime, and the effect the crime had or still has on you.

When they contact you, they will explain who they are, why they are contacting you, what you can expect from them, and what will happen next.

Special measures

‘Special measures’ are measures which have been put in place to help vulnerable and intimidated witnesses (including victims) give evidence in court.

Vulnerable witnesses include people who:

- are children under 18 years of age;
- have mental health issues, such as bi-polar, OCD and schizophrenia;
- have learning difficulties, such as ADHD, autism and selective/elective mutism;
- have neurological and other progressive disorders, such as brain/head injury, dementia and multiple sclerosis;
- have physical disabilities such as deafness.

Intimidated witnesses are those witnesses who are in fear of or distressed at the prospect of giving evidence. Victims of sexual assault fall into this category. Other witnesses who may be considered to be intimidated witnesses are those who:

- have experienced domestic violence;
- have been harassed, bullied or victimised;
- are a victim of human trafficking;
- neglect or harm themselves;
- are old and frail;
- are witnesses in a murder trial; or
- are making allegations against professionals or carers.

If your case is passed to the Public Prosecution Service, and you become a witness for the prosecution, the prosecutor will consider asking the court for permission to use special measures to help you when giving evidence. If the judge decides that you should be allowed to use special measures, the prosecutor will explain how the special measures will be used in court. Special measures may include the following:

- **The use of screens** – A screen or curtain can be put up when you are giving your evidence so that you cannot see the defendant.
- **The use of live link** – This allows you to give your evidence through a live televised link (live link) from a room which is separate from the Courtroom. The live link room is usually in the same building as the Courtroom, although it can be from a different location. The television is linked to the Courtroom so that everyone, including the defendant, can see and hear you as you give your evidence. You will be asked questions in the same way as you would if you were present in the Court. A person, known as a “supporter”, can be present with you in the live link room.

- **Giving evidence in private** - When you are giving your evidence, members of the public will be removed from the Courtroom. Only legal representatives involved in the case, the defendant and one member of the media can stay in the Courtroom. This special measure is only used in sexual offence cases, where very personal and sensitive evidence may be given, or in cases where you have been or are likely to be intimidated. This special measure is intended to reduce the embarrassment or sense of intimidation that you might experience while you give evidence.
- **The removal of wigs and gowns** – Judges and lawyers involved in cases in the Crown Court can remove their wigs and gowns to create a less formal Court setting and to help reduce your anxiety.
- **The use of video recorded interviews** - The police can video record your evidence in chief and this will then be played as your evidence in Court. Everyone in the Courtroom will see and hear your video but you will not be present. You will have to answer questions from the defendant's lawyer (cross-examination) - this usually takes place by live link.
- **The use of communication aids** - these are intended to assist you if you are a vulnerable witness

This may include using a symbol book or alphabet board.

Other guidance available

More details of the role of each criminal justice agency and voluntary-sector partners is given in the following three guides.

- A Guide to Northern Ireland's Criminal Justice System for Victims and Witnesses of Crime.
- A Guide to Northern Ireland's Criminal Justice System for bereaved families and friends following murder or manslaughter.
- Information, help and support for adult victims of rape and sexual assault in Northern Ireland.

These guides are on the following websites.

www.nidirect.gov.uk

www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications.htm

Each organisation has its own website which gives more information on their services.

Confidentiality

Each organisation's services are confidential. Any information about you is protected by data protection laws and will not be revealed to anyone without your permission, unless there are exceptional circumstances (for example, when the information must be released by law in child protection or adult protection cases). The Data Protection Act 1998 sets out your rights relating to information held about you.

Feedback

Each organisation is committed to improving their service to victims of crime. To do this they may ask you for feedback on how you have been treated and how you think their services could be improved. You may also be invited to take part in the Northern Ireland Victim and Witness Survey.

Format of this code of practice

This code of practice is divided into 13 sections.

- Section 1 identifies the path that you will follow through the criminal justice system and the organisations you will come in contact with.
- Sections 2 to 10 describe the role of each organisation, how you can expect to be treated by them, and how to complain about their service.

- Section 11 describes how the organisations will monitor their performance to make sure they provide a good service to victims.
- Section 12 gives details of independent organisations you can complain to if you are unhappy with services provided by an organisation.
- Section 13 gives contact details for criminal justice agencies and voluntary-sector support organisations this code applies to, along with other support organisations that can help victims.

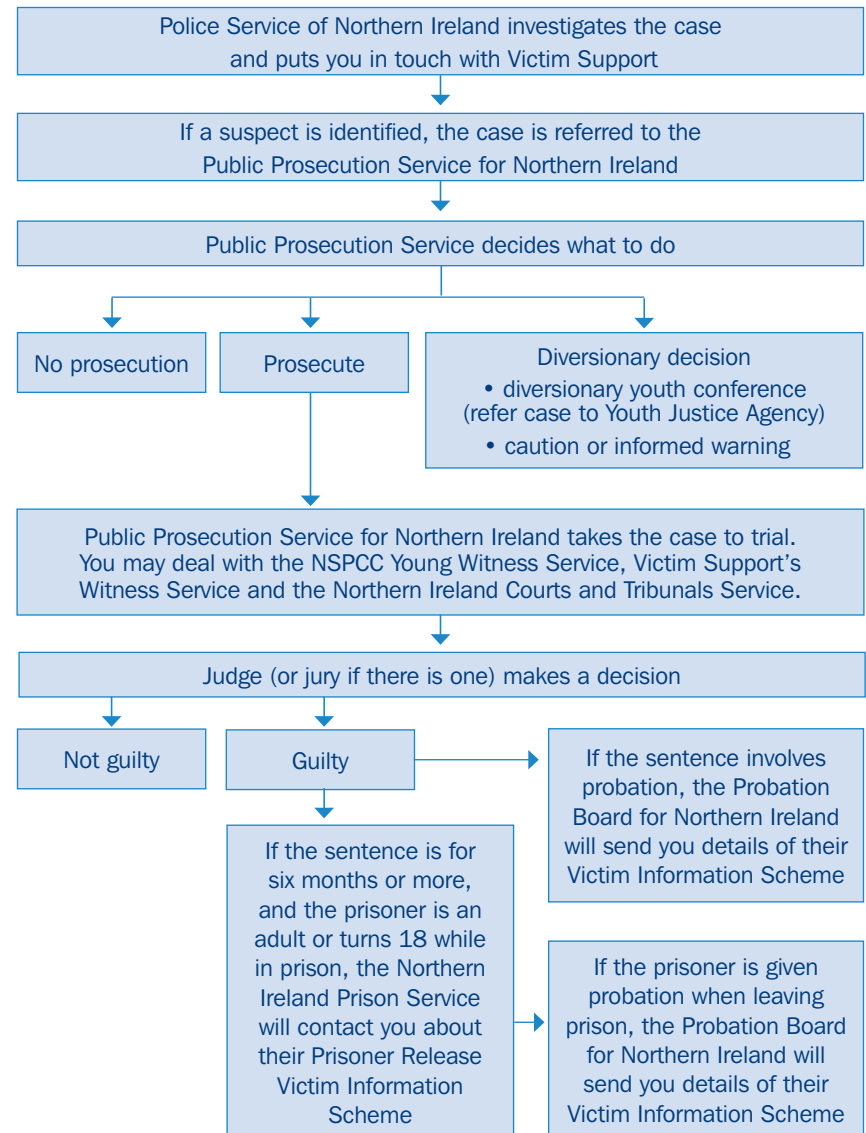
Please note that this code of practice is only a guide. It is not a legal document and does not give you legal rights.

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Part I

Part I

Path through the Criminal Justice System



Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Part 2

Part 2

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Our purpose

To work with communities and partners to make Northern Ireland safe, confident and peaceful.

Our vision

'To be the finest, personal, professional and protective police service in the world'.

Services provided to victims of crime

When you report a crime, the Police Service of Northern Ireland will do the following.

- Assist you promptly and treat you in a polite and fair way.
- Give you a Victim Information Card which will provide you with your Crime Reference Number, the name and contact details of your investigating officer and where they are stationed. It will also tell you details of the PSNI Contact Management Support Unit which you can contact if your investigating officer is unavailable.
- If you agree, pass your contact details to Victim Support Northern Ireland. Contact details of which are on your Victim Information Card.
- Update you within 10 days of what we are doing to investigate your crime. If it is appropriate we will give you further updates (and agree with you when these updates will be).
- Update you when there has been a significant change regarding the investigation e.g. when someone has been arrested for the offence or has been charged to appear in court.

- In case of murder, manslaughter or road death, appoint a Family Liaison Officer to manage communication between you and the police investigation team.
- If you are a victim of child abuse or rape, have your case investigated by a specialist team.
- If you are a vulnerable or intimidated victim, aim to identify your needs, try to meet those needs when dealing with your case, and pass information about your needs to the Public Prosecution Service so that they can continue to support you.
- If you are applying for compensation, give the necessary information to the Compensation Agency and issue the relevant certificates as soon as possible.

Feedback and complaints

The Police Service of Northern Ireland welcomes your feedback. However, If you have any concerns about the service you have received from the Police Service of Northern Ireland, you should contact your local police station.

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Part 3

Part 3

Victim Support Northern Ireland

Role

Victim Support Northern Ireland is a charity providing support to people who are victims of or have witnessed crime. When you have been a victim of crime, the police will let Victim Support Northern Ireland know, unless you do not want them to.

All Victim Support Northern Ireland staff and volunteers are carefully selected and will show you their identity card.

Services provided to victims of crime

Victim Support Northern Ireland will do the following.

- Phone or write to you within five working days of getting your contact details.
- Offer you the opportunity to speak to them in confidence about your experience.
- If you've experienced a violent crime, give you information, advice and support through the Criminal Injury Compensation process.

If you have to attend court, Victim Support Northern Ireland will do the following.

- Offer to accompany you throughout the process.
- Give you the opportunity to visit a court before the trial, and explain what happens in court.
- If possible, arrange a separate waiting area for you at the court.

After the trial has ended, Victim Support Northern Ireland will do the following.

- Offer you further support.
- Where appropriate, and with your permission, refer you to other help and support.

Feedback and complaints

If you are unhappy with any service you receive from Victim Support Northern Ireland, tell them as soon as possible so that they can try to put things right. If you would like to take the matter further, fill in and return a complaints form which you can get from any Victim Support Northern Ireland offices or from the witness room of the court. All complaints will be acknowledged within five working days of being received. Victim Support Northern Ireland will carry out an investigation and you will receive a written response as soon as possible, which will be within one month of the date the complaint is received. You can contact Victim Support Northern Ireland at:

Victim Support Northern Ireland
Annsgate House
70/74 Ann Street
Belfast
BT1 4EH

Phone: 028 9024 4039
Supportline: 0845 3030900
Email: info@victimsupportni.org.uk
Website: www.victimsupportni.co.uk

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Part 4

Part 4

NSPCC Young Witness Service

Role

The NSPCC Young Witness Service provides support and information for children and young people under the age of 18 who may have to give evidence in court, either as a victim or as a witness. The service also aims to help parents and carers support their child through the court process.

Services provided to victims of crime

- You will be offered support and information before, during and after a trial. This will include giving you the opportunity to see the court before the trial and to practise speaking on the TV-link equipment where this will be used at trial.
- Your needs as a witness will be assessed and we will work with other criminal justice agencies to meet those needs.
- Where appropriate, and with your agreement, you will be referred to other sources of help and support.
- The Young Witness Service will take action to address any child protection concerns or any issues relating to the safety of a child that may arise in a case which is known to the service.

Feedback and complaints

If you have a complaint regarding the Young Witness Service you should raise this directly with the service and we will try to resolve it promptly with you. If this does not resolve your complaint we will provide you with details of how to make a formal complaint.

Contact details for the NSPCC Young Witness Service are given in Section 13.

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Part 5

Part 5

Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland

Role

The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland is the main prosecuting authority for Northern Ireland. They aim to provide an independent, fair and effective prosecution service. Details of how they make decisions are given in the Code for Prosecutors, which you can get from their website:

www.ppsni.gov.uk.

Services provided to victims of crime

The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland is committed to making sure your best interests are taken into account as far as possible (though they cannot represent you in the same way a solicitor represents a client).

Providing information

The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland will contact you as follows.

- If the offence is serious, the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland will write to you when they have received the police file.
- If there has been a death and a suspect has been charged, the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland will tell you what their role is and give you details of who you can contact. A police family liaison officer will also contact you once the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland have decided whether or not to prosecute the suspect. They will tell you the decision before telling the suspect.
- In all cases, the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland will write to you when they have made a decision on whether or not to prosecute. (If they have decided not to prosecute, they will tell you why. In more serious cases, they will give you detailed reasons for that decision. In all cases you can ask for detailed reasons to be given to you. You can also ask to meet with the decision maker in the case).

Decision not to prosecute

If the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland decides not to prosecute, and you do not agree with that decision, you can ask them to review it. You can ask them directly or through a nominated representative (for example, a family member, solicitor, support group or public representative).

Decision to prosecute

If the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland decides to prosecute, the case will go to court. You will only have to give evidence if this is necessary to prove the case.

If the case goes to court but you do not need to give evidence, the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland will tell you the outcome of the trial and, if there is a conviction, the sentence given.

Giving evidence in court

The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland will give you information about coming to court to give evidence.

If you are a vulnerable or intimidated victim, the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland will apply to the court for special measures (if you qualify and you want to use them to give your evidence). The Public Prosecution Service will write to you to tell you if special measures have been granted and explain what these measures are. In some cases, the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland will apply for your identity not to be revealed, or reporting restrictions which prevent some details from being reported in the press.

When it is time for you to give evidence, the prosecutor will introduce himself or herself to you and will answer any questions you may have. If you have prepared a victim impact statement, (a personal statement describing the

effect the crime has had on you), the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland will make sure it is provided to the court. The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland will explain the procedure to you and will pay your reasonable expenses within a reasonable time.

If you have to give evidence and do not speak English, the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland will provide an interpreter for you free of charge.

If the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland think the way you are being cross-examined is inappropriate, or if the defence says something that is inaccurate, misleading or offensive, they will challenge this.

Where appropriate, the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland will apply for court orders, such as a Compensation Order (an order which requires the defendant to pay compensation to the victim) or a Sexual Offences Prevention Order (to protect the victim from serious sexual harm from the defendant).

Unduly lenient sentences

For certain serious offences, if the Director of Public Prosecutions considers that a sentence given in the Crown Court is unduly lenient (not strict enough) he or she may refer the case to the Court of Appeal. Further information about this is available on the PPS website at www.ppsni.gov.uk.

Feedback and complaints

The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland welcome your feedback on the services they provide. Their complaints procedures is set out in full on their website (www.ppsni.gov.uk) and in their booklet 'How to make a complaint'.

You can make a complaint directly, or through your nominated representative, by:

- writing to your Regional PPS Office (see the Organisations providing help and support to victims section);
- sending an email to complaints@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk;
- phoning 02890 897070 (textphone: 02890 897145);
- sending a fax to 02890 897069; or
- speaking to any Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland staff at court.

If you prefer to make your complaint in person, contact the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland in one of the ways shown above to make an appointment to visit one of our regional offices.

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Part 6

Part 6

Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service

Role

The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) is an agency of the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland. They are responsible for a range of functions including managing the 21 courts across Northern Ireland.

Services provided to victims of crime

- You can arrange to visit the court and view facilities before you come to give evidence. The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service can also send you information on the court venue you will attend and a leaflet called 'Attending as a Witness in a Criminal Court'. Information is also available on the website at:
www.courtsni.gov.uk.
- Supportive staff will be available at the court to help you.
- Wherever possible you will be given a place to wait which is away from the defendant and their family and supporters. In some courts a lack of space may mean that this is not possible.
- The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service will give you information you ask for on the court procedure or the progress of your case.
- You can arrange to enter the building before other members of the public are allowed in.
- For cases which will be heard in the Crown Court, you might be able to transfer the case to another venue if the original venue is particularly difficult for you to attend. You should discuss this with the person who has asked you to attend as a witness.

Coroner's Court

If you have to attend the Coroner's Court and you are a member of the deceased's family, you can speak with the Liaison Officer assigned to your case. They will:

- Tell you the preliminary cause of death following the post-mortem examination if this is known;
- Tell you if any organs or tissue samples were retained at post-mortem examination;
- Explain why these may have been retained and what you can request should happen to them;
- Explain the processes and stages in the Coroner's investigation.

There are a variety of leaflets which explain more about the work of the Coroner's Court. You can get these from all court offices in Northern Ireland.

Feedback and complaints

If you are not happy with the service you receive from the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service, talk to a member of staff or send your complaint in writing to the relevant court. If your complaint cannot be settled immediately, you will receive a response within 15 working days.

If you are still not happy, you can contact the complaints co-ordinator at:

Communications Group
Laganside House
23-27 Oxford Street
Belfast
BT1 3LA

Phone: 028 9041 2386
Email: communicationsgroup@courtsni.gov.uk

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Part 7

Part 7

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Role

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

The Prisoner Release Victim Information Scheme (PRVIS) allows you to receive and submit information about the person who has been convicted of a crime against you (or someone you have lost) being released from custody. It applies to adult offenders who have been sent to prison for six months or more, and young people who were sentenced to six months or more before they were 18, but who turn 18 while in custody.

If you want to receive information from the Prisoner Release Victim Information Scheme, you need to register with the scheme by contacting the Victim Information Unit (see the contact details below). If you do not register you will not receive any information.

If you prefer, Victim Support Northern Ireland can act as your representative and receive information on your behalf and support you through the process.

Services provided to victims of crime

You can receive information on the following.

- The month and year the offender is expected to be released from custody.
- Periods when the offender is temporarily released.

- Conditions that the offender must keep to when he/she are released.
- If the offender has broken any conditions which has resulted in him or her going back into custody.

If the prisoner's case is referred to the Parole Commissioners (the Parole Commissioners are an independent body which makes decisions on the release of life sentence and those serving indeterminate and extended custodial sentences) for them to make a decision on the prisoner's release, You can:

- be told when the commissioners are considering the prisoner's case;
- give the commissioners your views; and
- be told of the commissioners' decision and, if it is to release the prisoner, the conditions which apply.

If you choose to receive information about the prisoner being released temporarily, you will be given the opportunity to express any concerns you have. The Home Leave Board of the prison the prisoner is in will take account of these when considering the temporary release.

Please note that the Northern Ireland Prison Service do not provide information under the scheme if they think that doing so would damage the well-being of the actual victim of an offence or would threaten the safety of any person.

Feedback and complaints

If you have any questions or complaints about the Prisoner Release Victim Information Scheme, please contact:

Victim Information Unit
Room 306, Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast
BT4 3SU

Phone: 0845 247 0002

Email: info@niprvis.gov.uk

Website: www.nidirect.gov.uk/prisoner-release-victim-information-scheme

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Part 8

Part 8

Probation Board for Northern Ireland

Role

The Probation Board for Northern Ireland aims to reduce crime and the harm it does by challenging and changing offenders' behaviour.

The Probation Board for Northern Ireland's Victim Information Scheme aims to make sure that you receive information about what it means if the offender receives any sentence which has to be supervised by a probation officer. To get this information you need to register with the scheme through the Victim Information Office (contact details are given in the Organisations providing help and support to victims section).

The aims of the scheme are to:

- help victims of crime and contribute to community safety by providing clear, relevant information about probation; and
- work in partnership with other criminal justice organisations to provide a co-ordinated service to victims when an offender is sentenced to probation.

Services provided to victims of crime

The Probation Board for Northern Ireland will contact you within four days of you registering with the Victim Information Scheme. They will offer you information on:

- the type of supervision the offender will receive;
- how long the offender will be supervised for;
- any extra conditions that apply to the sentence;
- any further sentences relating to the case;

- how the Probation Board for Northern Ireland and other agencies manage the case, including how you can have your concerns taken into account; and
- other organisations who can provide support.

You can choose to receive information face-to-face, by phone or in writing.

You can also choose to have direct or indirect contact with the offender if this would help tackle issues resulting from the offence.

In certain cases, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland's Victims Unit also offers you and your family the opportunity to give your views and concerns in a victim report so they can be considered by the Parole Commissioners.

Feedback and complaints

Your feedback will help the Probation Board for Northern Ireland review their services and make improvements where necessary. If you are not satisfied with the service you receive, tell the person you are dealing with or their manager, or write to:

PBNI Complaints Officer
Probation Board for Northern Ireland
80-90 North Street
Belfast
BT1 1LD

Email: info@pbni.org.uk

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Part 9

Part 9

Youth Justice Agency of Northern Ireland

Role

The main aim of the Youth Justice Agency is to reduce youth crime and to build confidence in the youth justice system. The Youth Justice Agency work with children aged 10 to 17 years who have committed crimes or are at serious risk of doing so.

The Youth Justice Agency is responsible for a range of orders in which the victim can have their say. These are Youth conference orders, community responsibility order, attendance orders and reparation orders.

A youth conference is a meeting, or a series of meetings, between the offender, the adult responsible for them, a police officer, and the victim and their supporters.

All orders aim to challenge young offenders to take actions which make amends for their behaviour and contribute to preventing further offending. Actions may include apologising, paying compensation or having restrictions placed on their behaviour or movements or undertaking reparation.

If the offender who has committed a crime against you is under 18, the court or public prosecutor may refer them to a youth conference.

Services provided to victims of crime

If there is to be a youth conference:

- you will be invited to attend or to take part by video link, by phone or from behind a two-way mirror;

- you can be supported by a family member, a volunteer from Victim Support Northern Ireland, NSPCC or someone else you choose to bring with you for support; and
- the youth conference will be arranged at a time and place that suits you.

The conference will be led by a youth conference co-ordinator who will arrange to meet with you before the conference to help you prepare for it. Your well-being is the priority at the youth conference.

At the conference you:

- can tell the offender and their family how the crime has affected you;
- will be given the opportunity to assess whether you think the young offender regrets what they did; and
- ask for the young offender to apologise, pay compensation or take action to make amends for the crime, or for there to be restrictions on their behaviour or movements.

The outcome of the youth conference is set out in a Youth Conference Order which is supervised by the Youth Justice Agency.

You will be told when the young person successfully completes the Youth Conference Order, or if they have not kept to it.

If a young person who commits a crime against you receives either an attendance centre order, a community responsibility order or reparation order, the agency will contact you and advise you of this and invite you to have a say in how it will be undertaken.

Feedback and complaints

The Youth Justice Agency has its own Complaints Charter, which is on their website at www.youthjusticeagency.ni.gov.uk/about_us/complaints/.

You can get more information on the Complaints Charter from the following.

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

Phone: 028 9031 6400

Fax: 028 9031 6402

Email: info@yjani.gov.uk

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Part 10

Part 10

Compensation Agency

Role

The Compensation Agency deals with three main types of compensation – criminal injuries, criminal damage and compensation covered under the Justice & Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007.

Services provided to victims of crime

If you are a victim of a violent crime you may be entitled to compensation. If so, the Compensation Agency will:

- deal directly with you or, if you prefer, work with Victim Support Northern Ireland or any other representative that is acting for you;
- give you the information you need to help you fill in the application form;
- treat all the information you give us confidentially;
- deal with you sensitively, and treat you with respect, at all times;
- make a decision on your case as quickly as possible; and
- tell you about your right to appeal against our decision.

If you are applying for compensation for a criminal injury you received outside Northern Ireland, the Compensation Agency will tell you who you need to contact to make a claim, or you can apply directly by contacting the Criminal Injury Compensation Authority (CICA) through their website (www.cica.gov.uk) or through the European Commission's website (www.ec.europa.eu/).

Time limits

Do not delay in making your application.

Applications relating to a criminal injury should be made within two years of the date of the incident giving rise to the injury. (Applications from people who were injured while under the age of 18 can be accepted within two years of the victim reaching 18.)

Applications relating to criminal damage and claims made under the Justice & Security Act (NI) 2007 have shorter timescales, and you should contact the Compensation Agency as soon as possible after your property is damaged.

Appealing against a decision

If you disagree with the Compensation Agency's decision, you can ask them to review it. You must do this within 90 days from the decision being made.

The review will be carried out by Compensation Agency staff not involved in the original decision.

If you are not happy with the decision made after the review, you can appeal to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals Panel for Northern Ireland (see the contact details in the Organisations providing help and support to victims section). This panel is independent of the Compensation Agency and is run by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service. You must send your appeal to the panel within 90 days of the date of the decision made at the review.

The panel will:

- give you a detailed guide, called 'Your Panel Hearing', setting out how the appeal system works and what you can expect from the process;
- consider your application for compensation and any other information you provide; and
- make a decision on your claim. This decision may be to increase, reduce or withhold compensation. The panel's decision is final and you cannot appeal against it.

Feedback and complaints

If you are not happy with the service you receive, contact:

The Complaints Officer
The Compensation Agency
Royston House
34 Upper Queen Street
Belfast
BT1 6FD

Phone: 028 90547329

Fax: 028 90542013

Email: comp-agency@nics.gov.uk

Website: www.compensationni.gov.uk

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Part II

Part II

Monitoring performance

The Victim and Witness Steering Group will monitor the performance of each of the organisations set out in this code of practice to make sure they are meeting their commitments.

The Victim and Witness Steering Group is a sub-group of the Criminal Justice Board for Northern Ireland and is chaired by the Department of Justice. The Criminal Justice Board is made up of heads or senior representatives of the main criminal justice organisations in Northern Ireland and the Attorney General's Office.

The steering group is made up of representatives from the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service, Northern Ireland Prison Service, Probation Board for Northern Ireland, Youth Justice Agency of Northern Ireland, Victim Support Northern Ireland and the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children).

The steering group will:

- review the outcomes of the Northern Ireland Victim and Witness Survey to get victims' views on the criminal justice system;
- review the feedback and complaints received to identify common problems, and take necessary action to improve performance;
- hold discussions every six months on the criminal justice organisations performance against the commitments set out in this code of practice;
- ask Victim Support Northern Ireland and the NSPCC for feedback they have received from victims; and
- give the Criminal Justice Board updates on performance against the commitments set out in this code of practice.

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Part 12

Part 12

Complaints procedures

If you are not happy with the response you receive from any criminal justice organisation's complaints procedures, you can make a complaint to an independent organisation who will investigate the matter on your behalf.

Police Ombudsman

The Police Ombudsman investigates complaints against the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

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

Phone: 0845 601 2931 or 028 9082 8600

Fax: 028 9082 8659

Email: info@policeombudsman.org

The office is open between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. You do not need an appointment.

The Independent Assessor of Complaints

The Independent Assessor of Complaints investigates complaints made against the Public Prosecution Service.

The Independent Assessor of Complaints
Londonderry House
21 Chichester Street
Belfast, BT1 4JJ

Email: a.mclaughlin@btinternet.com

The Charity Commissioner for Northern Ireland

The Charity Commissioner for Northern Ireland investigates complaints made against Victim Support Northern Ireland and the NSPCC.

Charity Commission for Northern Ireland
4th Floor, 24-26 Arthur Street
Belfast, BT1 4GF

Email: concernsaboutcharities@charitycommission.org.uk

The Northern Ireland Assembly Ombudsman

The Northern Ireland Assembly Ombudsman investigates complaints against the Northern Ireland Prison Service, Probation Board for Northern Ireland and the Youth Justice Agency.

Complaints should be sent to the Northern Ireland Assembly Ombudsman. If you want to make a complaint to the Ombudsman, it must be supported by an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly).

The Ombudsman has no legal powers to enforce actions but if he or she asks a criminal justice organisation to put a problem right, they will almost always accept that recommendation in full.

The Ombudsman can recommend that the organisation:

- gives you an apology;
- pays any money due to you (for example, benefits);
- makes a compensatory payment (for example, for delays, anxiety or frustration); or
- improves or changes their policy and procedures.

You can contact The Northern Ireland Assembly Ombudsman at:

The Office of the Northern Ireland Ombudsman
Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6HN

Phone: 028 9023 3821

Fax: 028 9023 4912

Website: www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk

If a government department or agency rejects the Ombudsman's recommendations, he or she can make a report of the rejection to be provided to the Northern Ireland Assembly. If you disagree with the findings in the report, you can challenge the decision in the High Court.

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Part 13

Part 13

Organisations providing help and support to victims of crime

The criminal justice organisations will try to make sure that you receive help and advice throughout the criminal justice process. Based on your needs, this may include support from government, voluntary and community-based organisations.

Below is a list of organisations that may be able to provide help. Victim Support Northern Ireland also keeps a list of local services that may be useful to you. The list is on their website at www.victimsupportni.co.uk.

Criminal Justice Organisations

Compensation Agency

Royston House
34 Upper Queen Street
Belfast, BT1 6FD.
Phone: 028 9024 9944
E-mail: comp-agency@nics.gov.uk
Website: www.compensationni.gov.uk

Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals Panel for NI

The Corn Exchange Building
31 Gordon Street
Belfast, BT1 2LG.
Phone: 028 9092 4400
Fax: 028 9092 4420
E-mail: cicapni@nics.gov.uk
Website: www.cicapni.org.uk

Department of Justice

Massey House, Stormont
Belfast BT4 3SG.
Phone: 028 9052 7123
Website: www.dojni.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service

Laganside House
23-27 Oxford Street
Belfast, BT1 3LA.
Phone: 028 9032 8594
Website: www.courtsni.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Prisoner Release Victim Information Scheme
Room 306, Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast, BT4 3SU.
Phone: 0845 247 0002
E-mail: info@niprvis.gov.uk
Website: www.nidirect.gov.uk/prisoner-release-victim-information-scheme

Police Service for Northern Ireland

65 Knock Road
Belfast, BT5 6LE.
Phone: 0845 600 8000
E-mail: info@psni.pnn.police.uk
Website: www.psni.police.uk
Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111

Probation Board for Northern Ireland Victims Unit

Victim Information Scheme
Imperial Buildings, Office 40, 72 High Street, Belfast, BT1 2BE.
Phone: 028 9032 1972
Fax: 028 9032 1973
E-mail: victimunit@pbni.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.pbni.org.uk

Public Prosecution Service

Community Liaison Branch, Belfast Region (Headquarters)
Belfast Chambers
93 Chichester Street, Belfast, BT1 3JR.
Phone: 028 9089 7070 / 9089 7071
Text phone: 028 90897145
E-mail: info@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.ppsni.gov.uk

Community Liaison Branch, Southern Region
Newry Chambers,
1 Downshire Close
Newry, BT34 1FD.
Phone: 028 3083 2568
Text phone: 028 3083 2567

Community Liaison Branch, Eastern Region
Lisburn Chambers, Linen Hill House,
23 Linen Hill Street
Lisburn, BT23 1FJ.
Phone: 028 9262 5509
Text phone: 028 9262 5441

Community Liaison Branch, Northern Region

Ballymena Chambers
4 Parkway
Ballymena, BT43 5ET.
Phone: 028 2566 6563
Text phone: 028 25666623

Community Liaison Branch, Foyle Chambers

35 Limavady Road
Londonderry, BT47 6LP
Phone: 028 7134 0600
Text phone: 028 7134 0676

Community Liaison Branch, Western Region

Omagh Chambers
2 Townhall Square
Omagh, BT78 1BL.
Phone: 028 8224 8733

Youth Justice Agency (including Youth Conference Service)

41-43 Waring Street
Belfast, BT1 2DY.
Phone: 028 9031 6400
E-mail: info@yjani.gov.uk or info@yicsni.gov.uk
Website: www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk
www.youthconferenceserviceni.gov.uk

Voluntary Support Organisations

NSPCC Northern Ireland

Divisional Office, Block 1,
Jennymount Business Park
North Derby Street,
York Road
Belfast, BT15 3HN.
Phone: 028 9035 1135
Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

If you are worried about a child and need advice.
Phone: 0808 800 5000
E-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk
Text phone: 0800 056 0566

ChildLine

Free and confidential 24-hour helpline for children in danger or distress.
Phone: 0800 1111
Website: www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC Young Witness Service

Craigavon Courthouse
Central Way
Portadown, BT64 1AP
Phone: 028 3834 9381

Newry Courthouse
23 New Street
Newry, BT35 6AD
Phone: 028 3083 4849

Omagh Courthouse
High Street
Omagh, BT78 1DU
Phone: 028 8224 7856

Antrim Courthouse
90 Castle Way
Antrim, BT41 4AQ.
Phone: 028 9448 7533
Belfast Old Townhall Building
80 Victoria Street, Belfast, BT1 3GL.
Phone: 028 9024 0847

17-21 Bishop Street
Londonderry, BT48 6PR.
Phone: 028 7127 9555

Victim Support Northern Ireland

Annsgate House
70/74 Ann Street
Belfast, BT1 4EH.
Phone: 028 9024 4039
Supportline: 0845 3030900
E-mail: info@victimsupportni.org.uk
Website: www.victimsupportni.co.uk

Victim Support NI Regional Offices

| | |
|--|--|
| Ballymena Phone: 028 2563 0784 E-mail: ballymena@victimsupportni.org.uk | Belfast and Lisburn Phone: 028 9024 3133 E-mail: belfast@victimsupportni.org.uk |
| Foyle Phone: 028 7137 0086 E-mail: foyle@victimsupportni.org.uk | Newry Phone: 028 3025 1321 E-mail: newry@victimsupportni.org.uk |
| Omagh Phone: 028 8224 0012 E-mail: omagh@victimsupportni.org.uk | |

Victim Support NI Witness Service

| | |
|--|--|
| Antrim Court Office 30 Castleway Antrim, BT45 5DG. Phone: 028 9448 8631 | Craigavon Court Office Central Way Craigavon, BT64 1AP. Phone: 028 3834 3553 |
| Dungannon Court Office 46 Killyman Road Dungannon, BT71 6FG. Phone: 028 8775 155 | Downpatrick Court Office 21 English Street Downpatrick, BT30 6AB. Phone: 028 4461 6233 |
| Foyle Courts1 7-21 Bishop Street, Londonderry, BT48 9PR. Phone: 028 7127 9440 | Laganside Courts 45 Oxford Street Belfast, BT1 3LL. Phone: 028 9023 2523 |

Other Support Organisations

There are many other voluntary organisations which exist to help victims. They are independent and provide their services free and in the strictest confidence. These include:

Support following bereavement

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Cruse Bereavement Care Phone: 028 9079 2419 Email: northernireland@cruse.org.uk Website: www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk</p> | <p>SAMM NI (Support after Murder and Manslaughter) Phone: 028 9442 9009 Email: pam.surphlis.samm.ni@live.co.uk Website: www.samm.org.uk</p> |
|---|--|

Domestic Violence

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Relate Phone: 028 9032 3454 Email: office@relateni.org Website: www.relateni.org</p> | <p>Men's Advisory Project (MAP) Phone: 028 9024 1929 Email: info@mapni.co.uk Website: www.mapni.co.uk</p> |
| <p>24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline Phone: 0800 917 1414 Website: www.womensaidni.org</p> | <p>Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid Resource, Support & Outreach Centre 30 Adelaide Park, Belfast BT9 6FY Phone: 028 9066 6049</p> |
| <p>Cookstown & Dungannon Women's Aid Women's Resource Centre 27 Old Coagh Road Cookstown, BT80 8QU Phone: 028 8676 9300</p> | <p>Women's Aid Federation NI 129 University Street, Belfast, BT7 1HP Phone: 028 9024 9041</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Fermanagh Women's Aid Resource Centre, 27a High Street Enniskillen, BT74 7DQ Phone: 028 6632 8898</p> | <p>Newry, Mourne, South Down and South Armagh Women's Aid Women's Resource Centre 7 Downshire Place, Belfast Road Newry, BT34 1DZ Phone: 028 3025 0765</p> |
| <p>Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Larne & Newtownabbey Women's Aid Naomi Centre 2 Cullybackey Road Ballymena, BT43 5DF Phone: 028 2563 2136</p> | <p>Causeway Women's Aid Women's Centre, 23 Abbey Street Coleraine BT52 1DU Phone: 028 7035 6573</p> |
| <p>Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid Office 1, Floor 1 Legahory Centre Brownlow Craigavon, BT65 5BE Phone: 028 3834 3256</p> | <p>Foyle Women's Aid Aftercare & Outreach Centre Pathways 24 Pump Street Derry, BT48 6JG Phone: 028 7128 0060</p> |
| <p>North Down & Ards Women's Aid Bangor Resource Centre 18 Bingham Street Bangor, BT20 5DW Phone: 028 9127 3196</p> | <p>Omagh Women's Aid Resource Centre 27 Market Street Omagh BT78 1EL Phone: 028 8224 1414</p> |

Hate Crime

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Cara Friend Phone: 028 9089 0202 Email: steve@cara-friend.org.uk Website: cara-friend.org.uk</p> | <p>Chinese Welfare Association Phone: 028 9028 8277 Email: contact@cwa-ni.org Website: www.cwa-ni.org</p> |
| <p>Multi-Cultural Resource Centre Phone: 028 9024 4639 Email: info@mrcr-ni.org Website: www.mrcr-ni.org</p> | <p>Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association Phone: 028 9066 5257 Email: NIGRA@DNET.CO.UK</p> |
| <p>Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities Phone: 028 9023 8645 Email: info@nicem.org.uk Website: www.nicem.org.uk</p> | <p>Queer Space Phone: 028 9089 0200 Email: info@queerspace.org.uk Website: www.queerspace.org.uk</p> |
| <p>Rainbow Project Phone: 028 9031 9030 Email: info@rainbow-project.org Website: www.rainbow-project.org</p> | <p>Belfast Migrant Centre 2nd Floor Ascot House 24-31 Shaftesbury Square Belfast BT2 7DB</p> |

Sexual Abuse

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Nexus Institute NI Phone: 028 9032 6803 Email: info@nexusinstitute.org Website: www.nexusinstitute.org</p> | <p>Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre Phone: 028 9032 9002 Email: info@rapecrisisni.com Website: www.rapecrisisni.com</p> |
|---|--|

Other helpful services

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Age Sector Platform Phone: 028 9031 2089 Email: info@agesectorplatform.org Website: www.agesectorplatform.org</p> | <p>Age NI 3 Lower Crescent Belfast BT7 1 NR Phone: 028 90245729 Email: advocacy@ageni.org Website: www.ageni.org</p> |
| <p>Alzheimer's Society Phone: 028 9066 4100 Email: nir@alzheimers.org.uk Website: www.alzheimers.org.uk</p> | <p>Barnardo's Safe Choices Phone: 028 9065 8511 Email: Jacqui.montgomery@barnardos.org.uk</p> |
| <p>Citizens Advice Website: www.citizensadvice.co.uk</p> | <p>Citizens Advice Antrim Phone: 9442 8176</p> |
| <p>Citizens Advice Ards Phone: 9181 9257</p> | <p>Citizens Advice Armagh Phone: 3752 4041</p> |
| <p>Citizens Advice Banbridge Phone: 4062 2201</p> | <p>Citizens Advice Ballymena Phone: 2564 4398</p> |
| <p>Citizens Advice North Belfast Phone: 90357990</p> | <p>Citizens Advice Central Belfast Phone: 90 261970</p> |
| <p>Citizens Advice East Belfast Phone: 9022 3747</p> | <p>Citizens Advice Falls Phone: 90347780</p> |
| <p>Citizens Advice Shankill Phone: 90262890</p> | <p>Citizens Advice Suffolk and Andersonstown Phone: 90301916</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| Citizens Advice Carrickfergus Phone: 9335 1808 | Citizens Advice Causeway Phone: 7034 4817 |
| Citizens Advice Cookstown Phone: 8676 6126 | Citizens Advice Craigavon Phone: 3835 3260 |
| Citizens Advice Down District Phone: 4461 4110 | Citizens Advice Dungannon Phone: 8772 5299 |
| Citizens Advice Fermanagh Phone: 6632 4334 | Citizens Advice Larne Phone: 2826 0379 |
| Citizens Advice Newry and Mourne Phone: 3026 2934 | Citizens Advice Newtownabbey Phone: 9085 2271 |
| Citizens Advice North Down Phone: 9127 0009 | Citizens Advice Strabane Phone: 7138 2665 |
| Disability Action Phone: 028 9029 7880 Email: hq@disabilityaction.org Website: www.disabilityaction.org | Migrant Helpline Phone: 01304 203 977 Email: mhl@migranthehelpline.org Website: www.migranthehelpline.org.uk |
| Road Trauma Support Phone: 028 9054 1172 | The Law Society Of Northern Ireland Phone: 028 9023 1614 Email: info@lawsoc-ni.org Website: www.lawsoc-ni.org |
| The Samaritans Phone: 028 9066 4422 Email: jo@samaritans.org Website: www.samaritans.org | |

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

The Crime Victims Helpline

Phone: 1850 211407

Email: info@crimevictimshelpline.ie

Website: www.crimevictimshelpline.ie



Department of
Justice

www.dojni.gov.uk



Northern Ireland

**Courts and
Tribunals Service**

www.courtsni.gov.uk

NORTHERN IRELAND

PRISON  SERVICE



**Youth Justice
Agency**



Victim Support

Helping people cope with crime

NSPCC 
NORTHERN IRELAND
Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.



Department of
Justice

www.dojni.gov.uk