

VICTIM'S CHARTER

1. On 22 February 1990, European Victims' Day, the Home Secretary announced the 'Victim's Charter', a document which sets out the rights and expectations of people who have become the victims of crime. Copies of the Charter have been widely circulated to the criminal justice services concerned and to victim support schemes, libraries and citizens' advice bureaux, and consideration was also given as to whether the Charter's provisions should apply to the Services.

2. Whilst it has been decided that no firm requirement exists to publish tri-Service policy guidelines embracing the principles of the Charter, it has nevertheless been agreed that, in the interests of good public relations, we should be seen to adopt some of the standards set by the document and make provision for the victims of alleged serious offences, investigated by the Service authorities, to be advised in any case where a decision not to proceed in particular circumstances is made. For example, in cases of serious sexual abuse, indecent assault or alleged rape where, because of a lack of corroborating evidence, prosecutions are not pursued, it is considered appropriate that the victim, if he or she requests it, should then be informed of the reasons why disciplinary action was not undertaken.

3. Because it would be inappropriate for COs to have the responsibility of entering into correspondence with victims or their legal advisers on such matters, it has been decided that any requests for information received from a victim, or a relative of a victim, should be referred to HQ PTC (CS(Sec)2b) who will reply on behalf of the Air Force Department. It is not intended to introduce any hard and fast rules on the types of offence concerned or the categories of people entitled or not entitled to be informed. However, if a victim, or a relative of a victim, makes a genuine enquiry, then to enable the HQ PTC (CS(Sec)2b) staff to provide the Departmental reply they will require full details of the case and they may well ask supplementary questions to clarify certain points. In appropriate cases legal advice will be sought from DLS(RAF), HQ PTC.

4. In sum, therefore, if a victim, or a relative of a victim, of a serious alleged offence, which has been investigated by the Service authorities and it is decided not to proceed with disciplinary action, wishes to know the reasons why the matter was not proceeded with, the enquiry is to be referred to HQ PTC (CS(Sec)2b) with full details of the case so that the enquirer may be provided with a response on behalf of the Air Force Department.

5. Copies of the 'Victim's Charter' may be obtained from Room 101, Home Office, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London, SW1H 9AT.

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